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The Anglocene

Environmental Studies 220: Fall 2018

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What is the Anglocene?

- The prefix “Anglo” generally can be defined as white, English speaking groups of people typically of European decent
- Accompanied with these Anglo groups are the Christian and diverging sects of Christian theology (i.e. Christianity, Catholicism, Protestantism etc.)
- Anglo-Christian missionaries have spread their theologies to the point of globalization
- Based on Lynn White’s argument, these Anglo-Christian groups use technology to exploit resources
- The Anglocene describes the current post-Christian world that is globally saturated with influences from Anglo-Christian theology that we propose has permeated itself in environmental philosophy

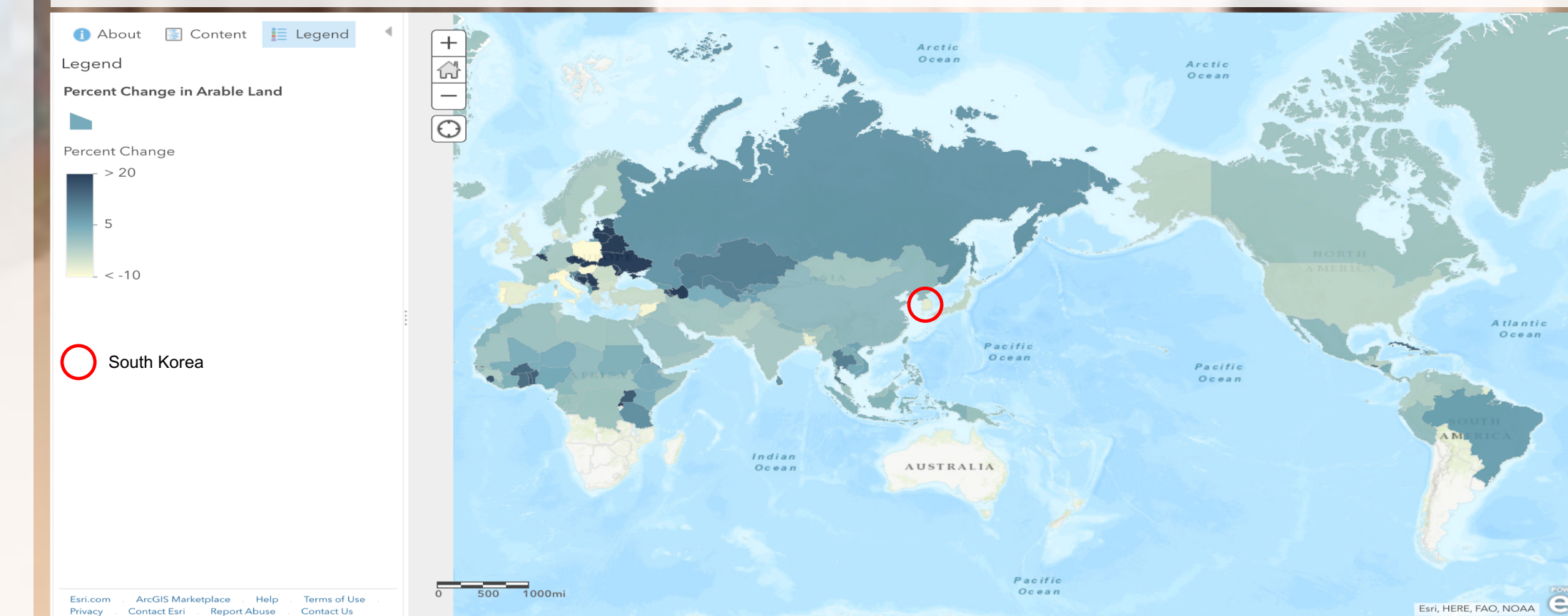
What is Lynn White’s argument?

Our project operates under the assumption that Lynn White’s argument in his “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis” (1967) accurately describes the contemporary relationship between man and nature. But what is his argument?

