FORMAL, FUNCTIONAL AND PERCEPTUAL REGIONS

A look inside these regions
WHAT IS A FORMAL REGION?
FORMAL REGIONS

Geographers draw formal regions on the basis of one or more measurable, shared traits that distinguish them from the surrounding area.

These traits can range from such characteristics of the local population as language, income, or religion to such physical characteristics as elevation or climate.

Many physical features, such as valleys, are easy to map as formal regions using naturally occurring boundaries.
EXAMPLES OF FORMAL REGIONS

- States- Texas, Florida, South Carolina, etc
- Countries- US, Mexico, Canada, etc
- Cities- Austin, Dallas, Houston, etc
- The area of town where the wealthiest people live.
- The Sahara Desert of Africa.
- U.S. city where more than 50% of residents speak Spanish.

** All Formal Regions are based on MEASURABLE data!!
FORMAL REGION MAP

http://blog.usa.gov/roller/govgab/resource/images/ntus_map.jpg
WHAT IS A FUNCTIONAL REGION?
**Functional Regions**

- Functional regions are defined by a system of interactions.
- Picture a bicycle wheel with a central axel in the middle of the wheel, which represents the center of all the activity. The spokes of the wheel represent links to outside areas (the tire) through transportation, communication and trade.

Center of all activity and beginning of interactions

Transportation, communication and trade reaching outside areas

Areas receiving the transportation, communication and trade
The Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan area is a functional region in that Dallas and Fort Worth share a common airport located between the two cities.
EXAMPLES OF FUNCTIONAL REGIONS

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WHAT IS A PERCEPTUAL REGION?
PERCEPTUAL REGIONS

- A perceptual region is defined by people’s feelings and attitudes about an area.

- Perceptual regions are more likely than other kinds of regions to change over time.

- They are also frequently based upon stereotypes, as people's definitions of perceptual regions are influenced by travel, media, reading, films, and conversations.
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN I SAY...

Southern California

The South

New York City

The Middle East
WHAT IS THE PERCEPTION OF THIS MAP?

http://cartophilia.com/blog/uploaded_images/footballstates.gif
Three Types of Regions

1. **Formal regions** have one or more common characteristics. They can be political entities, climate regions or landform regions.

2. **Functional regions** have a focal point with surrounding areas linked by transportation and communication systems.

3. **Perceptual regions** are defined by how people perceive of an area.