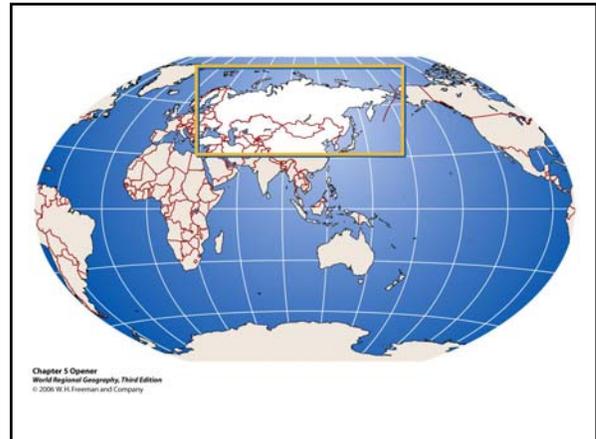


Lydia Mihelic Pulsipher • Alex Pulsipher

World Regional Geography
Third Edition

Chapter 5:
Russia and the Newly
Independent States

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I. THE GEOGRAPHIC SETTING
A. Physical Patterns

- The formal name used in this chapter is Russia and the newly independent states
- Russia contains more than 30 internal republics

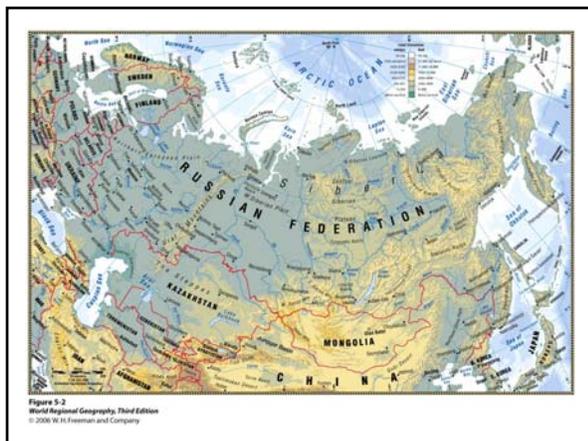


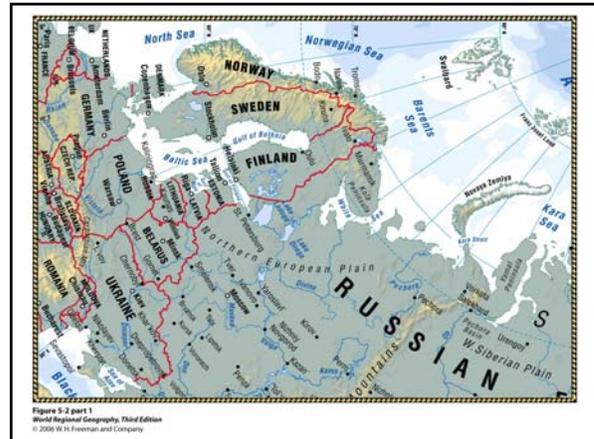
TABLE 5.5 *Countries of the world by descending area size*

| Country | Area | |
|---------------|--------------|-------------------|
| | Square miles | Square kilometers |
| Russia | 6,592,819 | 17,075,401 |
| Canada | 3,849,670 | 9,970,645 |
| United States | 3,717,796 | 9,629,092 |
| China | 3,696,100 | 9,572,899 |
| Brazil | 3,300,154 | 8,547,399 |
| Australia | 2,988,888 | 7,741,220 |
| India | 1,269,340 | 3,287,590 |

Source: 2000 World Population Data Sheet (Washington, D.C.: Population Reference Bureau.)

