



# Introduction to World Regions

Geography has made us neighbors. History has made us friends. Economics has made us partners, and necessity has made us allies. Those whom God has so joined together, let no man put asunder.

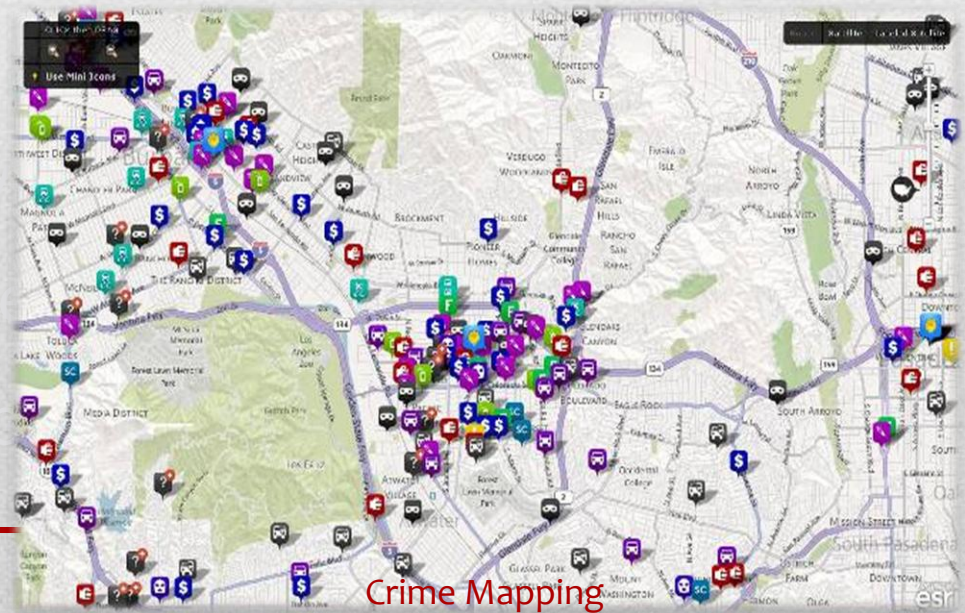
John F. Kennedy

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# Spatial Analysis

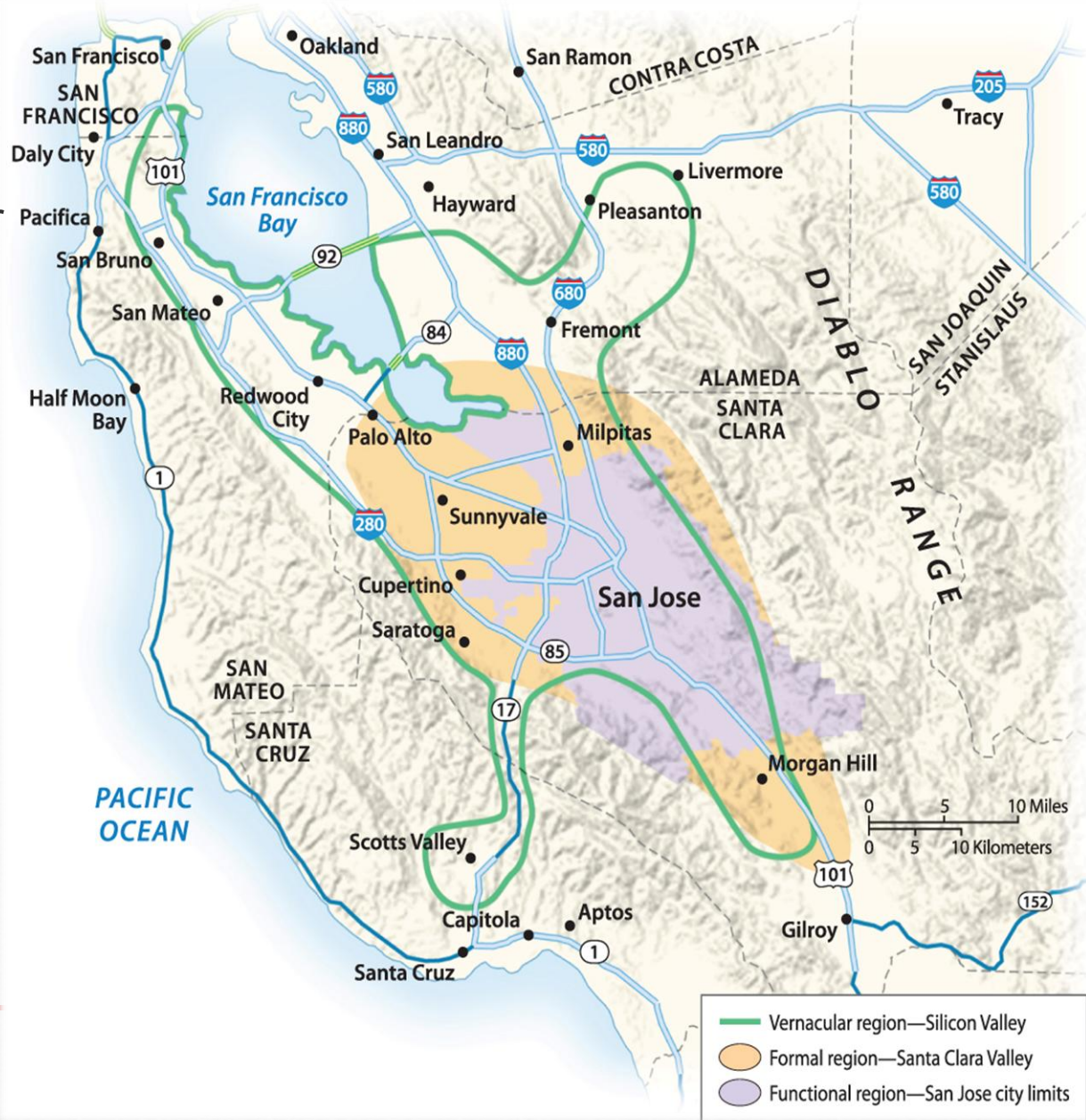
Geographers search for **patterns** in the distribution and movement of human activities and environmental processes.





# Region

- Regions divide the world into *manageable areas* that make it easier for geographic studies.
- All regions have: *area, boundaries, location*
- There are particular *characteristics that help define a region and unify the area.*
- There are three types of regions
  - formal
  - functional
  - vernacular



