

The role of relative isolation in the african continent

[Parts of the World](#), [Africa](#)



The concept of relative isolation when talking about the African continent is determined by the cultures and the way the people lived in this time. Relative isolation played a major role in the diversity of the cultures on the African continent. When certain things went wrong in these societies, they had to adapt and change what they were doing to make it work and not get killed off or wiped out as a whole. As said in our lecture, people create labor, which creates surplus. Then when there is surplus (food) in the society, then this creates specialists.

All of these things occur when things are going well for the people. But this was not always the case. This relative isolation also caused many problems for these societies and civilizations. When these people were isolated as they were, it makes it very difficult for them to escape things that happened at these times like climate change and many diseases, such as Malaria and malnutrition. This occurred on both a macro and micro level. On a micro level of relative isolation, such as smaller civilizations, problems such as disease and malnutrition were reoccurring issues.

But relative isolation was not always a bad thing for these smaller civilizations and societies. It helped them become stationary with a certain group of people that they would eventually build cultures around consisting of customs and laws, as stated in the lecture. The more people and labor they had, the more food they had. This seems like a good plan in theory, but when a severe climate change occurs and they lose crops, or a disease comes through and kills half of their civilization, it is very difficult for them to escape these deadly problems and thrive as a whole.

When they are all isolated in a small area, it is virtually impossible to prevent things like that from happening. It is also very difficult when these things occur, and the people left have to migrate as a whole. For example, as stated in *Civilizations of Black Africa*, “ It has very often happened in Africa that a society migrates, and moves, for example from the forest to the savanna. ” It happened often to these societies and sometimes they were not able to thrive in the new environment like they once were. On a macro level of relative isolation, the African continent is isolated geographically and because of its climate.

The seas and deserts around them did not allow them to expand and learn the ways of other thriving cultures and societies. The climate also added to the isolation because of the heavy rainfall. Many places were not suited for the crops they needed. More and more people were coming about, and not enough food was being made. These factors, as well as diseases made the African continent relatively isolated. Diseases were frequent, food was scarce at times, and the climate was incredibly hard to deal with when it came to trying to provide for your civilization.