



GEOnotes

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The Extra Credit Opportunity of a Lifetime

Latin America

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According to the text (P.484) 13.5 million Mexicans live in extreme poverty and furthermore 23.6 million are poor. According to the site (<http://www.ncr.org/press/1998/dialog.html>) there is a national council called the National Council of La Raza to aid in the poverty of Mexicans.

Mr. Josh Kendall [kendallj1@citrine.indstate.edu]

Based on the text (p.482) Mexico City is the worst air polluter in Central America. Pollution in air and water comes from mineral extraction, which is a major activity in this area. According to the World Resources Institute (<http://www.wri.org/wr-98-99/airpoll.htm>) exposure in Latin America alone includes 81 million city residents. This in turn causes 65 million estimated days of illness each year due to this pollution.



Curt Carnemark / World Bank

Ms. C. Johnson <johnsonc4@hotmail.com>

On page 488, it talks about the economic development of Latin America and the surrounding countries. It says that for the most part, Latin America is economically developed and it has been for some time. On the website (<http://www.forbes.com/newswire/2001/03/15/rtr214453.html>) it says that as for this year the economic slowdown will hurt Latin America somewhat, but that it's not all bad news and it will get better due to the fact of the type of country that Latin America is. On this website it said that this is a good thing because it will lower interest rates and it will bring down the economic growth rate. On the other hand it will affect traders but not for long. So basically there's advantages and disadvantages to this problem, but it's obvious that Latin America will work through it.

Ms. Brandi Silvonek <silvoneb@citrine.indstate.edu>

According to the article by BBC news (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/>) Europe is once again coming into some internal changes. These variations raise important questions concerning the environment, popular movements and the interplay of economics. In the past, when Europe tried to make some changes they have caused two major world wars. While Europe makes these internal changes there will be many questions to be answered.

Mary Hancock (mhancock@coral.indstate.edu)

As stated in our text (p. 472), the North American Free Trade Agreement of 1993 was a major breakthrough for Mexico. NAFTA opened the prospect of wider trade with Anglo America and other Latin American countries. In addition to the loss of employment for many Americans already living in impoverished areas, NAFTA has had severe environmental effects on Mexico. Rapid population growth and industrialization without adequate environmental investment and enforcement has led to polluted water sources and an excess of improperly stored industrial waste. Further information and statistics can be accessed through the United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce website at <<http://www.usmcoc.org/environment.html>>.

Donna McCann (mccann@citrusindstate.edu)

Pages 480-481 in the text book discuss issues of the Amazon rain forest. It is part of the largest rain forest and the most diverse. However, its soil is only rich on the top layer. Cutting down trees leaves the soil depleted and unable to produce many agricultural crops. However left alone it produces many medicinal plants which are widely used, and well as offering environmental protection. Many debates about how to manage the rain forest have been addressed, as well as the needs of the poor v. the needs of the world for medicines and a green environment. Ananaka is a political group dedicated to issues of the rain forest. The web site for Ananaka is <http://www.amanaka.org/history.htm>. They deal with issues of the Indians who are being made homeless by policies that allow the exploitation of the land. The mission statement of Ananaka is to: support the peoples of the Amazon rainforest in their efforts of live and work in harmony with their environment.

Ryan Merriwether [ryanmerriwether@hotmail.com]

Based on page 472 in the text, Mexico was looking to expand in the global economy. There was a breakthrough with the creation of NAFTA, North American Free Trade Agreement. The start of NAFTA in 1993 opened the doors to wider trade for Mexico. Many, on both sides of the spectrum, doubted the idea of having free trade. People in the United States was scared that many of the lower waged jobs would be lost. Many in Latin America felt that the cost to adjust to free trade would not be greater than the benefits of free trade. In the article by the institute for agriculture and trade policy at <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/42/005.html> states that Brazil, the largest country in the south, had differences in their views with the United States and the FTAA. Brazil and the United States came to agreements on the FTAA which upset a lot of smaller countries.

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According to pg. 488 of the text, Mexico is the most economically developed country of Latin America. Their GDP in the late 1990's accounted for 80% of the total GDP in this region. Mexico appears to be securing economic growth for the future as well. The following website <http://www.bmv.com.mx/bmving/sendsmex.html> "Financial" Strengthening Program for Mexico goes into depth about Mexican plans to bolster their economy, especially with help from the U.S. If the plans do succeed, Mexico seems to be a country rising in the world core-periphery relationship.