- Western Christianity holds the ideal that **God has created nature for the sole benefit of man**
- As well as man’s relationship with nature is of **dominance and exploitation** rather than coexistence and subsistence
- That this ‘dominance’ ideology is **specific to Christian theology** and is “in absolute contrast to ancient paganism and Asia’s religions” (White)
- This exploitative relationship paired with Europe’s technological advancements allowed Anglo-Christian groups to **expand their dominance to a global scale** through various colonization
- These advancements in technology also allowed Anglo-Christian groups to revolutionize resource use **specifically in terms of agriculture**, “Man’s relation to the soil is profoundly changed” (White)
- The world now suffers an ecological crisis that is **derived from the globalization** of the dominance over nature theology that Christianity holds

Research Question

Who suffers because of the relationship between Christian theologies and the ecologic crisis that Lynn White discusses?



White’s argument led us to look at agrarian communities. We noticed that South Korea has negative growth in an indicator that has experienced positive global growth

Methodology

Goal: Investigate the possible relationship between introduced Anglo-Christian culture and decline in arable land

Surveys: expected 1 month

- In urban specific areas: ask individuals if they have ever lived in an agrarian community
 - If yes: ask how long ago they relocated to an urban center
 - If no: ask how long ago their closest relative moved away from an agrarian community
- In agrarian specific areas:
 - ask those who participate in an agrarian lifestyle about their opinion on the declining agriculture community and what they believe is causing this decline
 - ask these same individuals how long they have part of the agrarian lifestyle and if their agricultural practices have changed in that time
- In rural and urban settings: conduct surveys on both communities to gauge social sentiment towards Christian theologies

Statistics: expected 2 months + 10 years remote data collection

- Use agriculture data to analyze various **crop cycles** and investigate if they are **similar to western agrarian practices**
- This data will date back to 1960 and continue to 2018 where we will continue to track the cycles for the following decade (final year being 2028)

- Investigate the nation’s **land use and cover change (LUCC)** data over time

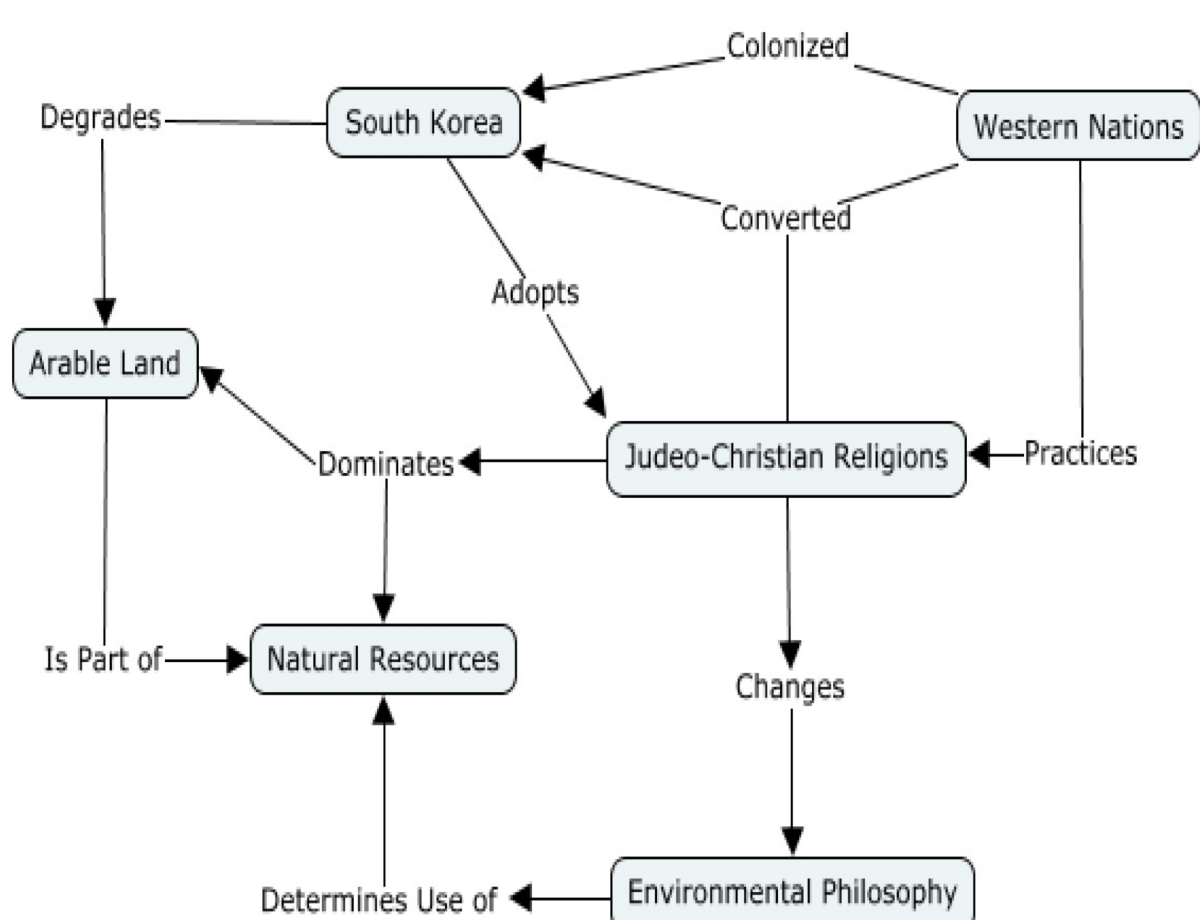
- LUCC investigation allows us to **track the change of rural land** and how they have evolved throughout history
- The timeline of this investigation will correlate with the crop cycle investigation (1960 to present day)