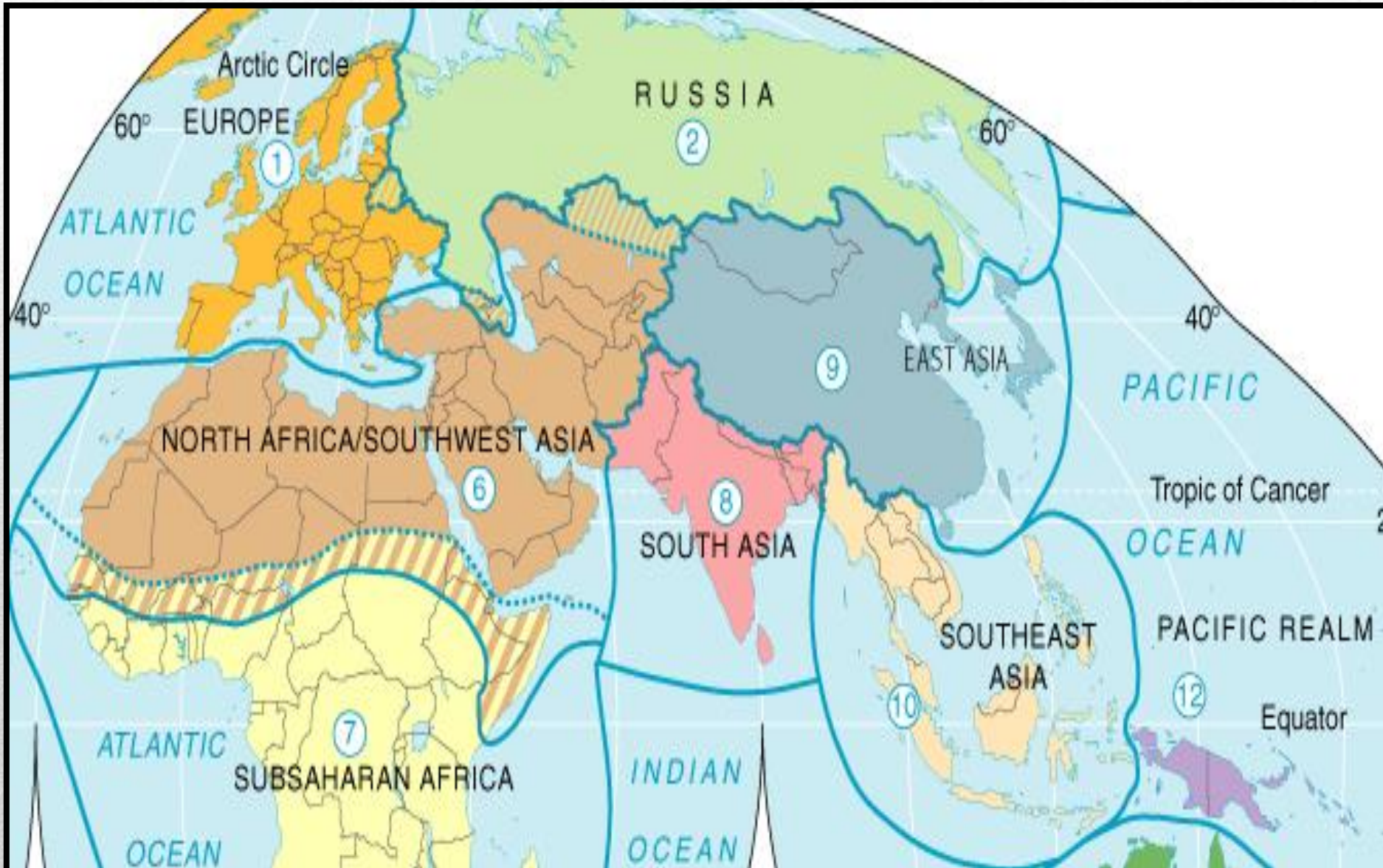


# Characteristics of World Regions

- spatial: the largest geographic units into which the inhabited world can be divided
  - functional: revealed by farms, mines, fishing ports, transport routes, dams, bridges, villages and other features on the landscape
  - demographic: represent the most comprehensive and encompassing definition of the great clusters of humankind in the world today
  - transitional: where world regions meet, transition zones (not sharp boundaries) mark their contacts ... areas where peripheries of two adjacent regions join as a gradual shift distinguishing the neighboring regions
  - variable: change over time
-



# Transition Zones





# Types of Regions

- ...an area that shares common characteristics
  - **formal**: whole area shares essential uniformity across the space, city of Dallas
  - **functional**: the region is defined by some activity or function or process, cell phone coverage or English-speaking people
  - **vernacular**: common perception of cultural identity, Deep South or Swiss Alps or southern California or the Latin Quarter of Paris





# Formal Region

...designated by **official boundaries**

...publically known including cities, towns, states, counties and countries

...physical region such as the Lake District, the Blue Ridge Mountains or the Korean Strait (in other words, place names)

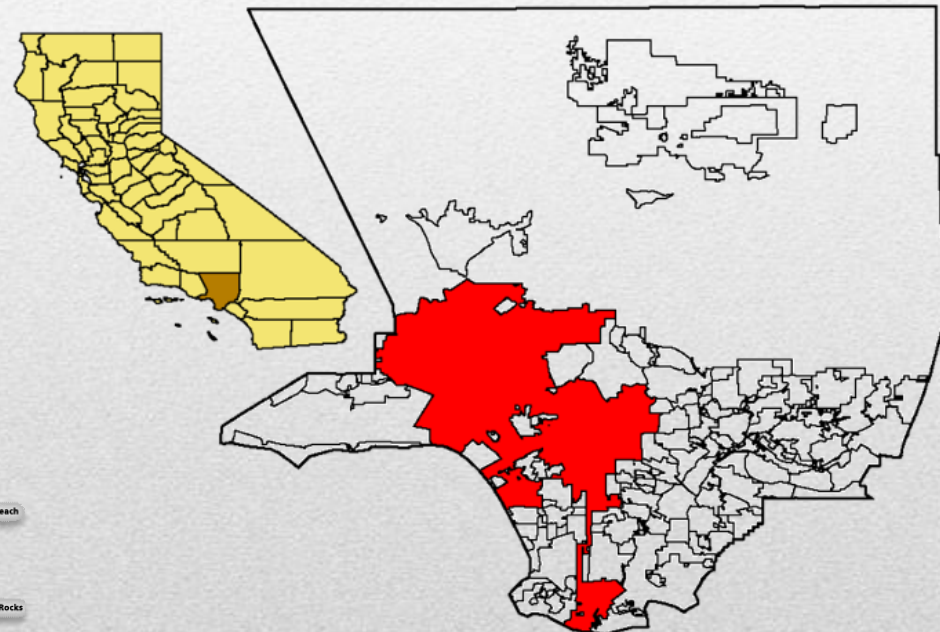
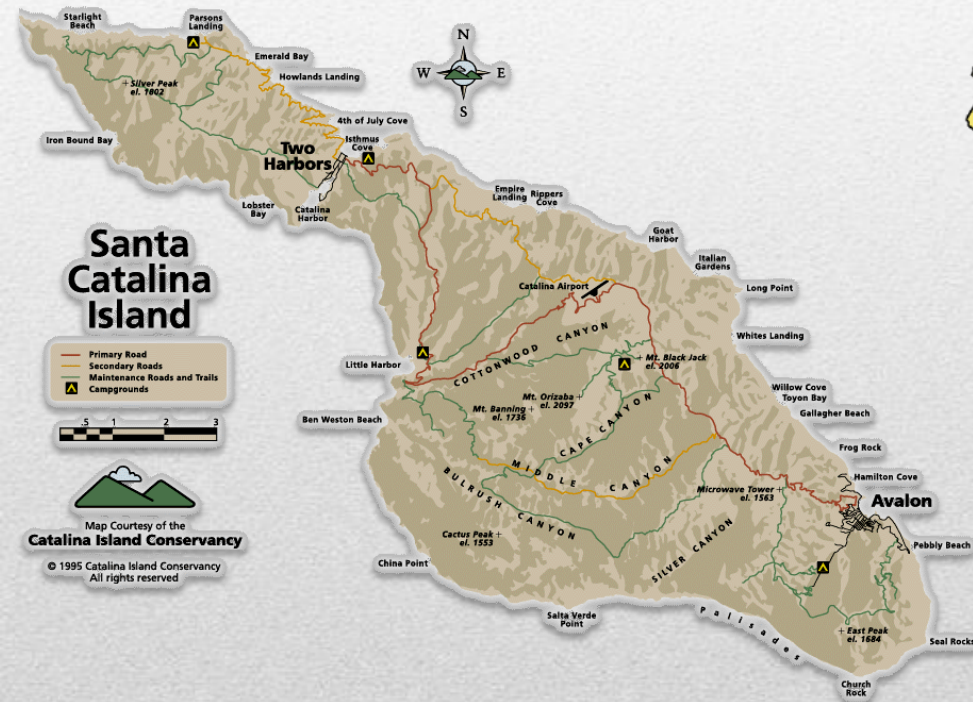
... marked by a certain degree of homogeneity in one or more variable

...whole area shares essential **uniformity** across the space  
... also called a uniform or homogeneous region

