

Geography of the balkans

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Balkans is the borderland geographic space-in the heart of Europe-where four of world's great advancements overlapped in a continuous way producing a dynamic and complex many-sided local civilization. In this territory, cultures of Rome, Greece, Byzantium, Ottoman Turkey, and that of Roman Catholic- Europe came together.

These cultures would fight and other times they were good friends, though none of them was in position to dominate the place wholly. The impermanent state of the border meant that the region was never to be fully controlled but was to be influence the greater outside civilization. The creative adaptation by the locals of the outside development that dominated the area led to creation of hybrids that left lasting imitations in the language, customs, politics, trade, and religion. The geographical distributions of a large number of European temperate species were by Quaternary climatic changes and ice rages. Species went inexistent in the north of Europe but survived in the south. .

The southern European headlands were host to the ice rage refugia hence the population of the species finally recolonized Europe. However, traditional pattern of variation in gene were eroded by animal domestication and human migration. Geographical perspective A. Lakes Lake Prespa and lake Ohrid on the peninsular of Balkan are the two freshwater lakes characterized by an extensive geological history of Europe. Lake Ohrid has a surface area of 358 kilometer square with maximum depth of 289 meters and 55-kilometer cube in volume.

Lake Prespa is 254 kilometer square with 58 meters water depth and a volume of 3.6 kilometers cube. These two formed because of tectonic movement probably five million years ago. This qualifies them as ancient lakes. There are differing histories of the two, which serves to explain the different faunas found in each .

Lake Ohrid has a large number of endemic species, which is because of its water depth, and the nature of water body. Lake Prespa is lower in biodiversity with very little fauna. The ecological values of these lakes came to the open when the UNESCO in 1979 declared Lake Ohrid a heritage site and the launch of Prespa National Park twenty years later. The increase of human settlements in these water catchments and the continuous use of their water in farming has greatly affected the ecosystem. For example, pressure in Lake Ohrid has shown a widespread of gastropod species though no shift witnessed at sites.

Surface sediments samples collected since 2004 provide information on how to control this. The information is also crucial for insights of changes in hydrology, chemical changes and to aid in detection of climatic and environmental changes that cause biodiversity variations. B. Climate There has been a great effect on climate in Europe especially in the period of ‘ Little Ice Age’ weather in 1590-1620 and between years 1680-1700. In this period, a major crisis suffered and its recovery is yet to be. The cause of this was because of an abrupt demographic shift causing depopulation.

This depopulation caused by great migration to secure place, which was in the hills or the cities though a number had already disappeared. The

population by 1800 had gone down to a quarter compared to the peak reported in 1590. Two theories have tried to explain the swings of climate in Europe –First is the argument that there was a volcanic process that created dust devils which is said to have reduced the amount of input from the solar hence the abnormal cold weather. Dust deils cause severe cooling and volcanic- dry frogs- associated with crop letdown and epidemics. The other aimed at the cause of a Northern Atlantic Oscillation that revealed noticeable swings in this period. This influence is from the Mediterranean and diminishes towards the east.

However, Turkey records complex dry winter environments up to 69 per cent for phases that are strong of North Atlantic Oscillation. From these studies, one can conclude that the 17th century climate manifested an extreme and frequent cold spell and phases of draught compared to the present. The events according to research have shown concentrations in spring and winter compared to summer. The lands at the coast with temperate Mediterranean climate had native vegetation that have been traded for imports like figs, olives, and wine grapes. Relating the climatic changes to crisis, a case study shows devastating effects on market during the period where poor harvests occurred in two or even more years consecutively meaning that there were no yields to counterbalance the first year failure.

At these times, the population relied heavily on barley and wheat whose harvests were overwhelming with spring drizzle. A regional failure in harvest provided very few options since food markets were local. In addition, there was mortality crisis through diseases, which occurred because of infections related to starvation, infections by poor sanitary in famine refugee camps, <https://assignbuster.com/geography-of-the-balkans/>

and diseases that occur due to crowding in the refugee centers.. The abandoned land parallel to climatic changes served as breeding earths to mosquitoes causing malaria. C.

