WORLD REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY

By Brett Lucas
Defining the Realm

SOUTHEAST ASIA – Part 1
A Geographic Overview

- Mainland and Insular physiographies
- Realm’s Giant: Indonesia
  - Size of area and population
- Borders of the realm:
  - India and China: source of immigrants, cultural infusion, economic interaction, and more

Concept Caching: Geography Textbooks and Atlases, Malang, Indonesia
Southeast Asia’s Physical Geography

- Part of the Pacific Ring of Fire:
  - 2004 undersea earthquake and *tsunami* of Indian Ocean.
  - Volcanic eruptions: some have provided a better understanding of the complex climate system.
- High relief realm dominates on both on mainland and insular regions.
Southeast Asia’s Physical Geography: Exceptional Borneo

- “Mini-continent” amid a mass of volcanic activity:
  - No volcanoes and negligible tremors
  - Slab of ancient crust uplifted above sea level and subsequently eroded

- Ecosystems:
  - Equatorial rainforests once a sanctuary to countless plant and animal species
  - Today, much destroyed by logging, roads, and farms
Palm-Oil Plantations and Deforestation

- Versatile palm oil
- Today, very lucrative agricultural crop
  - High yields and demand
  - Rising prices
- Plantation expansion single largest threat to tropical forests and habitat
- Pressures for sustainability
Southeast Asia’s Physical Geography: Relative Location and Biodiversity

- Destination for migrating species:
  - Animal and human migrations during shifting climactic periods or new modes of transportation
  - Known for its biodiversity: estimates that 10% of world’s plant and animals species are found there
Shifting Cultivation

- *Shifting cultivation* is also known as *slash and burn* or *swidden cultivation*

- To maintain soil fertility in these warm wet environments, farmers move their fields every 3 years or so, letting old plots lie fallow for 15 years or more

- The regrowth of forest on once-cleared fields not only regenerates the soil, it also absorbs significant amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere
Southeast Asia’s Physical Geography:
Four Major Rivers

- Lots of moisture
- Population distribution highlights relationship between people and rivers:
  - Not just for water and agriculture
  - Also as transportation arteries
- Coastal clusters at river deltas
Southeast Asia’s Physical Geography: Four Major Rivers

The Mighty Mekong

- Source in China’s Tibetan Plateau
- Borders five of the realm’s countries
- Supports farm and fishing livelihoods
- Upstream politics:
  - China’s dam projects
  - Managing flow volumes
  - Intra-realm development projects
Southeast Asia’s Physical Geography: Four Major Rivers

Rivers and States

- Other rivers in the realm are local:
  - Red River of Vietnam and its capital Hanoi
  - Chao Phraya River in Thailand and its capital, Bangkok
  - Irrawaddy River in Myanmar with its largest city, Yangon, sitting on the delta
Indonesia’s noteworthy Javan population cluster:

- More than half the country’s population
- Fertile volcanic soils, ample water and warmth
- Other clusters are fast-growing urban areas.
Population Geography: The Ethnic Mosaic

- Common stock with local ethnic/cultural groups
- Mainland spatial coincidence: major ethnic groups and political states
- Island nations ethnic groups
- In both, minorities present in remote peripheries:
  - Uplands or dense forests
Population Geography: Immigrants

- Some major ethnic minorities come from outside the realm
- South Asian peoples:
  - Some during European colonial period
  - Others from early Buddhist migrations
Population Dynamics

- All countries are nearing the last stage of the demographic transition, where births and deaths are low and growth is miniscule or slightly negative.
- Between one-quarter and one-third of the people are aged 15 years or younger.
- Brunei, Singapore, and Thailand have reduced their fertility rates; as a result, they will be coping with aging and shrinking populations.
Figure 10.18
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Population Geography: The Chinese

- Long history of migration out of China
- **Overseas Chinese** concentration in cities
  - Chinatowns
- Today the realm has more than half the world total:
  - Tensions with local ethnic majorities
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>THE CHINESE ARE TOO INFLUENTIAL!</strong></th>
<th><strong>THE CHINESE ARE INDISPENSIBLE!</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese were given privilege and separateness.</td>
<td>All minorities have troubles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese act on their own behalf, not as part of the country that they live and work in.</td>
<td>Others are resentful of Chinese resourcefulness and success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese exploit Southeast Asian opportunities and shared resources.</td>
<td>Chinese aloofness depends on the state context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese have made great contributions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Religions of Southeast Asia

