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**Oil and Westernization in the Middle East**

Two of the most important natural resources found in the Southwest Asia are natural **gas** and **oil**. Over half of the world’s known oil reserves are found in this part of the world. This has made some of these countries extremely rich and has led them to have a lot of control over the global economy.

Many countries in Southwest Asia have enjoyed tremendous growth in national wealth and an improved **standard of living** in the past fifty years. Standard of living is the amount of wealth or how well a population lives. Those countries without oil reserves have had a much harder time improving living conditions for their populations. The difference in wealth in some of the Southwest Asian countries has led to conflicts among the nations. Read below to see how oil and westernization shaped the city of Dubai.

**Dubai**

Almost everyone knows about Dubai and its vast expanse of riches. The city is a part of the United Arab Emirates and has been synonymous with oil for the major part of the last century. Most people think that Dubai became rich due to it being a part of the Gulf, the oil well of the world, but the major part of around a $100 billion revenue of the state comes from prosperous areas like real estate, airlines and ports. Oil comprises only seven percent of the total revenue whereas the rest of the income comes from heavy investments in industries and land. In other words, Dubai got its start from **oil** and used the money to invest in other businesses and is very rich today. It is important to remember that not all parts of Southwest Asia are wealthy. While Dubai is one of the wealthiest places in the world, other parts have low standards of living.

Due to its wealth and location on a shoreline, many people are living in Dubai today so its **population density** has increased. Population density is how crowded a certain area is or how many people live in a certain location. In 1950, the population of Dubai was 20,000. Dubai's 2019 population is now estimated at 2,833,079.

With higher standard of living, Dubai society has become more westernized and materialistic. **Westernization** is when a place becomes more materialistic like the western world (the United States). **Materialistic** means people are excessively concerned with material possessions and money-oriented. This can create a culture clash because most Middle East cultures and religion value modesty and humility. Other people feel as though their culture and way of life is being erased.

1. What are Southwest Asia’s two most important natural resources?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is standard of living?  
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3. Have all countries benefited from the oil industry? What problems can come from oil industry?  
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4. How has oil money transformed Dubai?  
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5. What is population density?  
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6. What is Westernization?  
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7. What does it mean to be materialistic?  
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Westernization: Create a circle map and write down examples of Westernization as seen in notes and video