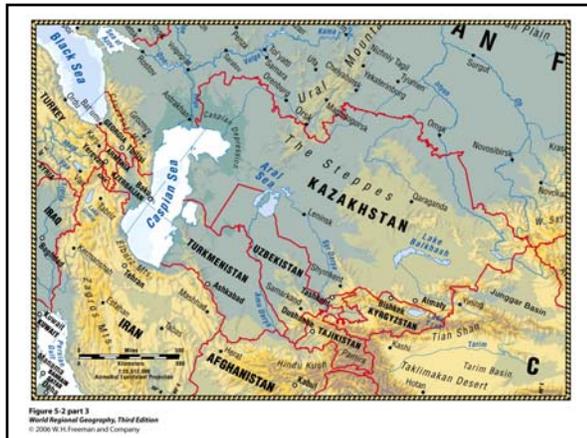
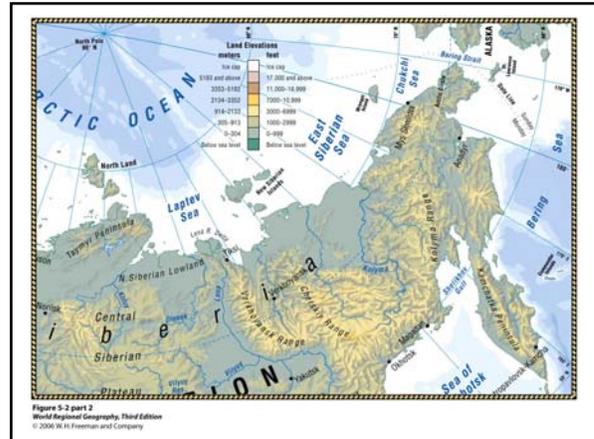
Physical Patterns

- **Landforms**
 - The North European Plain extends into the western portion of this region. This plain comprises European Russia and is the most densely populated area of the region.
 - The Ural Mountains, running roughly north to south, form the traditional border between Asia and Europe. These mountains have never formed a major barrier to human movements.
 - The West Siberian Plain is the largest plain in the world with its marshy lowland and extensive oil reserves. This plain is underlain by permafrost, and much of the native animal life breeds in the tundra.



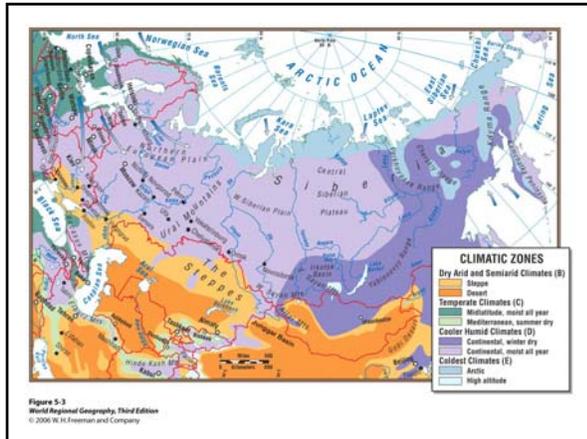
Physical Patterns

- **Landforms**
 - The Central Siberian Plateau and the Pacific Mountain Zone, lying further east, equal the size of the United States.
 - The Kamchatka Peninsula, the easternmost extent of this region, is a land of volcanic activity.
 - To the south lie arid grasslands, which are in turn bordered on their southern flank by a wide, curving band of mountains including the Caucasus, Elburz, Hindu Kush, Tien Shan, and Altai mountains. These mountains form a barrier to warm moist air generated off the Indian subcontinent but are not a barrier to cultural diffusion.



Physical Patterns

- **Climate and Vegetation**
 - This region is a prime example of continental climate with long, cold winters and short, hot summers.
 - Sufficient rain reaches the extensions of the North European Plain and the Caucasian republics, making them important agricultural subregions.
 - The soils of this region are generally poor except for the area extending from Moscow south to the Black and Caspian seas. These chernozem soils are very fertile.



Physical Patterns

- Climate and Vegetation

- East of the Urals, precipitation comes generally from the east and the land is covered by huge expanses of taiga forest. Agriculture is not possible because of the cold climate and poorly drained soils.
- East of the Caucasus, the lands of Central Asia support large-scale cultivation only when irrigation is adequate.



B. Human Patterns Over Time

- As the Russian Empire conquered new and distant lands, Russian cultural influence was introduced into the subjugated areas. At the breakup of the Soviet Union, the process of Russian expansion was reversed.

Human Patterns over Time

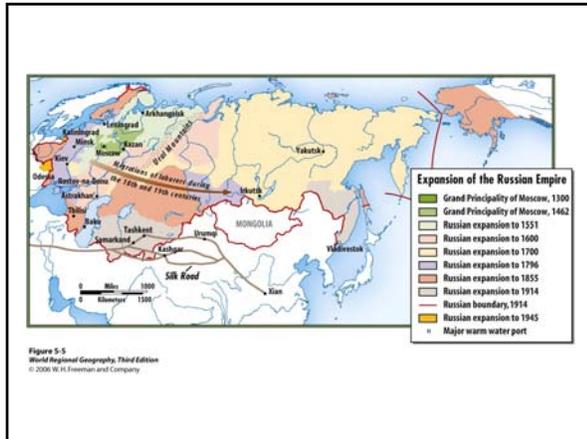
- The Rise of the Russian Empire

- The Slavic ethnicity emerged between 720 and 860 A.D. when trade developed between Scandinavia, Constantinople, and Baghdad via the Volga River.
- Towns first appeared in two major areas: the dry lands of Central Asia and the forests of Ukraine and Russia. The Slavs became the dominant cultural group, founding the towns of Moscow and Kiev.
- The Mongols were a loose confederation of nomadic pastoral people centered in eastern Central Asia that managed to conquer lands and people from Europe to the Pacific.