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# Formal Region

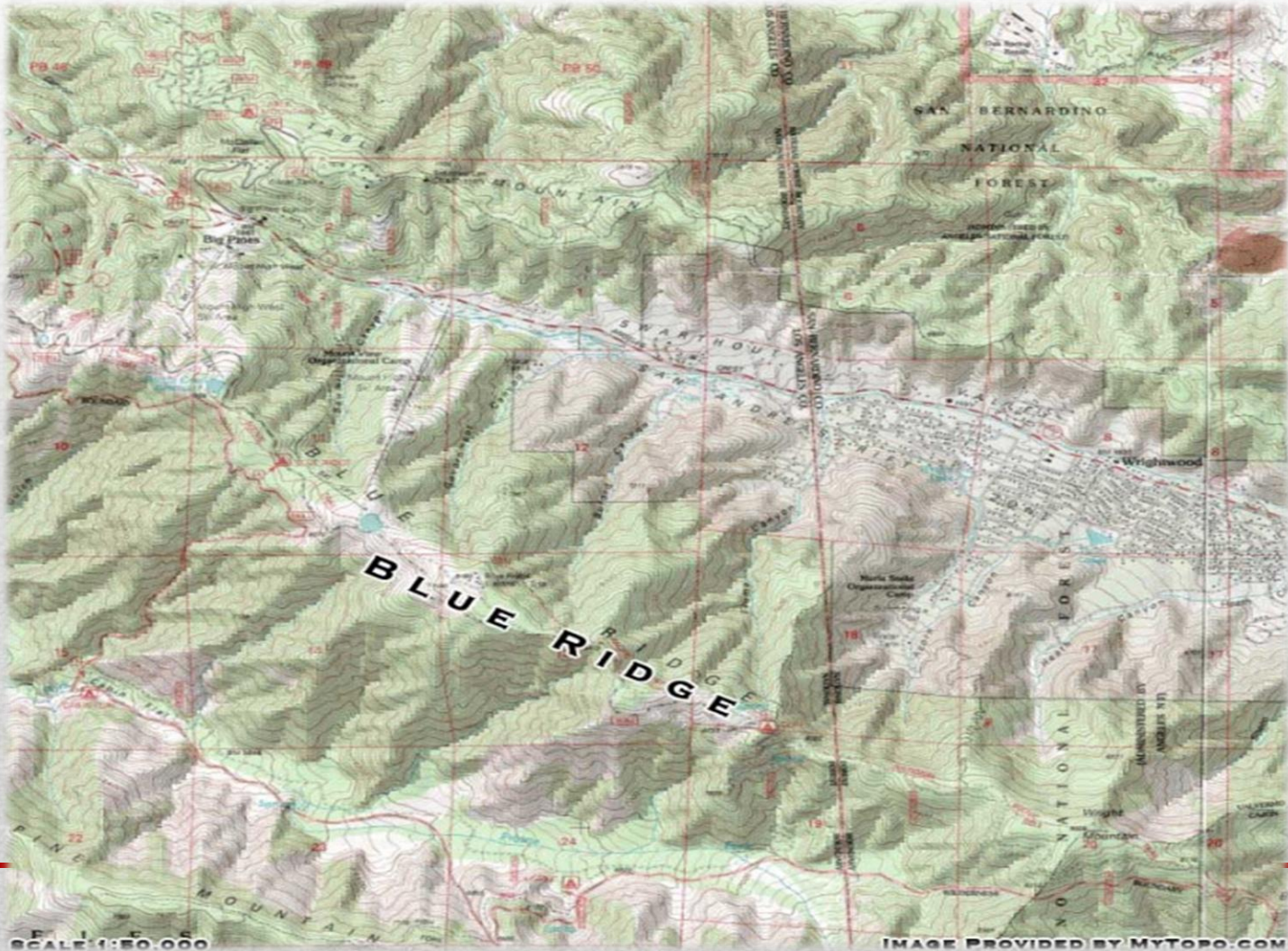


cities and counties





# Formal Region





# Functional Region

...defined by its **connections**

...marked less by its sameness than its dynamic internal structure ... integration of functions

... formed by a set of places and their functional integration

...defined by a node of activity and distance decay from center, Hawaiian tourism or NY subway or Midwest farming

...also called a nodal region

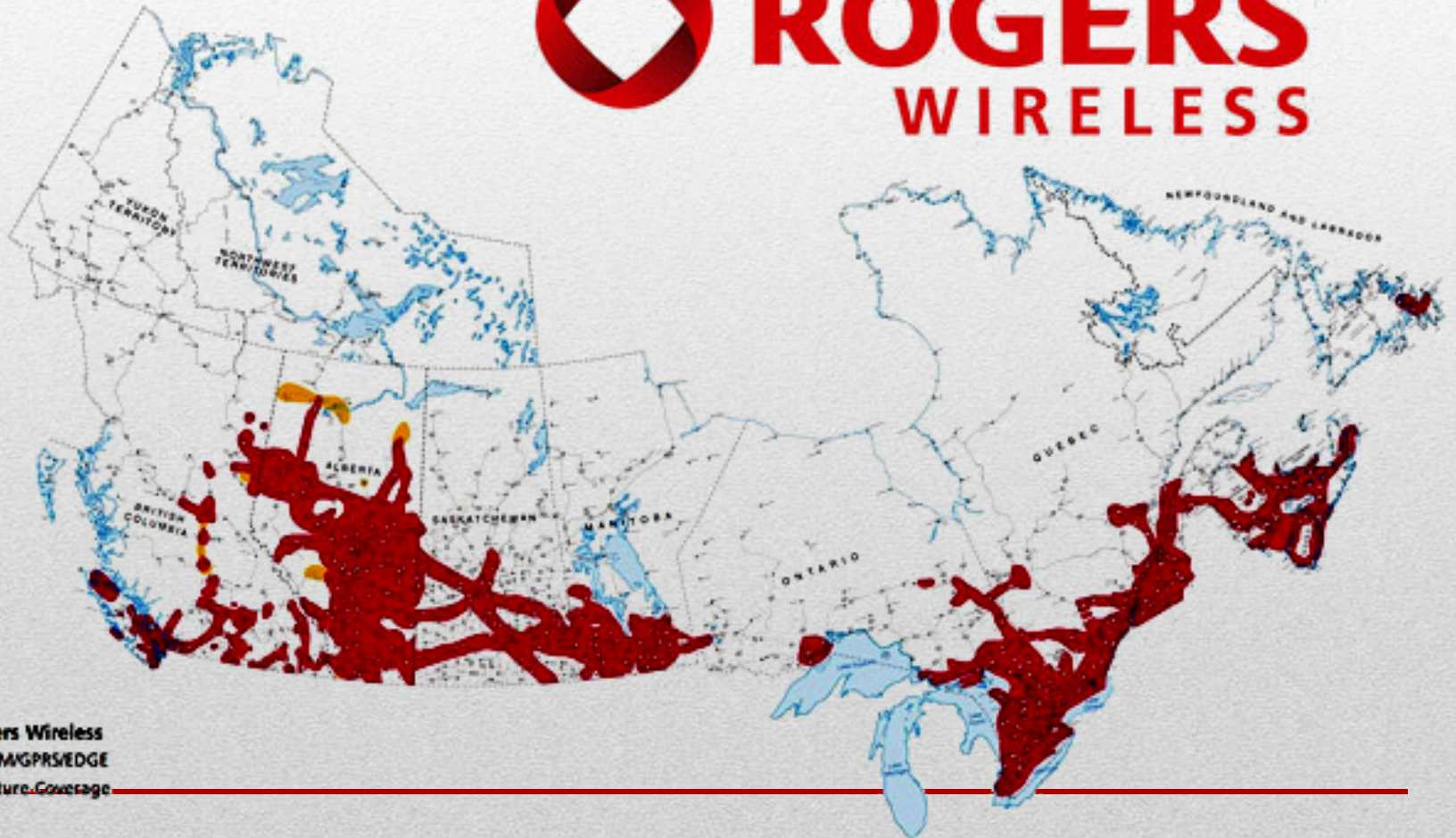
What is the function in a region? What acts as the node of functionality?