- Historic crossroads of religions:
  - Hinduism and Buddhism from South Asia
  - Islam from Southwest Asia
- Leads to great cultural diversity:
  - Different countries trend toward one religious system, yet presence of other significant religious groups
- Much cultural expression has been through infusion of foreign elements

Concept Caching:
Hindu Balinese dancers of Ubud, Indonesia
Colonialism’s Heritage: How the Political Map Evolved

- Europeans arrived to a politically fragmented realm:
  - Mainland river basins and plains as well as the islands produced a cultural diversity of societies.

- European colonization involved “divide and rule:”
  - Out of that strategy they forged comparatively large, multicultural states.
  - Foreign intervention created the contemporary political map.
Colonialism’s Heritage: How the Political Map Evolved: The Colonial Imprint

**French Indochina**
- Southeast Asian empire called *Indochina*.
- *Indo-* referred to South Asian cultural imprints.
- Five French dependencies into three political states:
  - Vietnam
  - Laos
  - Cambodia
Colonialism’s Heritage: How the Political Map Evolved: The Colonial Imprint

**British Imperialism**

- **Burma:** part of the South Asian British Empire:
  - Not part of South Asian religious-borne partition
- **Malaya:** system of colonies and protectorates:
  - *Malaya* refers to the geographic area of the Malaysian peninsula.
  - Eventually became complex Malaysian Federation.
Colonialism’s Heritage: How the Political Map Evolved: The Colonial Imprint

Netherlands “East Indies”

- “Spice Islands”: Name came from lucrative spice commerce between Arab, Indian, and Chinese traders.
- Europeans’ great lengths to control the trade:
  - Spices to conserve food and add flavor
  - Very high demand, and thus very lucrative in Europe
- Jawa: the focus of Dutch colonial administration:
  - Dutch East India Company and the Dutch government extended influence over the smaller islands over time.
- Colonialism paved the way for creation of realm’s largest state.
Colonialism’s Heritage: How the Political Map Evolved: The Colonial Imprint

From Spain to the United States

- Spanish control of the Philippines:
  - Spread Catholicism and stave off Islamic incursions in the south
  - Manila: a profitable way-station in travel across the Pacific

- Spanish-American war:
  - Already the Spanish were facing indigenous uprising.
  - Spain forced to settle following the brief war:
    - Ceded the Philippines to the United States
    - Local revolt for a time, but ultimately unsuccessful
Southeast Asia’s Emerging Markets: Singapore’s Centrality

- Leading **node**, or point of connectivity to wider economic network:
  - Top-tier world city due to its international linkages and global influence

- Symbol of modernity:
  - Skyline, industries, and economic prowess

- Exceptional regional position:
  - Relative location for trade and shipping
  - Physiography with large and deep natural harbor
Southeast Asia’s Emerging Markets: Prospects of Realmwide Integration: ASEAN

- **ASEAN**, Association of Southeast Asian Nations:
  - Supranational organization with goals of realmwide political stability and increased regional integration
  - Constant challenges:
    - Diversity of its member-states: economic and cultural differences
    - Conflict between member-states: cultural contention and competing territorial claims
    - Environmental problems: realmwide pollution
Southeast Asia’s Emerging Markets:
Prospects of Realmwide Integration: ASEAN

- **AFTA**, the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement:
  - Organization’s expansion into the economic domain:
    - Lowering of tariffs has encourage a intra-realm trade boom.

- Realm and foreign spheres of influence:
  - Previously integrated into the Japanese empire and the yen bloc
  - Chinese global resurgence:
    - AFTA allows it to hold its own, somewhat
    - Integration via Chinese investment and infrastructure
Total Imports to ASEAN, 2008

- **United States**: 79,910.5
- **European Union**: 89,471.5
- **Japan**: 107,053.9
- **China**: 107,114.3
- **South Korea**: 40,541.5
- **Australia**: 17,907.9
- **India**: 17,379.3
- **Canada**: 5,128.6
- **Russia**: 6,913.2
- **Other countries**: 144,132.6
- **Intraregion**: 215,616.5