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Based on the text (page 480-481), the Latin American Tropical Rain Forests are the "major type of vegetation in the Amazon River basin of Brazil" and neighboring areas such as Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. However, much of this is being logged and burned causing adverse affects on the ecosystem. Based on the web page (<http://www.org/~landshark/environment/rainforests.html>) the cutting of the rainforests in Latin America is very severe. The rates of destruction are happening at 2 acres/second, 43 hectares/minute and 620 square kilometers/day. The adverse affects of this deforestation include decrease in pharmacological sources, species, and genetic and industrial products. This web page predicted that the majority of the rainforests will be destroyed by 2025.

Shawna Bahlmann (shawna@csnetwork.net or bahlshaw@aol.com)

Rebels against the Colombian government have been trying to overthrow the government for more than a decade. According to a Colombian newspaper a Colombian businessman was kidnapped and held for ransom by the Revolutionary Army Forces of Columbia. Also known as FARC, this band of rebels uses kidnapping and ransoms as a means of paying for their uprising against the state. However, it took the rebels 56 days after the ransom had been paid to finally release the man. The turmoil in Columbia has given the country the highest rate of kidnapping in the world. The average is 10 kidnappings per day.

Erin Wardman [erin1327@hotmail.com] [<http://forests.org/recent/2001/nooilcri.htm>]

According to the website listed above, the Costa Rican government has granted concessions for oil development in some of the country's most cherished protected areas. Many of the native Costa Ricans and tourists are extremely angry to hear of the oil concessions. This will mean the destruction of many biological aspects that are native to this area, such as beautiful coral reefs, rare manatees, over 100 types of fish, and sea turtle nesting beaches. As our text points out on pgs. 480-1, some of the world's most rich and lavish rain forests are present in this area. Rapid destruction of these wonders in Latin America is becoming more and more prevalent each day. The future rests in the governments of these countries to prevent such events from occurring.

Early Core Submissions

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Based on the text on page 542-545. Australia is a country with many natural resources. It is one of the leading countries in exporting coal. Australia holds the record for 190 million tons of coal in the 1990's. Natural gas is being mined along the coast of Australia. The Australian economy is thirteenth in the world in GDP. The backbone of the Australian economy is the exportation of natural resources. The value of the Australian dollar has dropped because of its dependence on agriculture and natural resources for income. As it says in the article in the New York Times www.nytimes.com/2001/03/23/business/23AUSS.html?searchpv=site04 the value of the dollar is dropping and hurting Aussie businesses the rely on imports. The Australian economy can not rely on the exporting of the natural resources alone. Even though there is an abundance of it.

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On page 405 of our text the author states that in 1995 Canada and the United States produced 27 percent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP), Japan 18 percent and the five main countries of Western Europe 21 percent. The World Bank has been empowered by the countries that govern it, led by the United States, Canada, Japan, Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom. This group of seven holds over forty percent of the votes on their boards guiding global economy for the "Third World" or "Global South". Once southern countries build up large external debts, they are unable to get credit and must go to these international institutions for aid and accept whatever conditions may be applied for lending. These conditions often include regulation of interest rates and elimination of taxation on imports which has negative effects on domestic markets and business. For further information on the World Bank and its effect on global economy access <<http://www.globalexchange.org/wbimf/facts.html>>

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Based on the text (page 308-312), the declining population in Western Europe is a concern that most of the Western countries have. The populations of these regions have been declining and aging. In the context of Germany, its population has been falling since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Another worry with this population is the low natural increase. With the economically active group aging, the economy may suffer with no new labor to keep it going. Based on the web page (<http://www.africa2000.com/INDEX/decline.htm>), the decreasing population will be a problem for not only Western Europe but also the other core regions. At the end of WW II, the developed countries made up 40% of the world's population, now they only contribute to 20% of the world's population. Eastern Europe is trying to promote an increase in the birth rates through prenatal bonus payments. This site also stressed the relationship between population and world influence as a core region.

The Next GEONote is on Core Regions