Chapter 1A:
The European Realm
Geographical Features

- Realm of peninsulas & islands on Eurasian landmass
- Bounded by Atlantic, Arctic, & Mediterranean waters

*Europe’s Eastern Boundary*

- Undefined by clear physical boundaries
- Cultural boundaries are fuzzy & dynamic
- Textbook boundary: Russia’s western border
Geographical Features: Climate and Resources

- Wide range of natural environments
  - Climates influenced by position windward of moist Atlantic air
- Large & varied stores of raw materials
  - Consequence of varied natural environments
  - Helped fuel various stages of development
Geographical Features:  
**Landforms and Opportunities**

- **Physiography**: total physical geography
- 4 physiographic units:
  1. Central Uplands
  2. Alpine Mountains
  3. Western Uplands
  4. Northern European Lowland

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Geographical Features: Locational Advantages

- **Relative location** situated at the crossroads of the **land hemisphere**, or the half of the globe with the greatest land surface
  - Maximum efficiency for global contact
- Dense network of navigable rivers & canals
  - Aided contact within Europe & beyond
- **European interaction**
  - Close proximities & immense cultural diversity

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Ancient Europe

Ancient Greece and Imperial Rome

• Greece’s cultural & political foundations
  – City-states: small territories of cities & their hinterlands ruled by elected governments

• Rome’s political & urban system
  – Borrowed from Greeks, but expanded their empire & built a vast infrastructure network
Ancient Europe

Triumph and Collapse

• Roman political & economic spheres
  – System of rule over a vast area & peoples would continue as a European hallmark
    • *Local functional specialization*: people in particular places concentrate on specific goods & services
  – Spread of Roman culture: *Romance languages*, Christianity & political practices

• Collapse in 5th century AD allowed influx of diverse groups from elsewhere on Eurasia
Early Modern Europe

• Feudal turmoil of the “Middle” Ages where monarchies laid foundations of modern states
• European revival or *Renaissance* of 15th century in science, discovery & culture
• *Mercantilism* driven by exploration led the way for competition-driven capitalism & colonialism
• Social revolutions between aristocratic & newly wealthy merchants
• Rapid growth of cities, industry & population
Early Modern Europe

The Agrarian Revolution

• Growth in markets & population created economic opportunities for European farmers
• Changed landownership & farming practices

The City-States of Early Modern Europe

• Grew by agricultural output & expanding trade
• Dominated by merchant classes
• Found on the Mediterranean & Baltic coasts
Modern Historical Geography: The Industrial Revolution

• Industrial transformation of agrarian Europe

British Primacy
• Advantages: global influence & significant innovations at home

Diffusion Onto the Continent
• Eastward from Britain
• Followed belt of coal fields
EUROPE: SPREAD OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

- MIDLANDS: 1840s
  - London
- RUHR: 1850s
  - Paris
- SILESIA: 1870s
- DONBAS: 1880s

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Modern Historical Geography:  
**The Industrial Revolution**

- Industrialized society
  - Urban & population explosion

- Industrial cities became backbone of Europe’s population cluster
  - East-west industrial axis remains major feature of Europe’s population geography

![Europe Population Distribution: 2012 Map](image.png)

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Figure 1A-6
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Map Analysis Activity: *Interpreting Population Patterns*

1. Is there a relationship between physiography and population clusters?
2. What else explains the pattern of population clusters?
Political Revolutions

• Involved centralization of power into larger national territories into absolutist states

Competing Ideologies

• End of absolutism started with the French Revolution (1789–1795)
  – Uneven affects throughout Europe
• Introduced competing ideologies of liberalism, socialism, nationalism and fascism
  – Culminated in World War
Political Revolutions

A Fractured Map

• Legacy of feudal & absolutist periods
  – Territories were controlled by force, taxes & tribute
  – Marriages, alliances & wars further complicated

State and Nation

• Created form of political-territorial organization
  – Nation-state: state embodied by its cultural distinct population, or nation
  – Very few states today embody such an ideal
Cultural Diversity

• Diversity of ancestries & languages
  – Most belong to the **Indo-European language family**
  – English as *lingua franca*

• Religious strife
  – Historically between Catholics & Protestants
  – Today with the rise of Islam
Map Analysis Activity: 
Comparing Physiography & Language

1. Is there a relationship between physiography and language family regions?

2. What can be inferred about the diffusion of language across Europe’s physiography?
Contemporary Europe: A Dynamic Realm

Spatial Interaction

• Europe is unified as an enormous functional region that operates based on two principles:
  – Complementarity: as one area produces a surplus of a commodity that is required by another area
  – Transferability: ease with which a commodity can be transported by producer to consumer

• Creates a highly interdependent economic realm

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Contemporary Europe: A Dynamic Realm

A Highly Urbanized Realm

- The European *metropolis*, or central city plus suburban ring, has a long history
  - Focused on the *central business district (CBD)*, as the oldest commercial part
  - Wide & dense residential sectors radiate outward
  - Public transportation is well-developed
A Changing Population

Negative Natural Population Growth
• Shrinking population & below replacement fertility
  – Impacts workers whose taxes pay for social services