Human Patterns over Time

- The Rise of the Russian Empire

- Starting in the late 1500s, the Slavs and Russians began to conquer lands to the east, eager to amass the mineral resources of these lands.
- Along with their conquest, the Russians imposed their economic and political systems on the subjugated people.
- The Russian Empire was a land of great extremes of wealth and poverty. The czar ruled along with a tiny aristocracy while most of the people (serfs) were legally bound to live and farm on land that they never could own.



Human Patterns Over Time

• A Communist Revolution

- At the height of World War I, Czar Nicholas II was overthrown.
- One revolutionary faction, the Bolsheviks, instituted a communist form of government.
- Communism criticizes capitalism for allowing the ownership of production to rest in the hands of a wealthy minority.
- Communism called on workers to unite to overthrow the capitalists and establish a completely egalitarian society

Human Patterns Over Time

• A Communist Revolution

- The leader of the Bolsheviks, Vladimir Lenin, established the Communist party and from it evolved a powerful government that would rule for 70 years.
- Under this form of government, the economy was controlled by the state. The command economy allowed bureaucrats in Moscow to decide levels of production and what goods would be manufactured.
- Joseph Stalin created the centrally planned economy, and through despotic rule broached no criticism of the powerful central government.

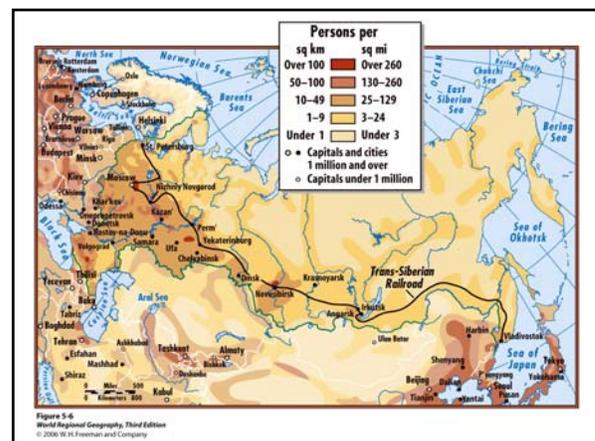
Human Patterns Over Time

• The Post-Soviet Years

- *Glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (economic restructuring) were the hallmarks of Mikhail Gorbachev's efforts to reform the failing Soviet system.
- Gorbachev's efforts proved unsuccessful in bringing about the reform so desperately needed, and the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991.
- Russia is the chief successor of the Soviet Union and, although smaller than the USSR in size, it is still the largest country in the world.
- Despite unsteady steps toward democratization and economic reform, reasons for optimism can be found, especially in the context of public participation in democratic processes.

C. Population Patterns

- European Russia contains the densest population in the region.
- Sparse settlements characterize the regions east of the Urals with concentrations occurring around major manufacturing or resource extraction areas.
- Other population concentrations occur in the Caucasus and along irrigated valleys of Central Asia.



Population Patterns

- Recent Population Changes

- After 1991, the well-being of citizens in the region deteriorated rapidly.
- Infant mortality rates have risen.
- Life expectancies dropped as a consequence of physical and mental distress; this was especially true for men..