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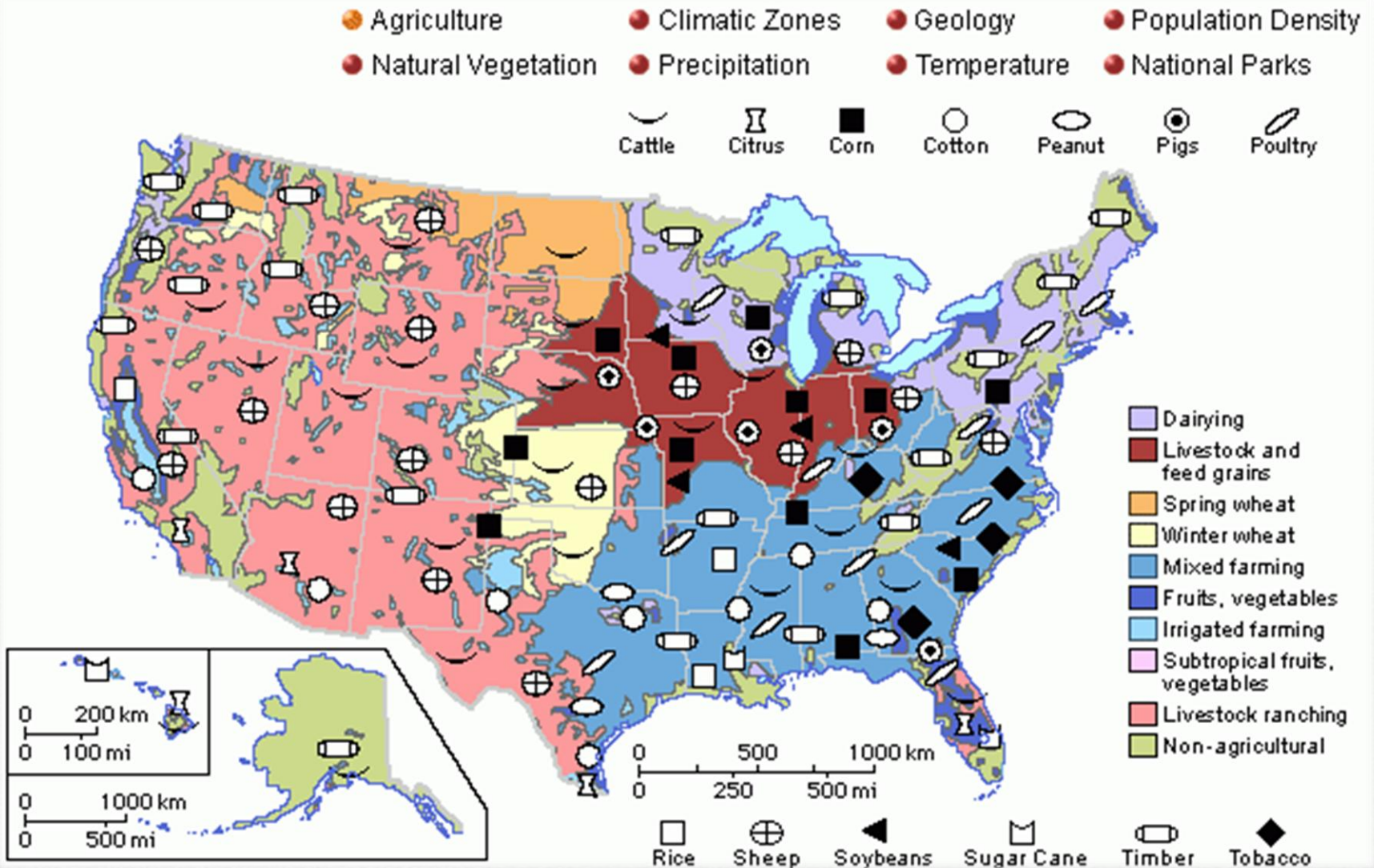
# Functional Region





# Functional Region

United States Agriculture Regions Map





# Vernacular Region

... **perceived** regions

...an intellectual invention

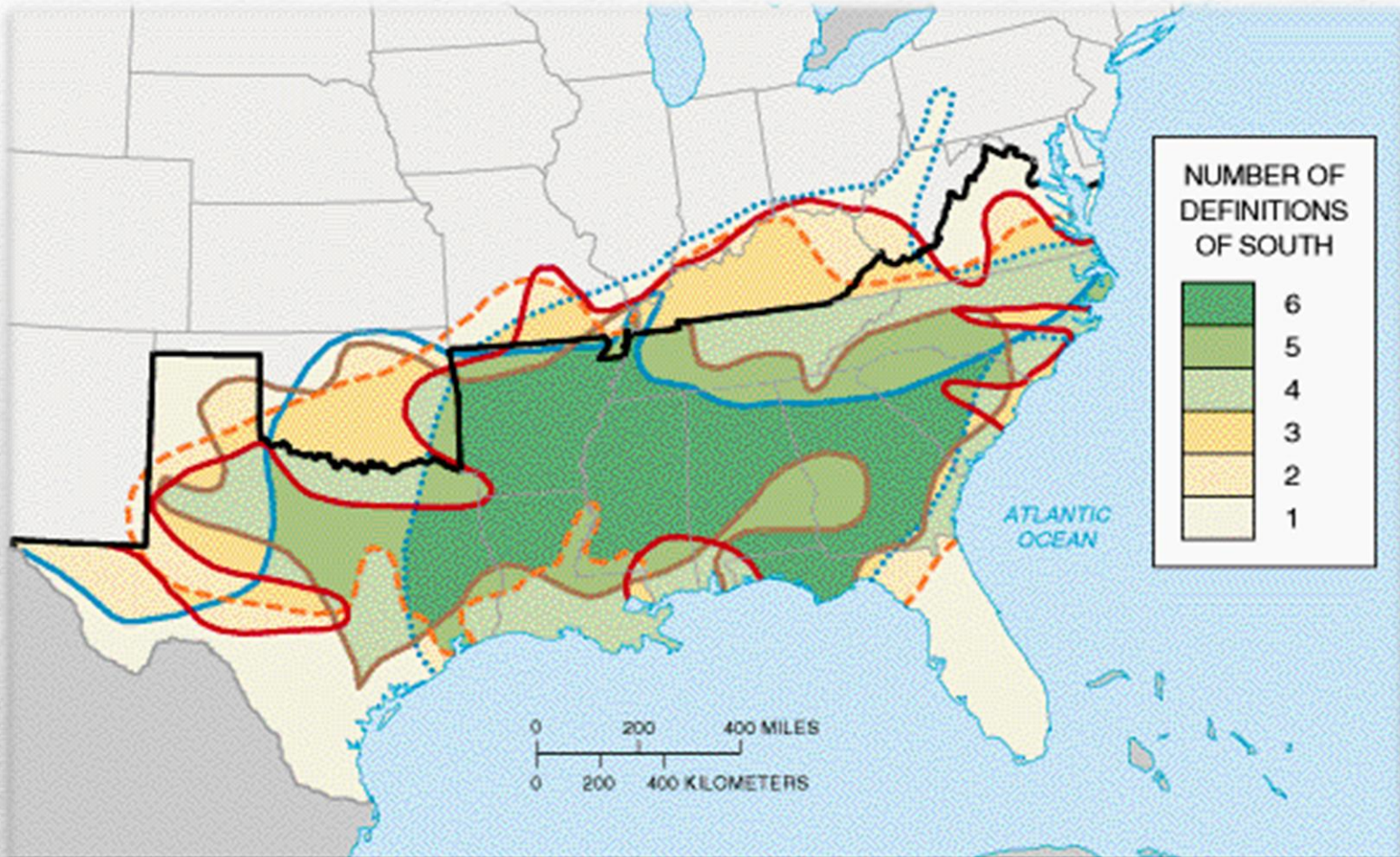
...a distinctive area where the inhabitants *collectively consider themselves interconnected* by a shared history, mutual interests and a common identity

...the sense of place that is revealed in ordinary people's language, attempting to understand the way people talk about their spatial environment and say where things are within it (more limited definition)

