

Anderw Garber

World Geography

Chapter 2 Response

The effects of plate tectonics of human civilization have been significant. The movement of the plates has caused the formation of mountains, volcanoes, and earthquakes. These natural formations have had a significant impact on the development of human cities, nations, and civilizations.

For example, mountains have forever been a natural barrier to the movement of people. The Himalayas, for example, have been a natural barrier between India and China, and much of the modern geopolitical tension between these two states can be traced back to this divide. The Andes have been a natural barrier between the west coast of South America and the interior of the continent, leading to significant internal disension between those living in the same polity but on either side of this geographical feature. The Alps have been a natural barrier between Italy and the rest of Europe, providing a natural defense for the Italian peninsula, effectively a bottleneck for any invading army.

Volcanoes have much more mixed effects on a civilization - on one hand, the ash and lava from a volcano can be devastating to a civilization, just look at Pompeii. On the other hand, the ash and lava from a volcano can make the nearby land extremely fertile, and many civilizations have been built on the slopes of volcanoes. In the modern era, the massive population density of Indonesia, specifically of Java and Sumatra, can be traced directly to the extremely high per acre yield of the volcanic soil in these regions. This has, since ancient times, led to the development of large and powerful civilizations in these regions, and the modern nation of Indonesia is no exception.

Earthquakes have the most negative impact on human civilization, of the effects of plate tectonics. Little to no good comes of an earthquake, and the destruction of an earthquake can be absolutely devastating - the earthquake in Turkey just months ago is a prime example. Despite modern advances of all kinds, earthquakes are major natural disasters that can cause massive loss of life and property, and can set back a nation for decades.

In conclusion, the effects of plate tectonics on human civilization have been significant, and will continue to be significant for the foreseeable future. All of these effects can be seen in the modern world despite our advances, from the isolation of mountain ranges to the fertile soil of volcanoes to the devastation of earthquakes.