Mountains The obvious features from the topographic map are mountains, which cover around 70 per cent of the entire region. The highest peak is that of Rila which is slightly below 3000 meters. These mountains acted as movement barriers mostly due to the tough terrain encouraging the creation of micro- cultures and making it problematic for invaders to dominate the area. These mountains however fail to provide an absolute obstacle to external attack. Invaders can penetrate the peninsula through several mountain passes and along the Eastern edge that is open to the lowlands in Roman and Ukrain then to steppe that stretches starting from the north shores of the Black Sea and ends at Mongolia. The later was the course by which majority invaders used to get to Balkans.

Another route open is across Dardanelles and Bosphorus which is a strait dividing the Peninsula from Asia Minor. Through this, the first agriculturists arrived from the advanced societies of Middle East around eight thousand years ago. The wars that caused large depopulation values stimulated the reemergence of the vast forests that exists now . These Mountainous areas served as herding grounds for those forced to vacate the fertile lowlands by the harsh climatic conditions. They were also havens for the outlawed group.

The mixture off the people was because of this Balkan geography and the personality of Ottoman Empire that was multi-cultural and multi ethnic. They enforced the citizens to one legal, social, political, linguistic, and cultural

scheme frequently killing or expelling the ones who fail to accept. New ethnic identities The region characterized a diverse cultural and ethnic structure called the Balkans and to be exact, the ex-Yugoslavia[. Invaders drove settlers to less fertile regions occupying the flat fertile lands along the plains of Balkans Rivers. This composition of different societies brought wars due to frictions resulting to resentment towards each other. The Enchelan Kingdom covered Yugoslavia in the 8th century and the kingdoms people were the Albaanians.

In the 17th and 18th century, the Ottoman and Habsburgs ruled and mixed peoples affairs and cultures. This created distinct civilization and people began a territory and influence competition. Ottomans divided the people by religion, which slowed the realization of ones nationality among the locals. In 19th and 20th centuries, its political history was clear as they strived to take the reality that the West European principles introduced and abandon the Ottoman traditions. This heightened dispute between the two until the World War I. In 20th century, Balkans states slowly lost their original characteristics through massacres, border changes, exchanges in population and absorption of power of the national educational schemes.

However, it was hard to wipe every trace of diachronic diversity the destruction of cultural memorials of Muslim culture the erasing of foreign words from the national language and embracing West European habits made it less deceptive. In rise of changes in the sphere's geo-political borders after World War II and again in the end of communism, the area lost its borderland value. Greece became a mono-ethnic government in 1920 while Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania lost Balkan features by 1950. The end <https://assignbuster.com/geography-of-the-balkans/>

of Yugoslavia to less ethnical states in the 1990 brought the Balkans history to a halt. Sure, some remained in Macedonia and Bosnia but the regions are under Western Europe and there is creation of a new border to the south and to its east. Balkans for once since Roman days is under a single civilization control.

The problem of Balkans The problems faced by the Balkans were because of rivalry of great powers. Balkan seemed a target being that its state was weak and surrounded by strong neighbors. These ancient power in control of Balkans were Huns, Romans, Goths and Turkey, who all had a portion in the shaping of this region's history. Immediately after the First World War, Balkans went through a period of insecurity and instability. There was a massive and lengthy struggle in uniting the fragmented territories. Legal codes and the taxation schemes had to unify and the common currencies forged.

This process was problematic due to inflation in the earlier years after war which led to the tender government spending more than what it could as a way to cover the state running. These assimilation problems were even more complex owing to the fact that the territories in question developed differently. Ottoman ruling had divided the Balkans greatly where the areas under the leadership of the Sultans had different laws, different social customs and they were now in a scheme that seemed to adapt slowly to economic modifications. The only issue met with ease was the land redistribution, which the Romanian government heeded to their promise on the reformation of land immediately the war was over. Being that this

redistribution was unfair, the population resented and there was the feeling of injustice creating questions in the economy.

Other than Albania, the internal security and international associations' stability of the region attained its ground by the mid-1920. From this time to the rise of the Nazi Germany, Balkan states enjoyed much freedom.

Conclusion The Balkans being a border territory was faced by problems of lack of identity due to many migrations to the area and the fact that it was under many different authorities. The difference in cultures and values brought in resentments hence the cause of conflicts in the area. It is however a region of memories to many cultures and religions. After the World War, all these different groups formed their small states under their own authority.