

CHAPTER THREE

Middle and South America



Middle and South America



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Figure 3-1 part 2
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I. THE GEOGRAPHIC SETTING

- ▶ Wide variation in latitudes
 - From Antarctica in the south to north of the tropics
- ▶ Wide variation in altitudes
 - Generally, highlands in the west, lowlands in the east

A. Physical Patterns

▶ Landforms

■ Highlands

- ▶ One continuous belt of mountains from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego
- ▶ Molten rock erupts from volcanoes
- ▶ Many Caribbean islands are volcanic in origin

Soufrière Volcano on Montserrat



Figure 3-4

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A. Physical Patterns

▶ Lowlands

- Stretch from the Andes to the Atlantic Ocean
- Amazon Basin: largest feature, drained by Amazon River system
 - ▶ 20% of world's fresh water
 - ▶ World's largest expanse of rainforest
- Interior of Amazon Basin home to some of the last relatively undisturbed indigenous people

The Amazon Lowlands



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A. Physical Patterns

▶ Climate

■ Temperature-Altitude Zones

- ▶ *Tierra caliente*: hot; tropical rain forests thrive; up to 3000 feet.
- ▶ *Tierra templada*: temperate; year-round spring like climate; 3000-6500 feet
- ▶ *Tierra fria*: cool; midlatitude crops; population centers; 6500-12,000 feet
- ▶ *Tierra helada*: frozen; some cultivation; snow and glaciers; above 12,000 feet