TABLE 5.1 National population statistics

| Country (1) | Population (millions, 2003) (2) | | Births per 1000 (3) | | Fertility rate number of children per woman aged 15–45 (4) | | Life expectancy at birth, 2003 (5) | | Life expectancy at birth, 2003 (6) | | Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1000 live births) (7) | |
|-----------------------|--|------|---------------------------|------|---|------|--|--------------|--|------|--|--|
| | 1990 | 2001 | 1990 | 2003 | 1990 | 2003 | Male, 2003 | Female, 2003 | 1990 | 2003 | | |
| Belarus | 9.9 | 13.9 | 9 | 9 | 1.9 | 1.3 | 63 | 75 | 11.9 | 9 | | |
| Georgia | 3.2 | 24 | 10 | 14 | 2.6 | 1.7 | 70 | 74 | 18.6 | 36 | | |
| Azerbaijan | 8.2 | 26 | 15 | 14 | 2.7 | 1.9 | 68 | 75 | 23.0 | 13 | | |
| Georgia | 4.7 | 17 | 9 | 9 | 2.2 | 1.1 | 75 | 80 | 15.9 | 15 | | |
| Central Asia | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Kazakhstan | 14.8 | 21.7 | 14 | 15 | 2.7 | 1.8 | 58 | 71 | 26.4 | 19 | | |
| Kyrgyzstan | 5.0 | 29.3 | 22 | 20 | 3.7 | 2.4 | 65 | 72 | 30.0 | 23 | | |
| Tajikistan | 6.6 | 38.8 | 21 | 19 | 5.1 | 2.4 | 66 | 71 | 40.7 | 19 | | |
| Turkmenistan | 5.7 | 34.2 | 21 | 19 | 4.2 | 2.2 | 63 | 70 | 45.2 | 25 | | |
| Uzbekistan | 25.7 | 33.7 | 23 | 20 | 4.1 | 2.5 | 68 | 73 | 34.6 | 20 | | |
| Moldova | 4.3 | — | 11 | 9 | — | 1.3 | 65 | 72 | — | 16 | | |
| Russia | 145.5 | 13.4 | 8 | 10 | 1.9 | 1.3 | 59 | 72 | 17.4 | 15 | | |
| Ukraine | 47.8 | — | 8 | 8 | — | 1.1 | 62 | 74 | — | 11 | | |
| Total | 281.4 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| For comparison | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| United States | 291.5 | 16 | 15 | 14 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 74 | 80 | 9.7 | 6.9 | | |
| Europe | 540 | 13 | 10 | 10 | 1.7 | 1.4 | 70 | 78 | 12 | 8 | | |

Sources: 2001 World Population Data Sheet (Washington, D.C.: Population Reference Bureau); Population Bulletin #9 (December 1990): 48–49.

Table 5-1
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Population Patterns

- Recent Population Changes

- Diets have deteriorated and consumption of essential balanced foods is rare.
- Environmental pollution is blamed for sickness and untimely deaths.
- The gloomy economic forecast is blamed for the lowering birth rate whereby couples elect not to have children in the face of grim opportunities for economic advancement.

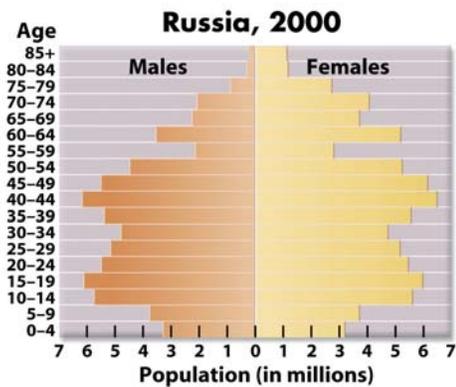


Figure 5-7 part 1
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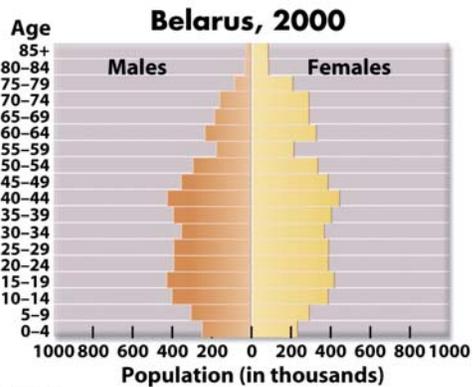