Immigration
• Partially offsetting population decline
• Changing once homogenous nation-states
  – Growth in Muslims clustered in cities & unassimilated

The Growing Multicultural Challenge
• Restriction of immigration & cultural differences
European Unification

- Forces at work:
  - *Centrifugal forces* contribute to social & political divergence that may break-up a state
  - *Centripetal forces* help to politically unify as a cohesive & stable entity

- European integration & unification
  - Triumph of *centripetal forces*
  - Proceeded after WWII
    - Effort to maintain stability, prosperity & security

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European Unification: Background

• Primary motive: rapid postwar economic recovery
  – Led by the United States with interest in:
    • Re-opening European markets for US goods
    • Securing Europe as a buffer against the USSR
  – European political considerations
    • Close political cooperation was necessary for peace

• Changing motives
  – Open market to compete globally with US & Asia
  – Maintain stability in an increasingly diverse society
European Unification: The Unification Process

- **European Union**
  - Example of *supranationalism*, a cooperative venture involving 3 or more states each giving up some sovereignty for mutual benefit
  - Several member state expansions: started at 6 in 1958 & is now 27 as of 2007
  - Parliament headquarters in Brussels, Luxembourg & Strasbourg
Regional Issue: How Desirable is Economic and Political Union?

**IN SUPPORT OF UNION**
- Opportunity to overcome divisions
- Development and prosperity will be more equitable
- Union is more economically powerful
- Political unification will aid global competitiveness

**IN OPPOSITION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION**
- Not a true democratic choice, was decided by the elite
- Economic inequity: high prices & cheap immigrant labor
- Development subsidies being squandered
- No such thing as “Europe”
Consequences of Unification: One Market

• Free movement of workers & goods
  – Requires harmonization of member state laws
    • Reduce legal barriers & remove internal borders

• Introduction of a single bank & currency: Euro
  – Signals strengthening unity in Europe
  – Helps to counter the global power of the US dollar
  – Some member states have chosen to opt-out
Consequences of Unification: A New Economic Geography

- Reduced effect of national boundaries
- Some subnational regions have become powerful engines of growth
  - *Four Motors of Europe:*
    1. Rhône-Alps
    2. Lombardy
    3. Catalonia
    4. Baden-Württemberg
Consequences of Unification: A New Economic Geography

- Policies of subsidies
  - Development of less prosperous subregions
  - Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) & farmers
- Uneven development
  - Major differences still persist between regions & within member states

Figure 1A-10
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Consequences of Unification: Diminished State Power and New Regionalism

- **Devolution**: centrifugal forces of regions or people within a state that demand & gain political strength at the expense of the state
  - Results when absolute sovereignty of the state over its territory erodes
  - states respond in a variety of ways, from suppression to accommodation
Map Analysis Activity: Context of New Regionalism

1. What relationships can be seen between the map, *Europe: Foci of Devolutionary Pressures, 2012* and the map, *Languages of Europe*?

2. How might the cultural context, such as language, influence a subnational region’s demands for devolution?
Defining Europe: Difficult Choices

Widening or Deepening?

• **Widening**: expand membership of the EU
  – Difficulty including uneven economies, disparate political systems & greater cultural diversity
  – Yet, negotiations with potential members continue

• **Deepening**: intensify policies & laws of the EU
  – Difficulty in maintaining & creating uniform laws
  – Rising “Euro-skepticism” & public resistance to deepening
Defining Europe: Difficult Choices

**The Remaining Outsiders**

- Negotiations with prospective members
  - Balkans
  - Europe’s “Far East”
  - Turkey
- EU demand for political, economic & social reform
- Cultural distinctions could impede membership

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Defining Europe: Difficult Choices

Once Again: In Search of Europe’s Eastern Boundary

• End of Cold War political divisions between West & East Europe
  – Economic contrasts remain
  – Historical ties between West & East also remain
• The eastward expansion of the EU might define this boundary in the future
Defining Europe: Difficult Choices

EU versus NATO

- North Atlantic Treaty Organization
  - Mutual defense alliance created in postwar, Cold War context
  - Partially overlaps with the EU, but includes non-EU, US, Canada & Turkey
  - Eastward expansion of members

• Today’s security needs:
  - Terrorism
  - “Rogue” states
  - Cyber war
Defining Europe: Difficult Choices

Impact of the Global Economic Crisis

• Economic woes:
  – Growth rates are down
  – Unemployment is up
  – Skyrocketing national debts
  – Eurozone bailouts

• Social-political consequences:
  – Polarization of national politics difficult for EU activities
  – Overall, benefit of Union widely questioned
  – Unskilled, unemployed immigrants drive negative economic indicators & become scapegoats
Defining Europe: Difficult Choices

Future Prospects of the EU

• Uncertain solvency of economic union & the euro
• Recurring structural challenges of supranationalism that occur with each widening & deepening effort
• Continuing struggles with uneven development & cultural diversity
• Addressing the “democratic deficit”

What do you think?

– Do you think political & economic power should be focused at the local, national or global scale? Why?