Temperature-Altitude Zones

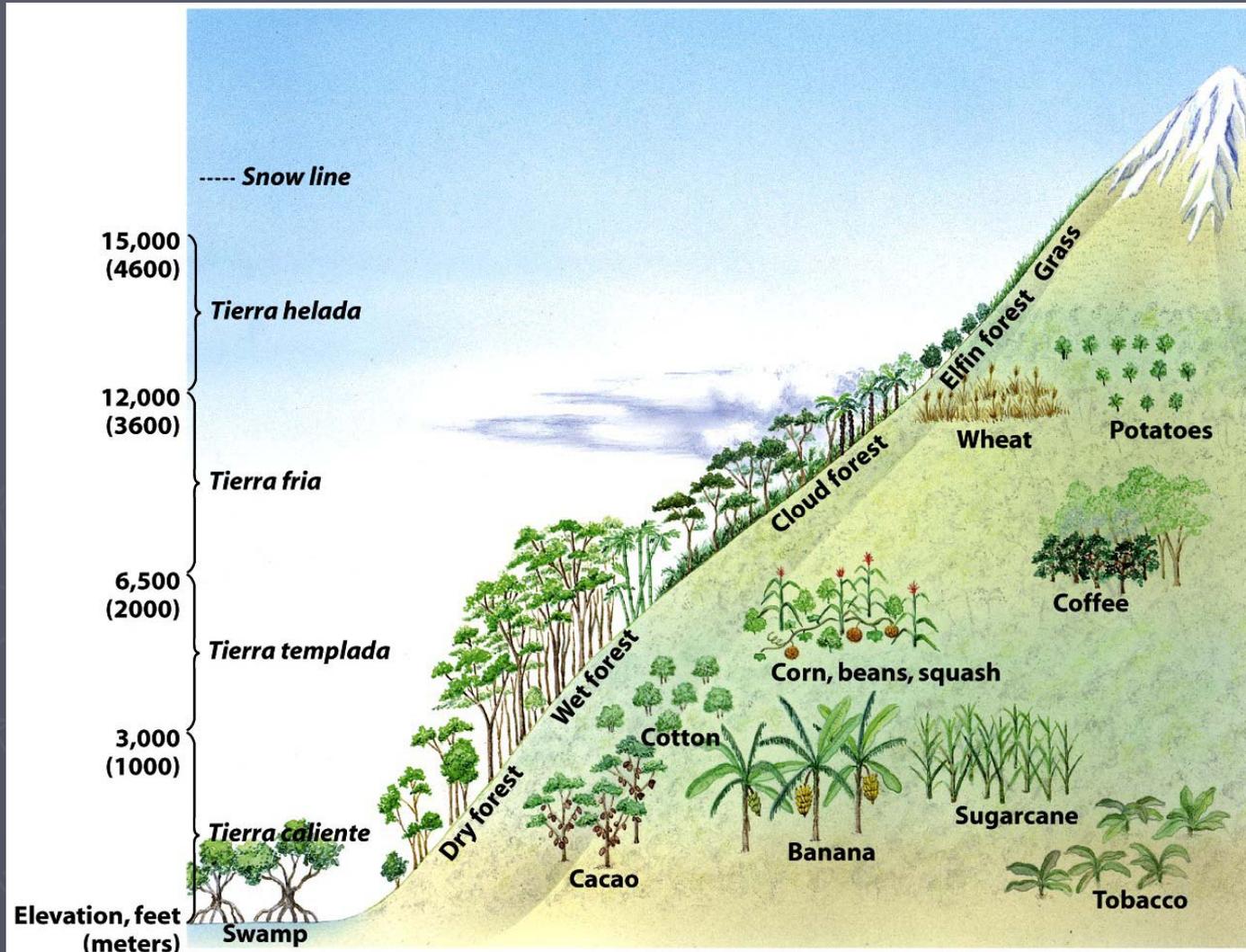


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A. Physical Patterns

▶ Precipitation

- Trade winds: come in from Atlantic, bringing seasonal rains at the equator
 - ▶ Hurricanes during summer and fall
- Winds from Pacific blocked by Andes
 - ▶ Also, cold Peru Current doesn't hold moisture
 - ▶ When changing direction "El Niño"

B. Human Patterns Over Time

- ▶ The Peopling of Middle and South America
 - Reached Tierra del Fuego 30,000-13,000 years ago
 - 50-100 million people by 1492 in advanced societies
 - ▶ Irrigation, terracing, urban sewers, shifting cultivation
 - Aztecs: Highly organized empire of Mexico
 - ▶ Higher standard of living than Europe
 - Incas: Largest empire of Americas, on west coast of South America

Incan Terraces



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B. Human Patterns Over Time

▶ European Conquest

- Within 40 years of Columbus, all population centers in region subjugated
- Superior military technology
- Vulnerability to disease
 - ▶ Smallpox, measles
- Within 150 years, total population of Americas reduced by 90%
 - ▶ Beginning of slave trade

B. Human Patterns Over Time

- ▶ A Global Exchange of Crops and Animals
 - European crops: rice, sugarcane, bananas, citrus, melons, onions, apples, wheat, barley, and oats
 - American crops: potatoes, manioc (cassava), corn, peanuts, cacao, peppers, pineapples, and tomatoes
 - European animals: sheep, goats, oxen, cattle, donkeys, horses, and mules

Spanish and Portuguese Trade Routes, circa 1600



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B. Human Patterns Over Time

- ▶ The Legacy of Underdevelopment
 - Today, 30% of the people lack land, education, and food/shelter; a small elite class is very wealthy
 - ▶ Mercantilism: export-based economy, based on resource extraction from colonies
 - ▶ Anti-colonial revolts replaced far-away elites with local ones (creoles and mestizos)
 - ▶ Economies largely remain oriented to exporting of resources

Colonial Heritage of Middle and South America



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C. Population Patterns

- ▶ Major migration
 - Rural to urban
- ▶ Population Distribution
 - No relationship between population and physical landforms
- ▶ Population Growth
 - Fast, but some countries are going through demographic transition (contraception)

Population Distribution



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C. Population Patterns

▶ Migration and Urbanization

- Crowded cities result from rural-urban migration
 - ▶ 75% urbanization rate
 - ▶ Lack of infrastructure, housing
- Primate cities: over $\frac{1}{4}$ of country's population
 - ▶ Leads to overcrowding, anti-rural bias in government policy
 - ▶ Squatters: colonias, barrios, favelas, or barriadas