Figure 5-7 part 2
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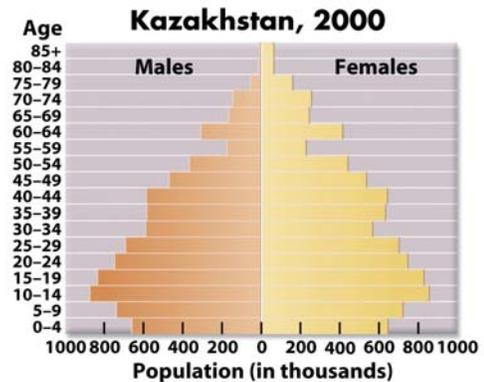
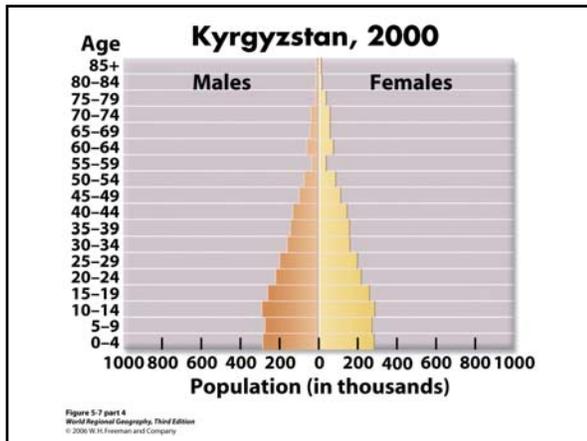


Figure 5-7 part 3
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II. CURRENT GEOGRAPHIC ISSUES

A. Economic and Political Issues

- For societies that have grown up under centrally planned economies, it is necessary to educate people about basic concepts of the free-market economic system.

Economic and Political Issues

The Former Command Economy

- Because it allocated goods and services inefficiently, scarcities and gluts would occur at the same time.
- Owing to a lack of competition, inefficient production methods resulted in products that were of poor quality and overpriced.

Economic and Political Issues

- *Soviet Regional Development Schemes*
 - Selection of industrial sites was determined by central planning; this added to the inefficiency in production.
 - Owing to poor choices in location, cost of transport kept the prices of goods from being competitive.
 - Lack of transportation in some areas kept industrial sites from linking with each other to increase production efficiency.



Kalingrad -the only Russian year-round ice free port on the Baltic.

Economic and Political Issues

- *Transport Issues*
 - The newly independent states must now improve the inefficient transport linkages set up by the Soviets in order to make their products competitive in regional markets.
 - Russia's transcontinental highway is limited to major unconnected highways.

Economic and Political Issues

- Reform in the Post-Soviet Era
 - Industries formerly owned and operated by the government were sold to private companies or individuals.
 - The most lucrative businesses were sold first and hence the government has failed to earn much needed cash from the profits of those enterprises.
 - Price controls were lifted with the unpredicted consequences of skyrocketing prices.



New port at Vostochny to increase European and Asian trade.

Economic and Political Issues

- Reform in the Post-Soviet Era
 - Most citizens resorted to using their meager savings in order to purchase basic living essentials.
 - New owners of lucrative companies use their wealth to influence political trends.

Economic and Political Issues

- *Foreign Direct Investment*
 - Foreign investment has not met expectations because of limited transparency and rampant corruption
- *The Growing Informal Economy*
 - The informal economy has blossomed, bringing opportunities for generating income to many.
 - The government has failed to benefit from the growing informal economy because taxes are difficult to collect.

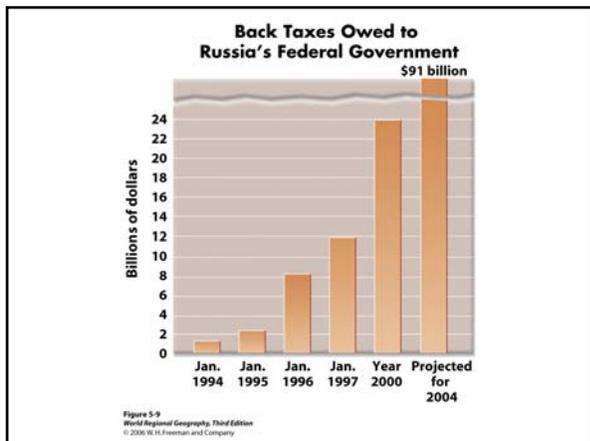


Unsubstantiated Figure pg 231
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Economic and Political Issues

- *Debt Crisis*
 - Russia is staggering under monumental foreign debt, but restructuring of the debt is contingent upon continued progress toward a market economy and a democratic form of governance.



