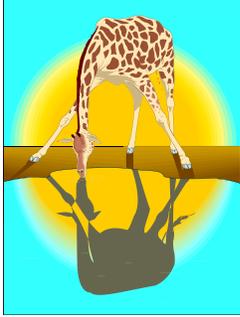


<p>A River Runs Through It Some Thoughts On Why Africa Developed More Slowly Than Some Other Regions. e:\geog\afrika\river.1dp</p>	
<p>1. Importance of Water. Across Europe and Asia-and, later, the Western Hemisphere and Australia-man's dependence on waterways has been demonstrated again and again in the sites of leading cities, from London to Bombay and from Sydney to Rio De Janeiro. Thomas Sowell, <i>Race and Culture</i> (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 237.</p>	<p>Main Ideas: Key Words: Analysis:</p>
<p>The enormous importance of rivers and harbors to economic and cultural development is indicated by the fact that nearly all the world's great cities have developed on rivers or harbors. Thomas Sowell, 236.</p>	
<p>The general importance of waterways may be suggested by the fact that, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, four-fifths of the world's population lived in coastlands. Thomas Sowell, 237.</p>	
<p>The modern development of artificially powered, non-waterborne transportation-motor vehicles, railroads, and airplanes-reduced that coastal concentration but, as late as 1975, two-thirds of the world's population still lived in coastal regions. Thomas Sowell, 237.</p>	
<p>When we investigate the reasons behind the location of the world's great clusters of human population, we should remind ourselves of the importance of water to human life-throughout history. H. J. De Blij, Peter O. Muller, <i>Geography: Realms, Regions and Concepts</i> (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1994), 18.</p>	
<p>2. Water and Population Centers. The world's greatest population cluster is concentrated in the valleys of China's major rivers, the Huang He and the Chang Jiang (the Yellow and Yangzi [or Long], respectively). True, there are great cities in China (such as Beijing and Shanghai), but the total population of these urban centers is far outnumbered by the farmers-those who live and work on the land and whose crops of rice and wheat feed not only themselves but also the people in those cities. H. J. De Blij, 22.</p>	<p>Main Ideas: Key Words: Analysis:</p>

<p>The South Asia population cluster lies centered on India and includes the populous neighboring countries of Bangladesh and Pakistan. This huge agglomeration of humanity focuses on the broad plain of the lower Ganges River. H. J. De Blij, 22.</p>	
<p>The world's third-ranking population cluster, Europe, also lies on the world's biggest landmass. Here, the key to the linear, east-west orientation of the axis of population is not a fertile river basin but a zone of raw materials for industry. Europe is among the world's most highly urbanized and industrialized realms, its human agglomeration sustained by forges and factories rather than paddies and pastures. H. J. De Blij, 22-23.</p>	
<p>The next-ranking cluster is Eastern North America, comprising the east-central United States and southeastern Canada. The heart of the North American cluster lies in the urban complex that lines the U.S. northeastern seaboard from Boston to Washington, D.C., and includes New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. H. J. De Blij, 23.</p>	
<p>The valley and Delta of the lower Nile River in northeastern Africa, the basin of the Ganges River in India and Bangladesh, and the plain of the Huang He (Yellow River) in China all contain recent alluvial soils, and through their nearly legendary fertility they sustain many millions of people. H. J. De Blij, 18-19.</p>	
<p>Hundreds of millions of Indians and Chinese Depend directly on alluvial soils in the river basins of the Ganges and Huang He, where crops are grown that range from corn to cotton, wheat to jute, rice to soybeans. H. J. De Blij, 19.</p>	

<p>3. Cheap Transportation. This reflects in part the vast differences in costs between transporting goods by water and transporting them by land. Thomas Sowell, 236.</p>	<p>Main Ideas: Key Words: Analysis:</p>
<p>For example, in mid-nineteenth-century America, before the transcontinental railroad was built, San Francisco could be reached both faster and cheaper from a port in China than it could be reached over land from the banks of the Missouri. Thomas Sowell, 236.</p>	
<p>In the city of Tiflis in the Caucasus, it was cheaper to import kerosene from Texas, across 8,000 miles of water, than to get it over land from Baku, less than 400 miles away. Thomas Sowell, 236.</p>	
<p>In Africa, even in the twentieth century, the cost of shipping an automobile from Djibouti to Addis Ababa (342 miles) has been estimated as being the same as the</p>	

cost of shipping it from Detroit to Djibouti (7,386 miles). Thomas Sowell, 236.	
Similarly, in nineteenth-century Japan, before roads were improved and railroads built, it was said to cost as much to transport goods 50 miles over land within Japan as to transport them from Europe to Japan. Thomas Sowell, 236.	
Construction of the Erie Canal began in 1817 and was completed in 1825. Soon thereafter the cost of shipping grain from Lake Erie to the Atlantic dropped from \$100 to \$10 a ton. Joel Swerdlow, <i>National Geographic</i> , November 1990, v. 178, no. 5, 39.	
The Erie Canal was 363 miles in length. Though "Clinton's Ditch" measured only four feet Deep and forty feet wide, it cut freight costs by 90% and travel time by at least half. Joel Swerdlow, 44.	

<p>7. Water, Cultural Interaction and Development. What may not be so obvious, but of equal or greater importance, is the crucial importance of navigable waterways to transport these and other natural resources, and the products resulting from them, to different regions of the Earth creating wider cultural interactions in the process. Thomas Sowell, 236.</p>	Main Ideas: Key Words: Analysis:
Huge transportation costs shrink the economic universe, severely limiting how far given goods can be carried, and severely limiting which goods have sufficient value condensed into a small size and weight (gold or diamonds, for example) to be feasible to transport over land for substantial distances. These same high transportation costs shrink the cultural universe as well. Thomas Sowell, 236.	
However, a general lack of navigable waterways to facilitate economic and cultural interchanges has in Africa been reflected in a general Dearth of large cities, on what remains the world's least urbanized continent. Thomas Sowell, 237.	
These ports became not only economic centers but also cultural centers and centers of progress in general, as cities have led the progress of civilization. Thomas Sowell, 237.	
Geography is not all-determining, but it can set the limits of human possibilities narrowly or widely. Thomas Sowell, 237.	
For much of sub-Saharan Africa, it has set those limits narrowly. Not only were economic activities restricted by	

<p>the high cost of transportation; more fundamentally, human interactions in general were narrowly circumscribed, resulting in such cultural barriers as numerous language differences and tribalism. Thomas Sowell, 237.</p>	
--	--

<p>Discussion.</p>	
<p>1. How do navigable rivers speed development?</p>	
<p>2. How does the lack of navigable rivers hinder development?</p>	
<p>3. Do island nations develop faster because of water as cheap transportation?</p>	
<p>4. Link to democracy and water, faster, higher development?</p>	
<p>5. Think about the world's first superpowers.</p> <p>How did navigable water speed their development?</p>	
<p>Greece, 300 B.C.</p>	
<p>Rome, 100 B.C.</p>	

Spain, 1500 A.D.	
Great Britain, 1600 A.D.	
United States, 1930 A.D.	
6. There is an old Geopolitics theory that navigable water promoted democracy. It is similar to this Discussion Packet. Explain the outlines of this theory,	