Overurbanization

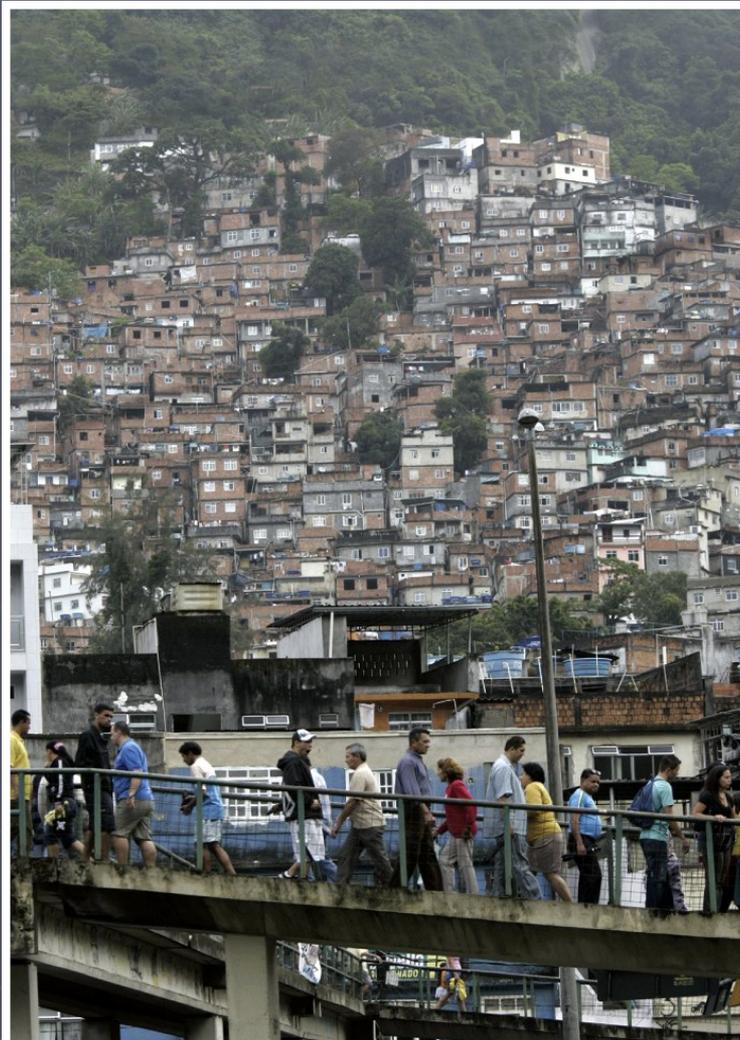


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II. CURRENT GEOGRAPHIC ISSUES

- ▶ Power and wealth in the region was concentrated in colonial elites
- ▶ Remains so today despite:
 - Economic modernization
 - Urbanization
- ▶ Assumption of huge government debts during 1970s and 1980s
 - No economic benefit
 - Supported by taxes on the poor

A. Economic and Political Issues

- ▶ Not as poor as other regions (sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia)
 - Widest income disparity in the world
 - Wide disparity inhibits development, political stability
- ▶ Globalization has benefited urban middle-class and elites rather than working class

Income Disparity

TABLE 3.2 Income disparity in selected countries^a

Ratio of wealth of richest 20% to wealth of poorest 20% ^b			
Country	1987	1998–2000 ^c	2005
Middle and South America			
Bolivia	9:1	12:1	12:1
Brazil	26:1	29:1	26:1
Chile	17:1	19:1	19:1
Colombia	20:1	20:1	23:1
Guatemala	30:1	16:1	24:1
Mexico	16:1	17:1	19:1
Peru	12:1	12:1	18:1
Other selected countries			
China	8:1	8:1	11:1
France	6:1	6:1	6:1
Jordan	6:1	6:1	6:1
Philippines	10:1	10:1	10:1
South Africa	33:1	18:1	18:1
Thailand	8:1	8:1	8:1
Turkey	8:1	8:1	8:1
United States	9:1	9:1	8:1

^aThe UN used data from 1987, 1998 to 2000, and 2005 on either income or consumption to calculate an approximate representation of how much richer the wealthiest 20 percent of the population is than the poorest 20 percent in selected countries. The lower the ratio, the more equitable the distribution of wealth in the country.

^bDecimals rounded up or down.

^cSurvey years fall within this range.

Source: *United Nations Human Development Report 2000*, Table 13; *2003*, Table 13; *2005*, Table 15.

Table 3-2

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A. Economic and Political Issues

- ▶ Phases of Economic Development
 - The Early Extractive Phase
 - ▶ Colonialism, haciendas, plantations
 - The Import Substitution Industrialization Phase
 - ▶ Nationalization of industry; land reform
 - The Current Structural Adjustment Phase
 - ▶ Free Trade Zones, maquiladoras

A. Economic and Political Issues

► The Informal Economy

- Causes: Canceled subsidies; reduced government jobs; recession; underemployment; losses in real wages
- Positive effects: Workers support their families; lower prices; conservation of resources; promotes entrepreneurialism
- Negative effects: Workers pay bribes instead of taxes; no recourse to law

A. Economic and Political Issues

▶ Regional Trade and Trade Agreements

- NAFTA: U.S., Mexico, Canada
- Mercosur: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela
- FTAA: U.S. attempt to create hemispheric free trade bloc

▶ Mixed record: increases income inequality, yet helps economies achieve more economic independence

A. Economic and Political Issues

- ▶ Global Free Trade Issues as Seen from Middle and South America
 - Recent opposition to free trade talks
 - Perceived hypocrisy of the G8
 - ▶ Promotion of free trade while practicing protectionist policies for endangered industries

WTO Protest in Cancún



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A. Economic and Political Issues

▶ Agriculture and Contested Space

- Large-scale, absentee-owned, export-oriented agriculture promoted
 - ▶ Smaller farmers are often squeezed out
- Resistance by rural farmers
 - ▶ E.g., Zapatistas, Movement of Landless Farmers

A. Economic and Political Issues

▶ Is Democracy Rising?