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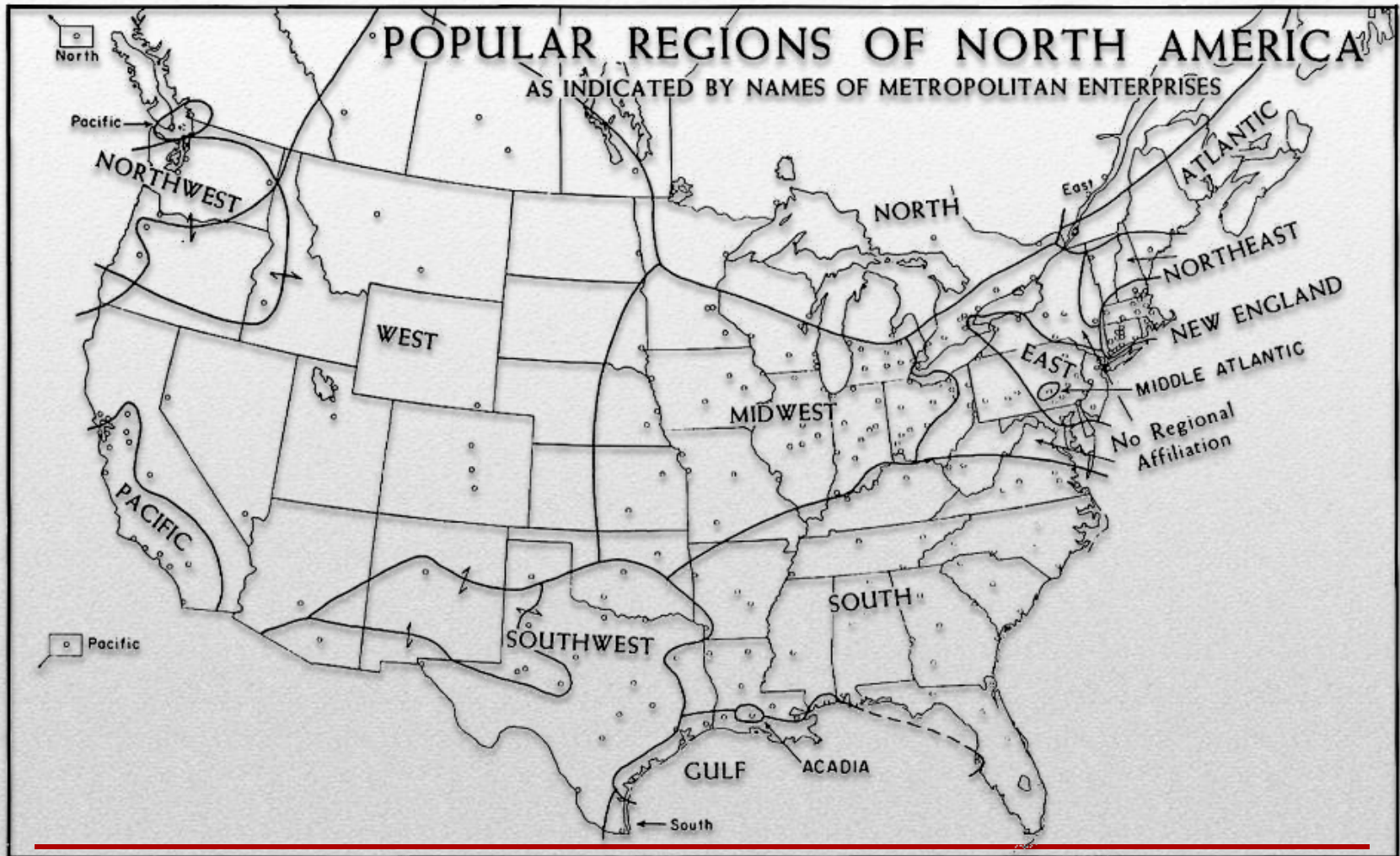
# Vernacular Region



- Confederate States
- Fewer than 50% high school graduates
- - - At least 50% Baptist
- Cotton producing area
- ..... Winter precipitation more than 50 cm (20 in.)
- Last frost in March



# Vernacular Region







# World Regions

- World regions are large-scale geographic divisions based on continental and physiographic settings that contain major clusters of humankind with broadly similar cultural attributes.
- The contribution of regional geography is to reveal how natural, social, economic, political and cultural phenomena come together to produce distinctive geographic settings.
- All regions and borders are political (**arbitrary**) and even though world regions are formal regions, they are subject to contestation and variation. (They're also subject to ignorance ... See the story below.)

## Nation Of Andorra Not In Africa, Shocked US State Department Reports:

The US gave billions of dollars in aid to the wealthy European state of Andorra, which it mistakenly assumed was a poor African state.



# World Regions





# North America



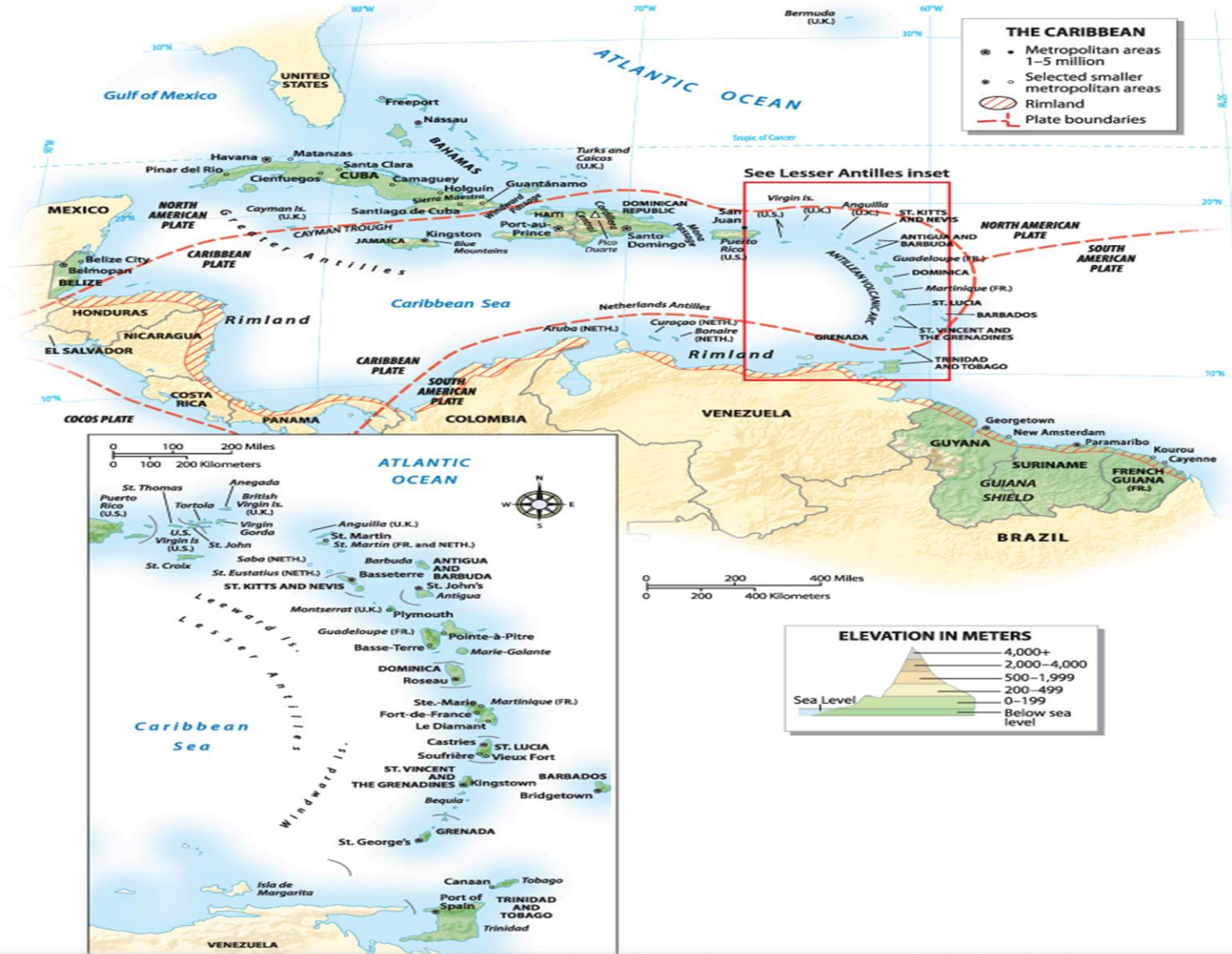


# North America

- Sometimes called Anglo America because of its ties to Britain, but North America is increasing its **cultural diversity** through globalization and immigration.
  - highly **developed** and **wealthy**
  - in stage 4 of Demographic Transition
    - low population growth
    - industrial, fuel, agricultural resources
    - postindustrial
-



# The Caribbean





# The Caribbean

- The Caribbean includes 26 states and dependent territories located in the Caribbean Sea.
  - **isolated proximity**
  - Europeans, then the US, influenced the region.
  - **Plantation agriculture** is important.
  - high population densities, environmental problems
  - **cultural diversity** greater than Latin America
  - economy based on tourism, offshore banking, manufacturing, exports (e.g., flowers).
  - wide **disparities in wealth**
-