Economic and Political Issues

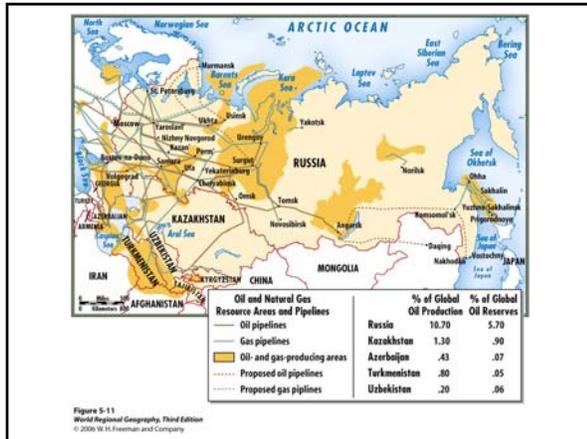
- *Market Reforms and International Trade*
 - Russia's relationship with the other republics under the Soviet system was similar to a colonial relationship.
 - The new republics appear to be selecting alternative trade measures that may not always include Russia. This is particularly true of the Baltic States that look to western Europe for increased trade opportunities.

Economic and Political Issues

- *Obstacles to International Trade*
 - The newly independent countries are struggling to learn market economy trade processes and to move beyond the former Soviet system to increase trade opportunities.
 - Underdeveloped transport systems are an obstacle for the newly independent countries to create increased trade with the global economy.

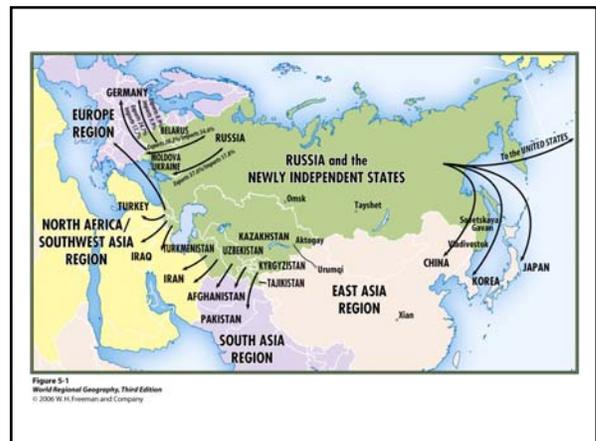
Economic and Political Issues

- Supplying Oil and Gas to the World
 - Crude oil and gas are Russia's most lucrative exports.
 - The Russian government keeps tight control on the oil and gas sector, a major source of income to the government.



Economic and Political Issues

- Greater Integration with Europe and the United States
 - To encourage Russia's continued movement toward democracy and a market economy, the Group of Seven has invited Russia to participate in its meetings.
 - Likewise, Russia has been invited to join the World Trade Organization.
 - The European Union has many projects aimed at bringing the newly independent states into EU compliance regarding their production. Such activity will promote increased trade between this region and Europe.

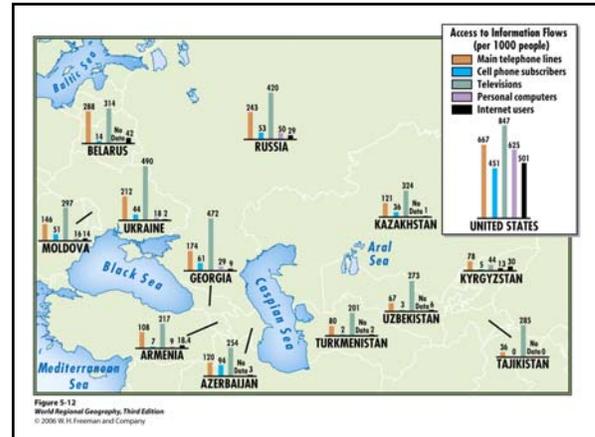


Economic and Political Issues

- Political Reforms in the Post-Soviet Era
 - Movement toward a market economy has been speedier than the movement toward democracy.
 - High officials can be influenced by oligarchies, powerful elites who wield influence because of their enormous wealth.
 - Public participation in the democratization process has been slow to develop.

Economic and Political Issues

- *The Media and Political Reform*
 - For the most part, a free press is developing in Russia, but citizens remain ambivalent about the level of openness that the free press should have.
 - Availability of communication technology is generally good for the public. TV access was widely available in the USSR, and mobile phones are increasingly popular.
 - Personal computers are rare but access to mobile phones is increasing rapidly.



Economic and Political Issues

- *The Military in the Post-Soviet Era*
 - The role of the military is one of the most important political issues facing the region today.
 - Once the most privileged sector of society, the military is faced with reduced services, funding cuts, and low morale among the troops.
- *The Political Status of Women*
 - Although the USSR's constitution granted them equal rights, women never held much power in government and therefore had little say in policy development.