- All countries in the region except Cuba have democratically elected governments
- Some threatened with coups d'état
 - ▶ Policies unpopular with the masses, powerful elites, or the United States
 - ▶ Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia, and Bolivia
- Democracy fragile and not necessarily transparent

First Indigenous President in



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A. Economic and Political Issues

▶ Political corruption

- Bribes and kickbacks widespread, undermining faith in government

▶ Drug Trade

- Undermines democracy and rule of law
- Central America and northwestern South America
- U.S. attempts to stanch the flow of drugs are largely a failure, as evidenced by falling prices of cocaine

Geography of Cocaine

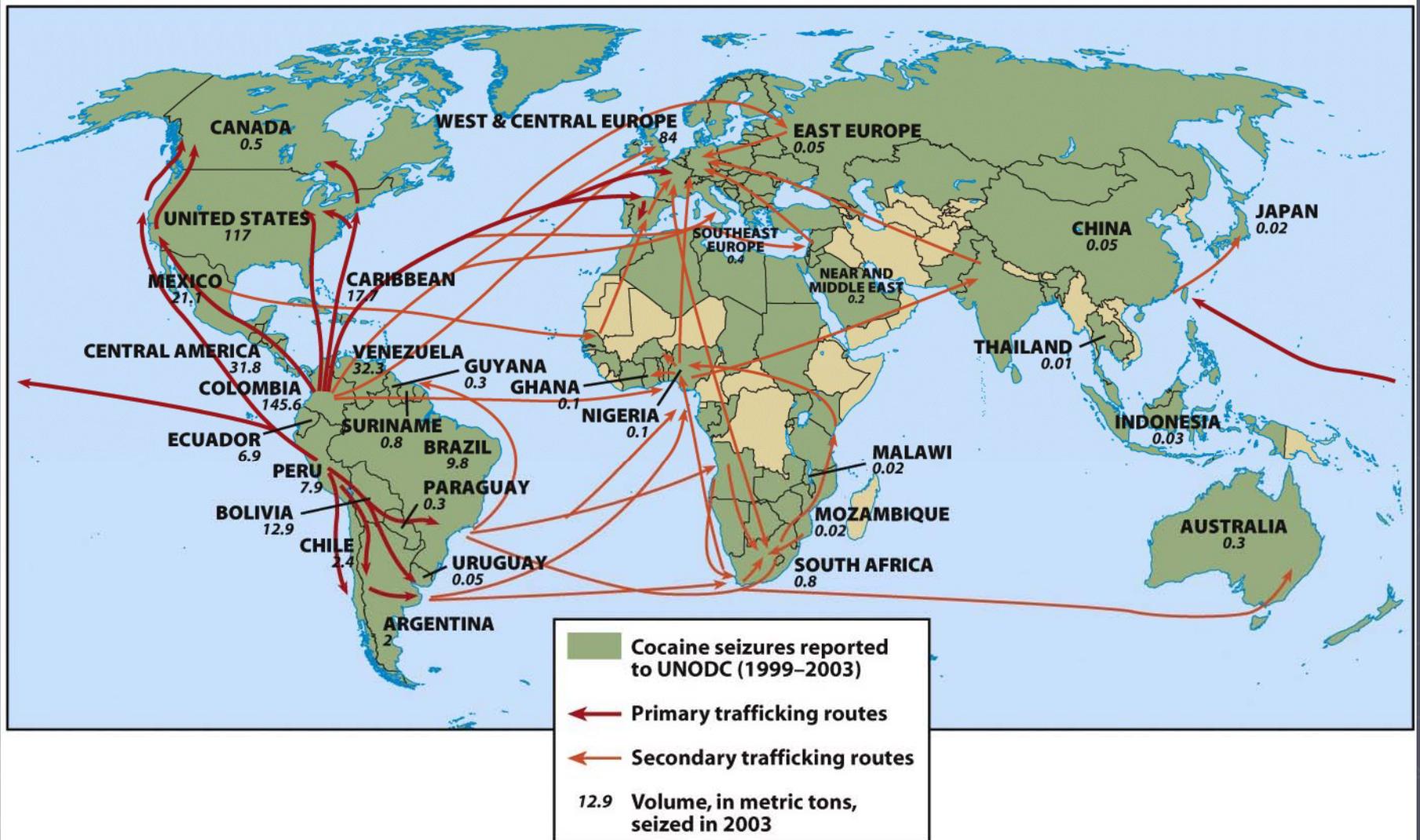


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A. Economic and Political Issues