# Latin America





# Latin America

- From the Rio Grande (Rio Bravo) in the north to Tierra del Fuego in the south
  - 21 states
  - **colonial landscape**: former colonies of Spain and Portugal, shared colonial history (Iberian: associated with the states of Spain and Portugal)
  - large, **multiethnic** populations ... indigenous peoples with Indian and African presence
  - **urbanization** among the highest in developing world
  - industrialization and development growth since 1960s
  - **natural resource extraction** remains important
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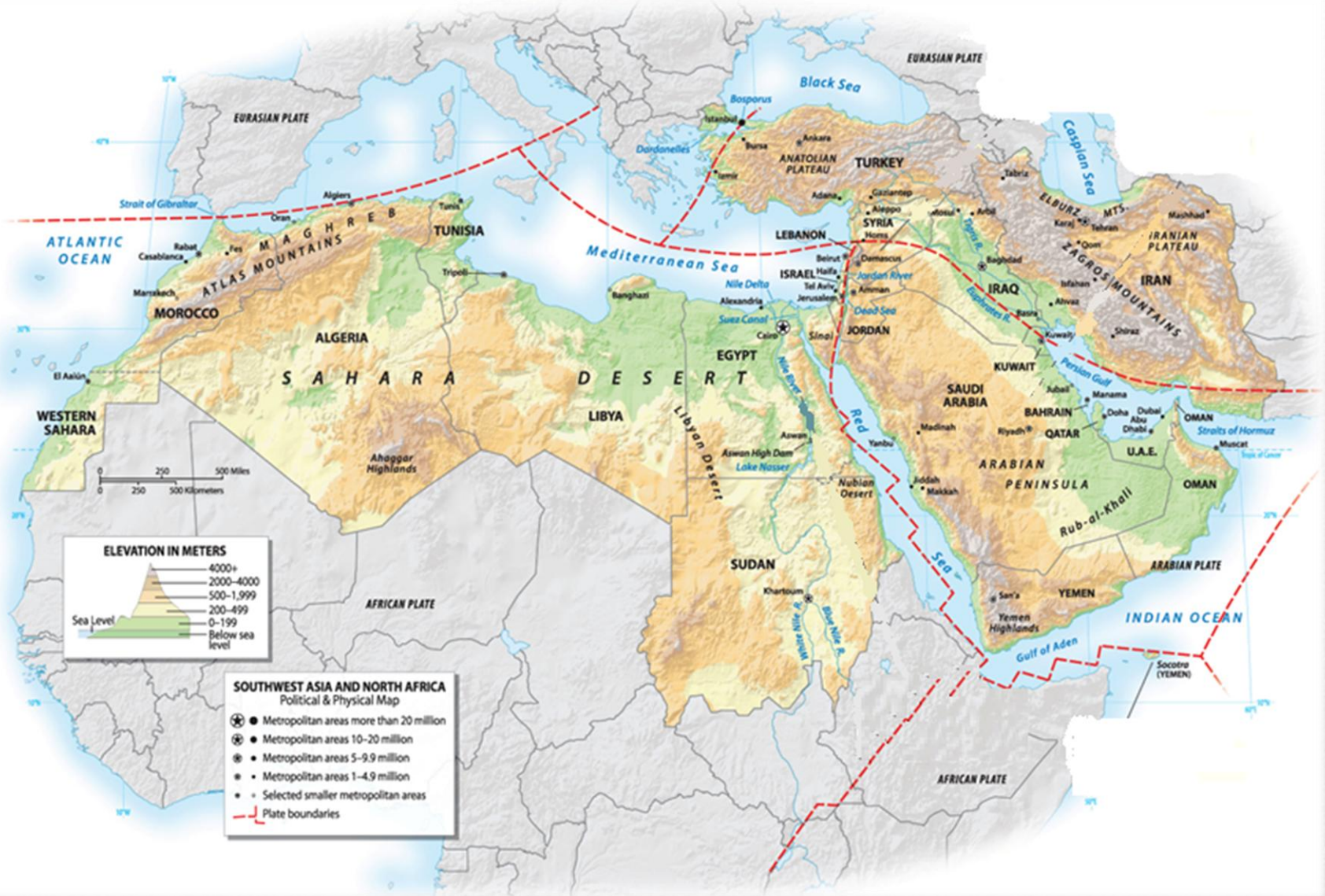


# Sub-Saharan Africa

- **unity** based on similar livelihood systems and shared colonial experience
  - a **culturally diverse** region
  - world's **fastest-growing** region
  - relatively **low economic output**
    - foreign aid helped improve agriculture, but led to large debt and corruption
-



# North Africa and Southwest Asia





# North Africa and Southwest Asia

- sometimes called the Middle East (a European perspective)
  - Region is generally **arid**, **Muslim** and contains **oil** (but this is not true of all states in the region).
  - This region is a **cultural hearth**: a region of many cultural innovations that subsequently diffused to other parts of world.
  - The development of the petroleum industry has had a large impact on the region.
  - OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries): member states profoundly influence global prices and production targets for petroleum.
  - **Islamic fundamentalism**: an aspect of Islam that advocates the return to more traditional practices, calls for the merger of civil and religious authority, and challenges the encroachment of global popular culture.
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# Europe





# Europe

- Europe is diverse.
  - different climates, landforms, agricultural output
  - 51 different states, with many different languages and cultures
  - long history of warfare, mostly along state lines
  - Europe is **globalizing**, was a major colonial power.
  - **European Union**, a supranational organization
  - cradle of the Industrial Revolution
  - **shared history amidst cultural diversity**
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# The Russian Domain