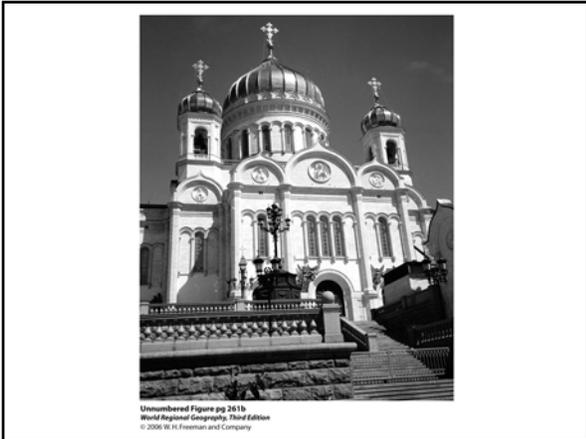
Economic and Political Issues

- Russia's Internal Republics
 - Russia contains more than 30 internal republics and more than 10 autonomous regions; these combine with greater Russia to form the Russian Federation.
 - Much of this territory was gained by Russia during five centuries of expansion.
 - Assimilation of minorities to Russian ways was always a priority.
 - To this end, ethnic Russians were settled among the minority groups and often received special benefits.
 - No consistent political plan exists for the governance of each of these semi-autonomous regions.



Economic and Political Issues

- *The Conflict in Chechnya*
 - In 1991, as the USSR was dissolving, Chechnya declared itself independent.
 - Russia feared that other semiautonomous regions would follow suit so it has become engaged in a prolonged armed conflict to subdue the independence movement.



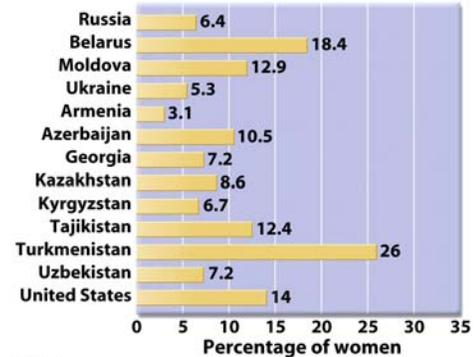
Sociocultural Issues

- Unemployment and Loss of Safety Net
 - Widespread unemployment and underemployment is common.
 - Loss of job and status is particularly difficult for men and is suggested as the cause for their increased alcoholism and lowered life expectancies.

Sociocultural Issues

- Gender and Opportunity in Free-Market Russia
 - During the Soviet regime, women worked outside the home but also carried the burden of all housework.
 - By the 1990s, the female labor force was, on average, better educated than the male labor force. Women held highly professional positions, but their wages as a percent of the national average were generally lower than men's wages.
 - Market reforms in the 1990s resulted in many women being laid off, despite the fact that many were head of their households.

Women in Legislatures, March 1, 2003



Sociocultural Issues

- Corruption and Social Instability
 - Corruption is nearly ubiquitous and many citizens have become adept at devising coping methods, including paying bribes and dodging taxes.

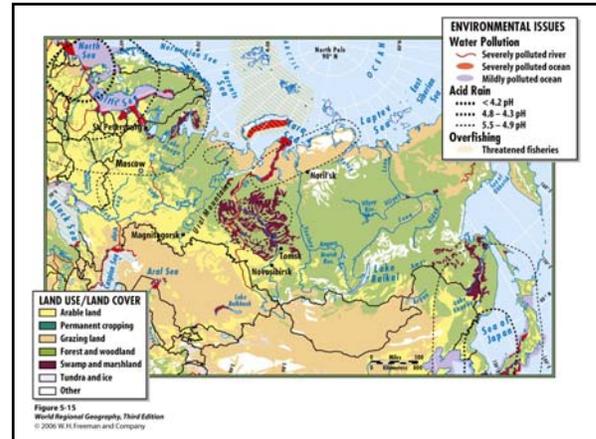
Sociocultural Issues

- Impatience with the Present, Nostalgia for the Past
 - Many people look fondly to the days of the USSR when guarantees provided at least basic living essentials, despite the lack of political freedom.
 - However, many people do find the present era of change and challenge very exciting and are optimistic that political and economic change will enhance livelihoods in the long run.

II. CURRENT GEOGRAPHIC ISSUES

C. Environmental Issues

- Soviet attitudes toward the environment are largely responsible for the tragic state of the region's environment. Nature was viewed as the servant of industrial and agricultural progress. Large industrial complexes were admired for their evidence of human domination over nature.
- The general decline in living standards has prevented people from advocating on behalf of environmental controls.
- Pollution affects millions of people, especially infants and children, in the form of air, water, and soil contamination.
- Resolving the pollution issues is made even more difficult when the pollution extends across international boundaries.