ArcGIS Mapping: expected <1 month

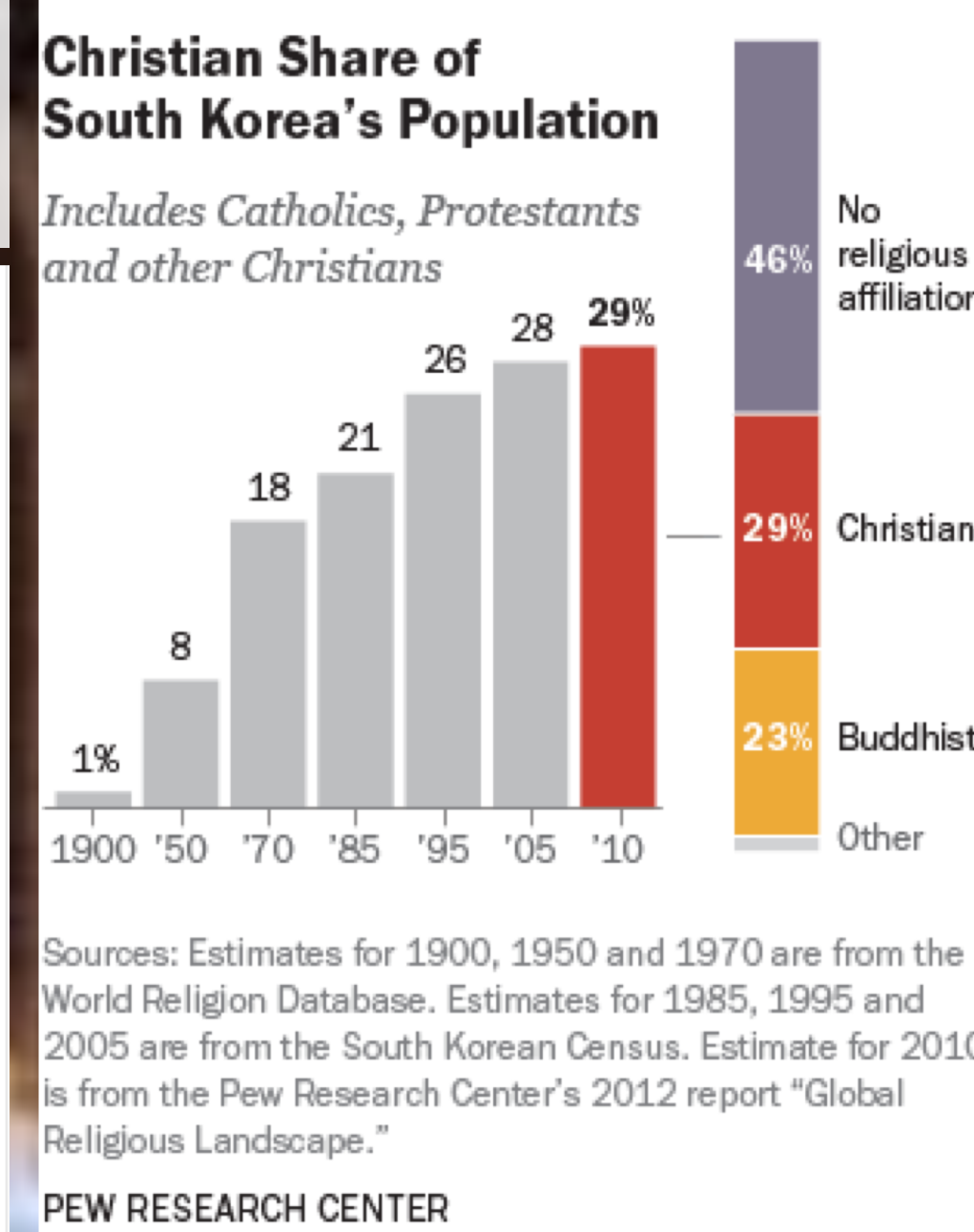
- Create map displaying the **nation’s LUCC throughout its religious transformation**
- Compiling the images and comparing them, we hope to see visible physical transformation of the nation’s land use