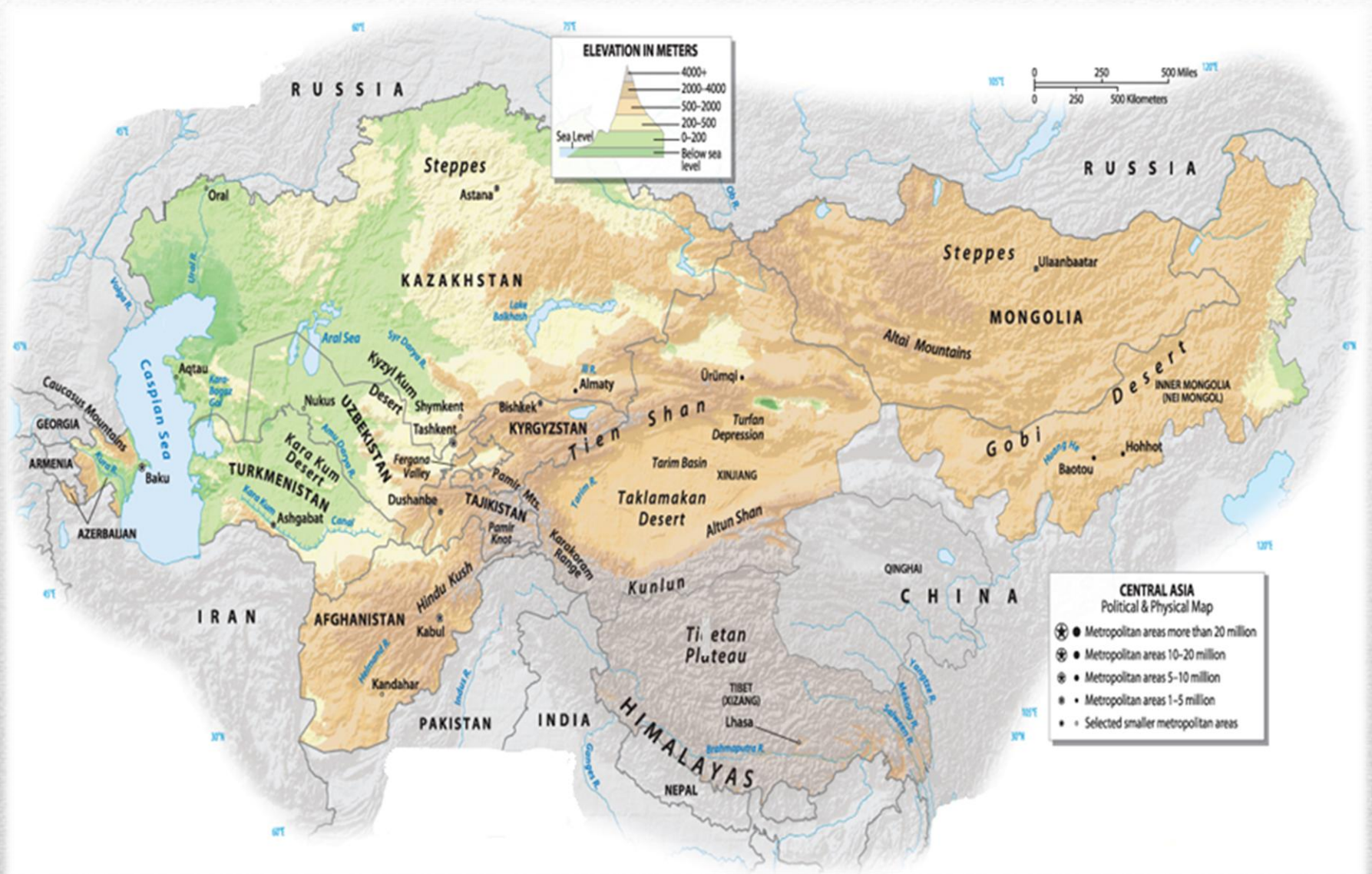
# The Russian Domain

- Russia is the **largest state** (in land area) on Earth; it spans 11 time zones.
    - rich in resources but one of the world's harshest climates
    - rapid political and economic change
    - persisting Russian influence in this region
  - The Russian Domain has had extremely **rapid political and economic change** since 1990.
    - from centrally planned economy to capitalism
    - from authoritarian dictatorship to democracy
    - region's economy is currently weak, commitment to democracy uncertain, nationalist movements threaten stability
    - Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and the Ukraine must all work on global relationships.
-





# Central Asia





# Central Asia

- large, compact, **remote** region within the Eurasian landmass
  - culture: **Turkish** languages and **Islam**
  - similar environmental settings
  - Until 1991, the region contained only two independent states, Mongolia and Afghanistan.
  - Soviet Union's breakup added several independent states to the region.
  - Historically, Central Asia has been **weakly integrated** into international trade networks.
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# East Asia



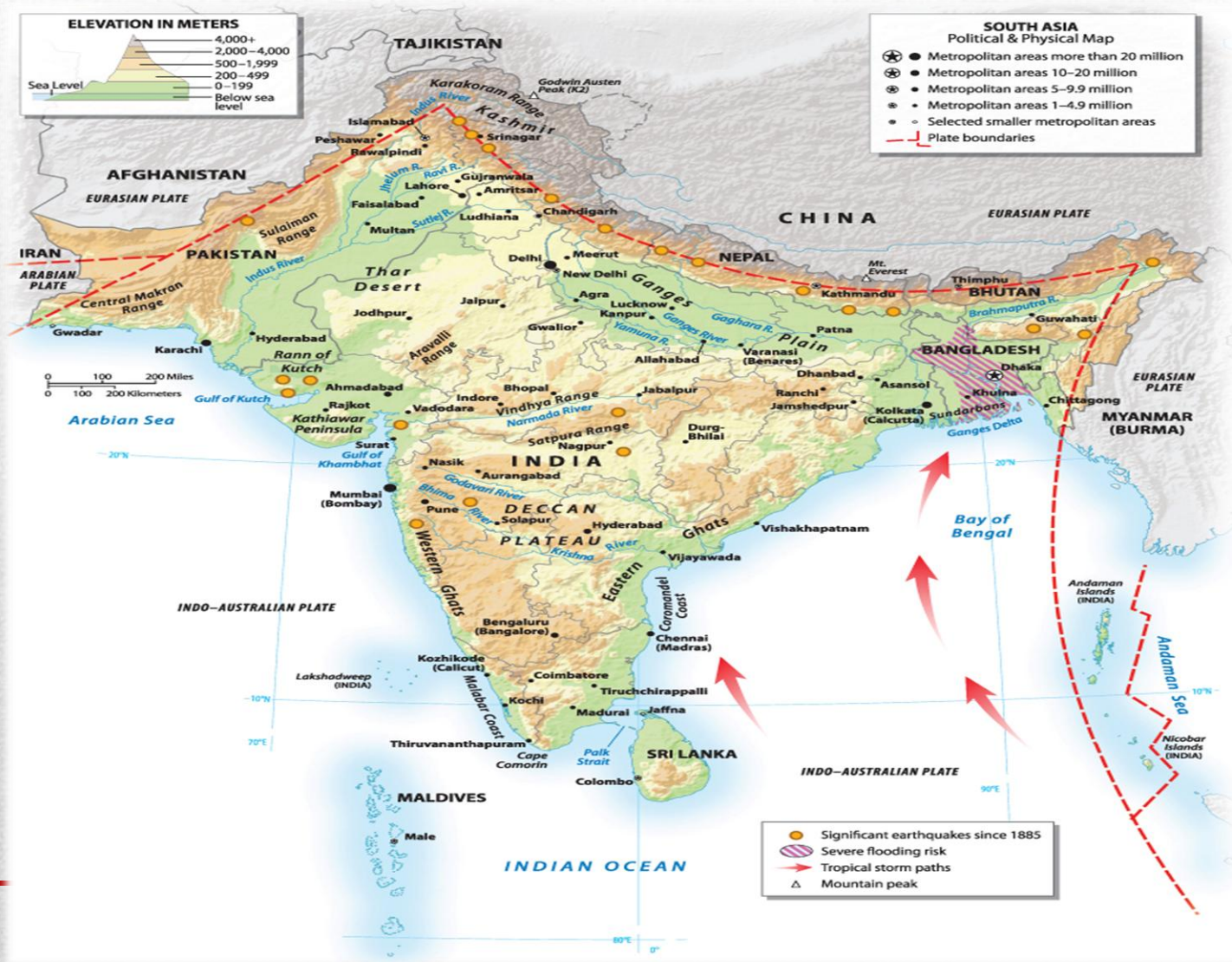


# East Asia

- East Asia is a **core area of the world economy** and an **emerging center of political power**.
  - East Asia is the world's **most populous** region, while China is the most populous state, with the oldest continuous national culture.
  - East Asia has experienced **colonization**, and has seen both internal and international **conflict**.
  - China and Japan have been rivals from time to time over the centuries.
  - Japan is extremely wealthy, but poverty may be found in parts of the region.
  - Japan, North and South Korea, and Taiwan share cultural similarities with the eastern part of China. The western part of China, however, does not fit this region as well.
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# South Asia





# South Asia

- *The Subcontinent* is a distinct landmass of Asia south of the Himalayan Mountains. There is extensive **cultural and religious diversity** in the region.
  - includes: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives
  - South Asia is the world's second most populous region and **growing**, raising concerns about food production keeping pace.
  - South Asia was a **British colony** for several centuries.
  - Since achieving independence in 1947, India and Pakistan have been embroiled in conflict; both states have nuclear weapons.
  - This region is one of the world's **poorest**.
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# Southeast Asia