Environmental Issues

- Resource Extraction and Environmental Degradation
 - This region is gifted with abundant resources, many of which are demanded by industrialized countries.
 - Resource extraction has brought negative environmental effects, many of which are beyond repair.
 - Environmental effects include clear-cutting, flooding from dams, thermal pollution, and devastation of wildlife habitats.
 - A rebounding economy will lead to increased environmental degradation owing to weak laws and lax enforcement.



Environmental Issues

- Urban and Industrial Pollution
 - Urban pollution, because of close proximity to large populations, tends to affect the largest number of people.
 - Contamination occurs most commonly through nonpoint sources of pollution.



Environmental Issues

- Nuclear Pollution
 - Nuclear pollution in this region is the worst in the world.
 - The world's worst nuclear accident occurred at Chernobyl in the Ukraine in 1986.



Environmental Issues

- Irrigation and the Aral Sea
 - Large-scale irrigation projects in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan are causing the Aral Sea to disappear.
 - Shrinkage of the Aral Sea affects human health because of chemical contaminants in the dry seabed that become wind-borne, and groundwater contamination.
 - Because Uzbekistan depends on cotton for income, little is being done to arrest the shrinkage of the Aral Sea.



II. CURRENT GEOGRAPHIC ISSUES

D. Measures of Human Well-Being

- In general, average measures of well-being declined soon after the breakup of the former Soviet Union.
- By 1998, living standards began to improve.
- The impacts of democratic and economic change were assuaged by the willingness of individuals to help each other during the time of transition.
- HDI rankings improved from 1998 to 2000, an indication that the reforms are starting to show benefits to the populations of this region.
- In none of the regions are women approaching equality with men with respect to income.

TABLE 5.2 Human well-being rankings of Russia and the newly independent states and other selected countries

| Country (1) | GDP per capita, adjusted for PPP in 2000 \$US (2) | | Human Development Index (HDI) global rankings, 2000 ^a (3) | | Gender Inequality Measure (GIM) and Gender Development Index (GDI) global rankings, 2003 (4) | |
|--|---|--------|---|--------------|--|-----|
| | 1995 | 2000 | 1998 | 2003 | GIM | GDI |
| Selected countries for comparison | | | | | | |
| Japan | 23,970 | 25,130 | 8 (high) | 9 (high) | 44 | 13 |
| United States | 26,966 | 34,320 | 4 (high) | 7 (high) | 10 | 5 |
| United Arab Emirates | 17,400 | 28,510 | — | 49 (high) | 63 | 49 |
| World | 5,900 | 7,376 | — | — | — | — |
| Russia and the Eurasian Republics | | | | | | |
| Russian Federation | 4,531 | 7,100 | 72 (medium) | 63 (medium) | 57 | 56 |
| Belarus | 4,798 | 7,620 | 68 (medium) | 53 (high) | — | 48 |
| Moldova | 1,347 | 2,150 | 115 (medium) | 108 (medium) | 81 | 87 |
| Ukraine | 2,361 | 4,150 | 102 (medium) | 78 (medium) | 61 | 63 |
| Caucasia | | | | | | |
| Georgia | 1,389 | 2,560 | 108 (medium) | 88 (medium) | 62 | — |
| Armenia | 2,208 | 2,650 | 99 (medium) | 100 (medium) | — | 78 |
| Azerbaijan | 1,463 | 3,090 | 110 (medium) | 89 (medium) | — | — |
| Central Asian Republics | | | | | | |
| Kazakhstan | 3,037 | 6,500 | 91 (medium) | 76 (medium) | — | 62 |
| Turkmenistan | 2,345 | 4,320 | 103 (medium) | 87 (medium) | — | — |
| Uzbekistan | 2,376 | 2,460 | 104 (medium) | 101 (medium) | — | 79 |
| Tajikistan | 943 | 1,170 | 118 (medium) | 113 (medium) | — | 92 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 1,927 | 2,750 | 109 (medium) | 102 (medium) | — | — |

^aPPP = purchasing power parity.
^bThe high and medium designations indicate where the country ranks among the 171 countries classified into three categories (high, medium, low) by the United Nations.
 Source: United Nations Human Development Report 1998, United Nations Development Programme, Tables 1-5, 2003, Table 1, 22, 23.
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