

33. South America

= Central America (mainland + Caribbean countries) and South America

South America

= dominated by the Andes and tropical/equatorial rainforests.

Main features

- *extremes of wealth and poverty* (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, etc.)
- *overcrowded cities* (notably in Brazil and Argentina majority of population lives in cities)
- *illegal drugs trade* (cocaine in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia ⇔ growing of coca is more profitable than growing food.

Venezuela

= little Venice (Venezia) – by Amerigo Vespucci (1499), Angel Falls (world's highest – 980 m)

- *oil wealth* => great social polarity (rich vs. poor people living in shantytowns)
- vast *deforestation* of rainforest (where native tribes live)

Colombia

- *oil, coal and nickel reserves* + emeralds
- growing of *coffee, sugar-cane, bananas, cotton*
- export of *cocaine* (to US, CAN, EU)

Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia

= Andean countries

- *agriculture and fishing* = important in Ecuador and Peru
- *Cotopaxi* volcano (5,897 m) = 1 of the world's tallest active volcanoes
- lake *Titicaca* = largest lake of South America – located in very high altitude (3,810 m)
- *Machu Picchu* = lot city of the Incas (remains of temples + homes)
- *Bolivia* = inland, mountainous country with many native Indians (>50%), wealth of tin, silver, lead

Brazil

= world's major producer and exporter of *coffee* + sugar-cane, cotton and cocoa plantations.

- = largest country in SA (147 mil.), Roman Catholics and Portuguese language (the only 1 in SA) with very poor rural population => migration to cities (to find a job)
- *slums* (favelas) in suburbs of large cities, e.g. Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte = main industrial centres (URB = 80%)
- Amazon – the most important *waterway* (shipping to Manaus), rainforest = area of AUS
- large foreign (international) *debts*
- modern city of capital *Brasília* (built in late 1950s)
- 1/3 of all Brazil cars run on the “green fuel” = ethanol

Chile, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay

= 1/2 of the continents total area, region of great land contrasts (climate, relief)

Many European immigrants (Italians, Spanish, Germans) came here during 1860s-1930s.

- *pampas* in Paraná and Paraguay lowlands (mainly in Argentina)
- Chile = dictatorship of Pinochet, nowadays relatively stable political and economic situation
- Chile = world's largest producer and exporter of *copper*
- *cattle and sheep ranching* in Paraguay and Uruguay
- *Itaipú dam* on Paraná river in Paraguay = 1 of the largest in the world

Keywords

shantytowns, emeralds, slums/favelas, debts, pampas