- ▶ U.S. Involvement in the Region's Politics
 - Monroe Doctrine: protecting American business and political interests
 - ▶ Recently, U.S. interventions in: Cuba, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Chile, Panama, and Venezuela
- ▶ Political Impacts of Information Technology
 - Used by activists to organize
 - More "online and wired" than many regions
 - ▶ Especially the Caribbean
 - ▶ Brazil 10th in the world in Internet users

B. Sociocultural Issues

▶ Religion in Contemporary Life

- Roman Catholic Church historically dominant
 - ▶ Partnered with Spanish and Portuguese colonists
 - ▶ Encouraged colonized to accept their low status, obey authority, and postpone rewards until heaven
- Over time, Catholicism connected more with poor, less with elites
 - ▶ Liberation Theology: Catholic activists teaching redistribution of wealth

Religion in Middle and South America



1700

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2002

Figure 3-31b
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B. Sociocultural Issues

▶ Evangelical Protestantism

- Imported from North America
- Fastest growing religion in region
 - ▶ About 10% of Christians
- “Gospel of Success”
 - ▶ Theology that those blessed by God will have prosperity in this life
 - ▶ Has led to increased social mobility but declining class-consciousness

C. Environmental Issues

- ▶ Human settlement always had consequences for the environment
- ▶ Today, more severe because of growth in:
 - Population

III. SUBREGIONS OF MIDDLE AND SOUTH



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A. The Caribbean

- ▶ Disparity between tourist image and reality
 - Still, strong record of human well-being
- ▶ Turn from plantation agriculture to tourism, resource processing
- ▶ Contrasts:
 - Cuba vs. Puerto Rico
 - Haiti vs. Barbados

Haiti vs. Barbados



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B. Mexico

- ▶ Working towards middle-income status
 - Remittances from workers in USA
 - ▶ \$20 billion in 2005
 - ▶ Temporary migrants, most return home
 - Service sector dominates (70% of GDP)
 - ▶ Tourism on coast, urban services
 - Maquiladoras (27% of GDP) focused on U.S. border towns
 - ▶ Cheap labor, few regulations

Maquiladora Workers



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C. Central America

- ▶ More agricultural
 - Limited land ownership → income disparity
 - Costa Rica: unusually egalitarian
- ▶ Most people indigenous or ladino (mestizo)
- ▶ Class conflict coincided with Cold War
 - Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador

Minifundios



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D. Northern Andes and Caribbean Coast

- ▶ The Guianas: Creole societies
 - Plantations and resource-based economies
 - Asian and African labor leads to diversity
- ▶ Columbia and Venezuela: Mestizo societies
 - Oil in Venezuela
 - ▶ Chavez and populism/socialism
 - Drug insurgency in Colombia
 - ▶ Attempts to wipe out drug production lead to civil war

Chess in Cartagena, Colombia



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E. Central Andes

- ▶ Poorest subregion; largest indigenous pop.
 - Agriculture along coast (mestizo, African)
 - Altiplano: potato farming, mining, sheep
 - Amazon basin: resource extraction
 - ▶ Altiplano and Amazon: home to indigenous pop.
- ▶ Increasing political role by indigenous
 - Bolivia: first indigenous president in Americas

Traditional Ecuadorean Food



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F. The Southern Cone

- ▶ Largely European populations
- ▶ Service-oriented economies
 - Strong role for agriculture in identity (Pampas)
- ▶ Class conflict coincided with Cold War
- ▶ Buenos Aires
 - Primate city, once world city
 - Now suffering from restructuring, loan default

G. Brazil

- ▶ 184 million people; vast income disparity
 - Same land area as USA
- ▶ Largest regional economy; 8th largest in world
 - Gold, silver, gems, titanium, manganese, iron
 - Highly industrialized → southeast
 - Shantytowns (favelas) result from urbanization
- ▶ Brasilia: forward capital

Umbanda Ceremony



Figure 3-50

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