Thickness of arrow represents percent of total.
Figure 10.14b

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Value of Exports (in millions of U.S. dollars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>101,128.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Union</td>
<td>112,886.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>104,861.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>85,557.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>34,938.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>33,681.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
<td>5,416.9</td>
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<td>Russia</td>
<td>2,706.7</td>
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<td>Other countries</td>
<td>125,490.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intraregion</td>
<td>242,497.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Exports from ASEAN, 2008

Thickness of arrow represents percent of total.
Tourism

- International tourism is an important and rapidly growing economic activity in most Southeast Asian countries.
- By 2008 international visitors numbered more than 65 million.
- Close to 50 percent of tourists in ASEAN countries were from within the region.
- This is a positive trend because familiarity between neighbors lays the groundwork for various forms of regional cooperation.
Urbanization

- Southeast Asia as a whole is only 43 percent urban.
- The rural–urban balance is shifting steadily in response to declining agricultural employment and booming urban industries.
- The forces driving farmers into the cities are called the push factors (rising cost of farming).
- Pull factors, in contrast, are those that attract people to the city (abundant manufacturing jobs).
States and Boundaries

- Boundaries as invisible vertical planes extending into the air and below the ground:
  - Their most “tangible” feature is as lines on the map.

- Contracts between states:
  - Treaties contain the definition of boundary segments referring to landforms or specific terrain.
  - Surveyors translate descriptions into lines in a process called delimitation.
  - Finally, states mark stretches of their border with tangible barriers in a process called demarcation.
States and Boundaries: Classifying Boundaries

- **Types of boundaries:**
  - *Physiographic*: conform to elongated features of the natural landscape.
  - *Ethnocultural*: coincide with historic breaks or transitions in the cultural landscape.
  - *Geometric*: simple straight lines defined by endpoints.

- **History of realm’s boundaries:**
  - Most defined by European colonial powers.
  - Does more judiciously than elsewhere, but still cause problems.
States and Boundaries: Boundaries in Changing Times

- **Antecedent boundary**: existing before the cultural landscape emerged
- **Subsequent boundary**: evolved as the cultural landscape took shape
- **Superimposed boundary**: drawn across an existing cultural landscape, often with little consideration of pre-existing patterns

- **Relict boundary**: border that has ceased to function but for its evident imprint on the cultural landscape
**Territorial morphology**: the shape of a state’s territory:
- Affects a state’s condition and even survival

Five dominant territorial configurations:
- **Compact states**: near round or rectangular shapes with no major indentations
States and Boundaries:
State and Territorial Morphology

- **Protruded states**: substantial, usually compact territory with an extended peninsular corridor

- **Elongated states**: territorial dimensions where length is much greater than the average width; result in cultural and environmental transitions
States and Boundaries: State and Territorial Morphology

- **Fragmented states**: two or more territorial units separated by foreign territory or substantial body of water
- **Perforated states**: completely surrounded by the territory of another state; appear as a “hole” in another state
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HDI rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Estimated earned income, female, 2007 (PPP U.S.$)</th>
<th>Estimated earned income, male, 2007 (PPP U.S.$)</th>
<th>Female earned income as a percent of male earned income, 2007</th>
<th>Combined gross enrollment ratio in education (all levels), 2007</th>
<th>Combined gross enrollment ratio in education (all levels), 2007</th>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Brunei</td>
<td>36,838</td>
<td>62,631</td>
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<td>138</td>
<td>Burma (Myanmar)</td>
<td>640</td>
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<td>5163</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td>69.5</td>
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<td>133</td>
<td>Laos</td>
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<td>2455</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>64.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>7972</td>
<td>18,886</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>69.8</td>
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<td>105</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
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<td>4293</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>81.6</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>34,554</td>
<td>64,656</td>
<td>53</td>
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<td>87</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>6341</td>
<td>10,018</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>76.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>162</td>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>934</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>64.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>2131</td>
<td>3069</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>63.9</td>
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**Selected countries for comparison**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>34,996</th>
<th>56,536</th>
<th>62</th>
<th>96.9</th>
<th>88.1</th>
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<td>53</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>8375</td>
<td>20,107</td>
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<td>81.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>4323</td>
<td>6375</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>68.9</td>
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</tbody>
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