Concept Map

What demographic in South Korea has been most affected by Anglo religious colonization?

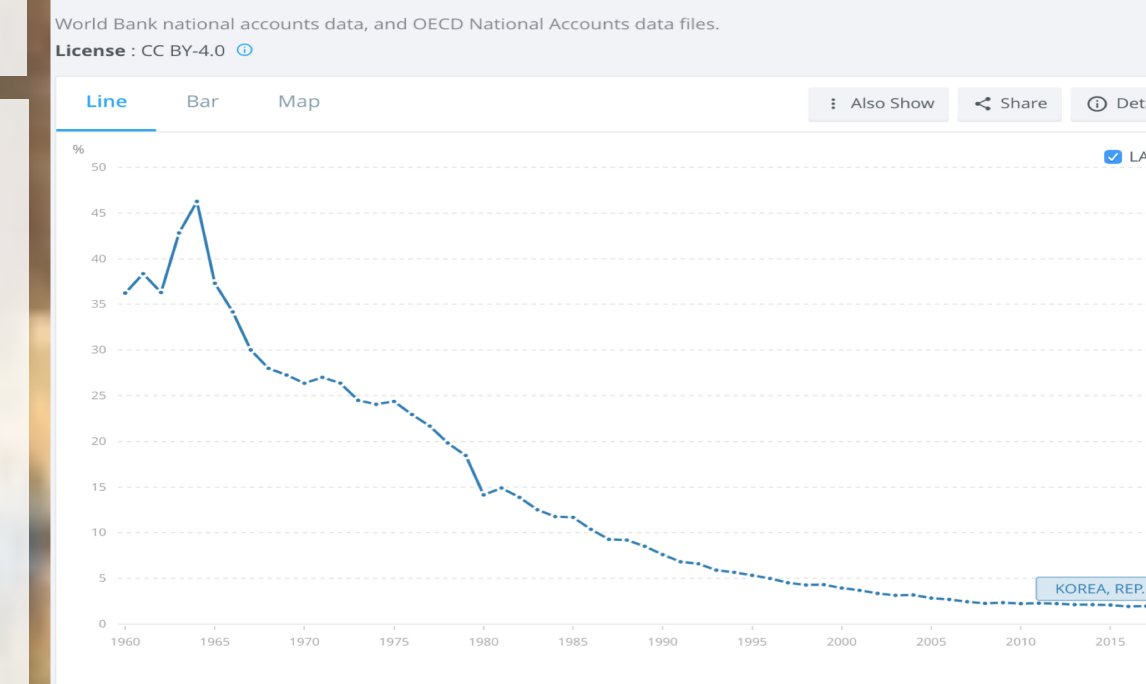


Christianity in South Korea



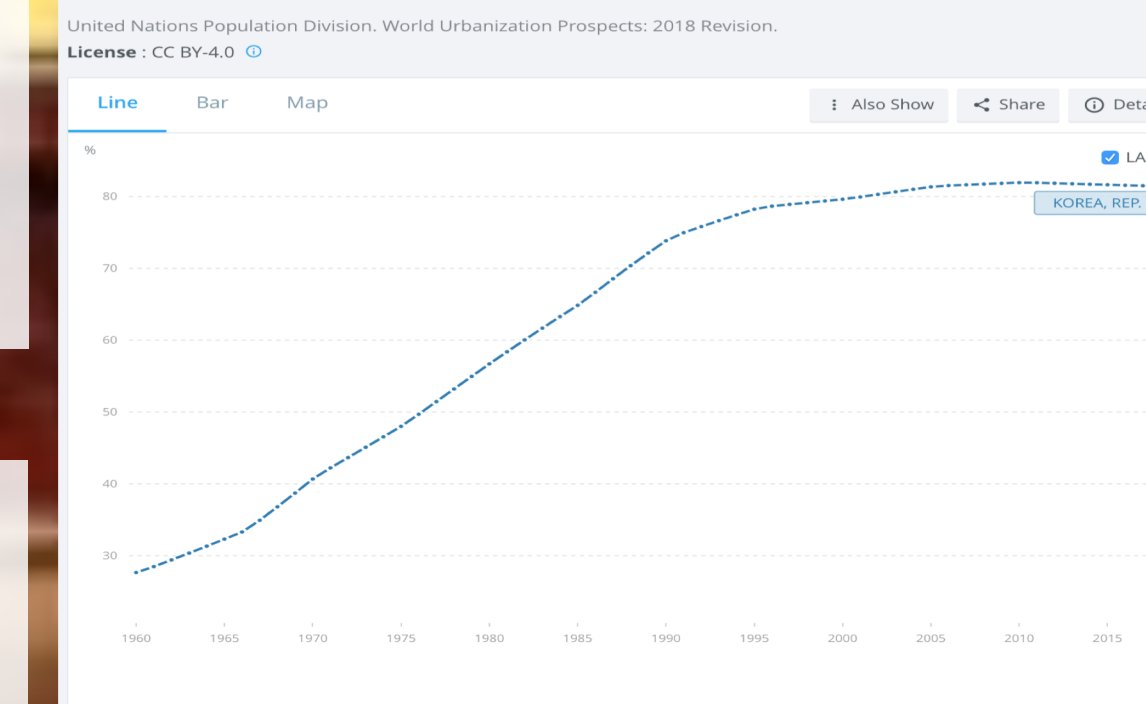
- While South Korea’s population is >99% Korean in ethnic background, **29% of Koreans identify as Christian**
- Arable land in South Korea has **decreased by nearly 10%** while the average change in arable land across the world **increased by 1%**
- Agriculture, forestry, and fishing percentage of the nation’s GDP has decreased from over 46% in 1964 to less than 2% in 2015 meaning the nation continuously relies less on these industries
- **Percent of urban population** in South Korea grew from 32.4% in 1965 to 81.6% in 2015; a **49.2%** change

Agriculture, forestry, and fishing, value added (% of GDP)



As arable land in South Korea decreases, as does agriculture’s contribution to national GDP. As agriculture suffers so do those who depend on it

Urban population (% of total)



Growth in urban population demonstrates movement from agrarian to urban lifestyles.

Key References

- White, Lynn. “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis.” *Science, New Series* 155, no. 3767 (1967)
- Hand, Carl M., and Kent D. Van Liere. “Religion, Mastery-Over-Nature, and Environmental Concern.” *Social Forces* 63, no. 2 (December 1, 1984)
- Kim, Andrew E. “Korean Religious Culture and Its Affinity to Christianity: The Rise of Protestant Christianity in South Korea.” *Sociology of Religion* 61, no. 2 (2000).

Situated Outcomes

- **Survey Outcomes:** Understand the role of **Judeo-Christian** religion in people’s daily lives
- Learn the **effect of declining agriculture** on the nation’s agrarian communities
- Recognize the **level of separation** between agrarian and urban populations
- **Statistical and Mapping Outcomes:** Determine the level of land use change South Korea has felt since introduction of Judeo-Christian religion

Moving Forward: Possible Solutions

- How the Anglocene is present in South Korea (i.e. arable land) is not indicative of how the Anglocene is present in other countries
- Arable land solutions are not indicative of global issues
- Relationship between Christianity and ecologic crisis takes varying form in different areas
- Abolition of religion is both impossible and unhelpful since the Christian relationship outlined by White already exists
- One size fits all type legislation and large scale change are impossible
- Crises catalyzed by this relationship must be handled on a local basis

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