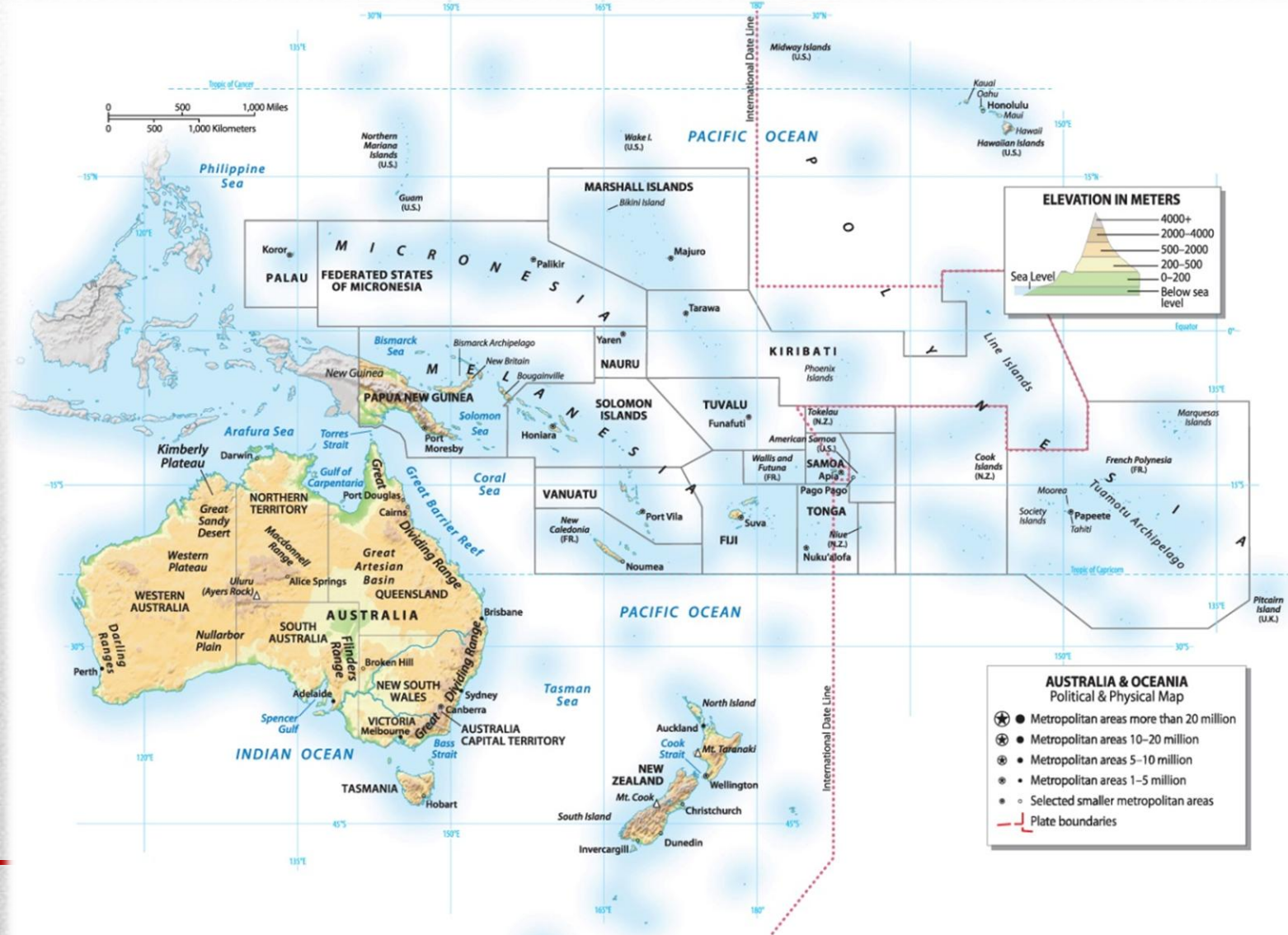
# Southeast Asia

- There is **considerable variation** in spatial extent, population, cultural traits and levels of economic and social development.
  - Southeast Asia illustrates both the promises and perils of globalization.
  - This region has long been **influenced by external sources** because of its resources and its strategic location.
  - Recent economic turmoil has come with increased **ethnic and social tensions** in many states in the region.
  - ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, has brought a new level of regional cooperation to the area with the goal that the states in the region will control – rather than be controlled by – external global forces.
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# Australia, New Zealand and Oceania





# Australia, New Zealand and Oceania

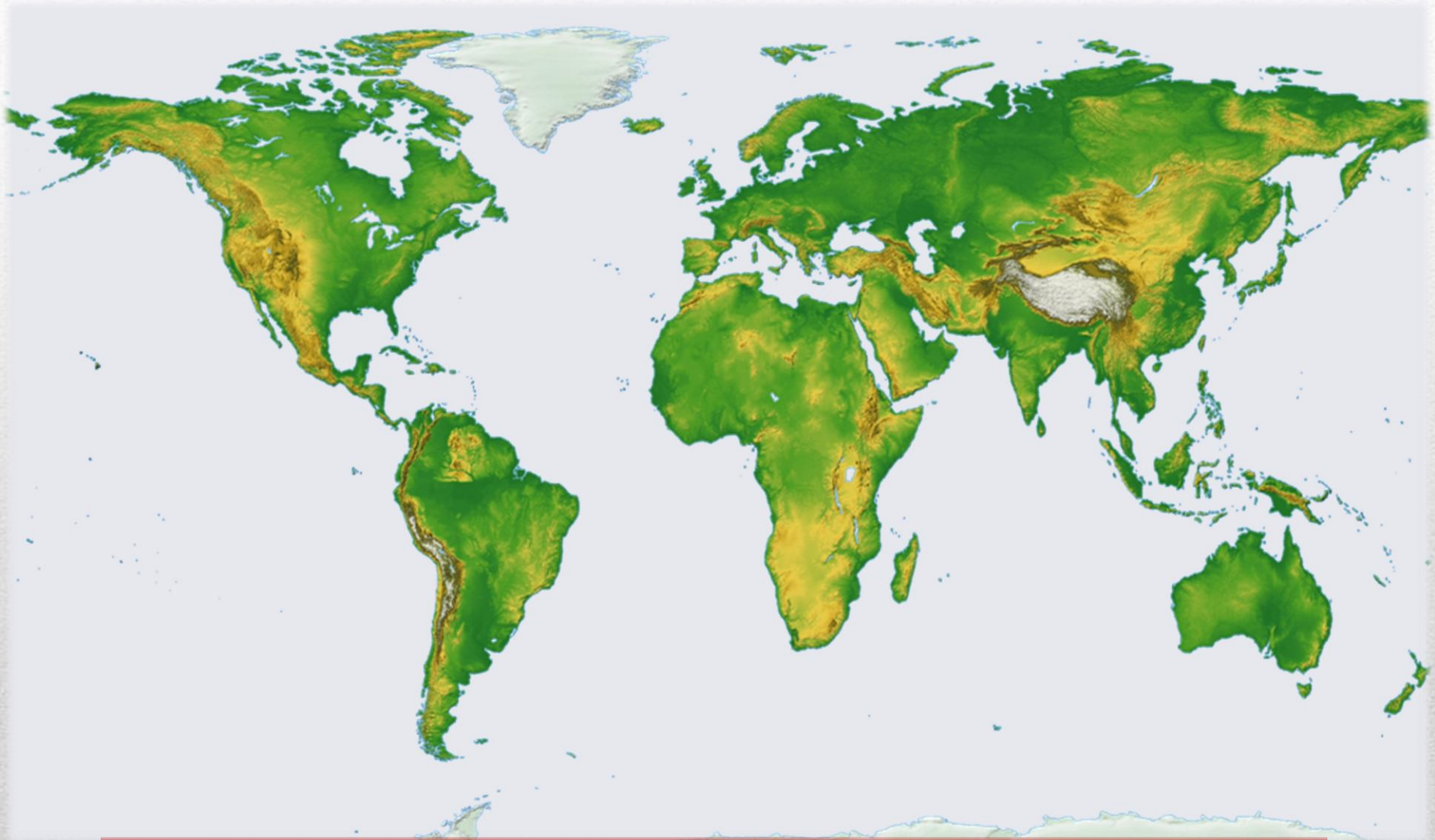
- The states in the region share elements of **indigenous and colonial history**.
- Australia, New Zealand and Oceania are dominated mostly by **water**.
- Oceania is a sweeping collection of islands reaching from New Guinea and New Zealand to Hawaii.
  - **Melanesia** - dark islands
  - **Polynesia** - many islands
  - **Micronesia** - small islands, west of Polynesia
- Political unrest in Fiji between Fijians and descendants of South Asian sugarcane workers illustrates the role of **globalization** in this region.
- The largest states in the region are Australia and New Zealand.





# On the map on the next slide, can you find...

- North America
  - The Caribbean
  - Latin America
  - Sub-Saharan Africa
  - North Africa and Southwest Asia
  - Europe
  - The Atlantic Ocean
  - The Russian Domain
  - Central Asia
  - East Asia
  - South Asia
  - Southeast Asia
  - Australia and New Zealand
  - Oceania
  - the Indian Ocean
  - the Pacific Ocean
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The End