

ARCTIC OCEAN

The True Map of North America

A Cartographer's Guide to 23 Sovereign Nations, 596 Million People, and the Continent Beyond the Three-Country Myth.

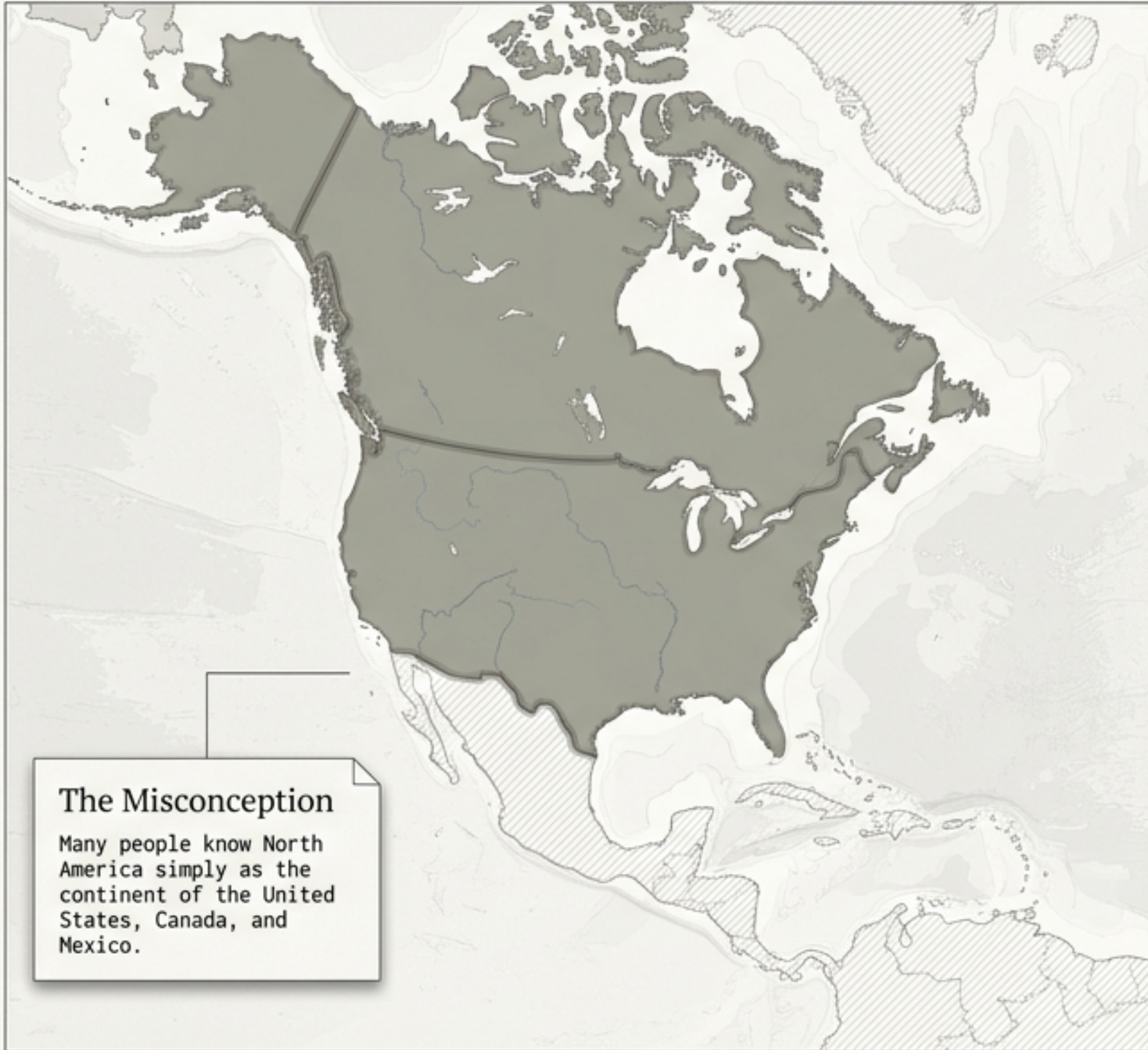
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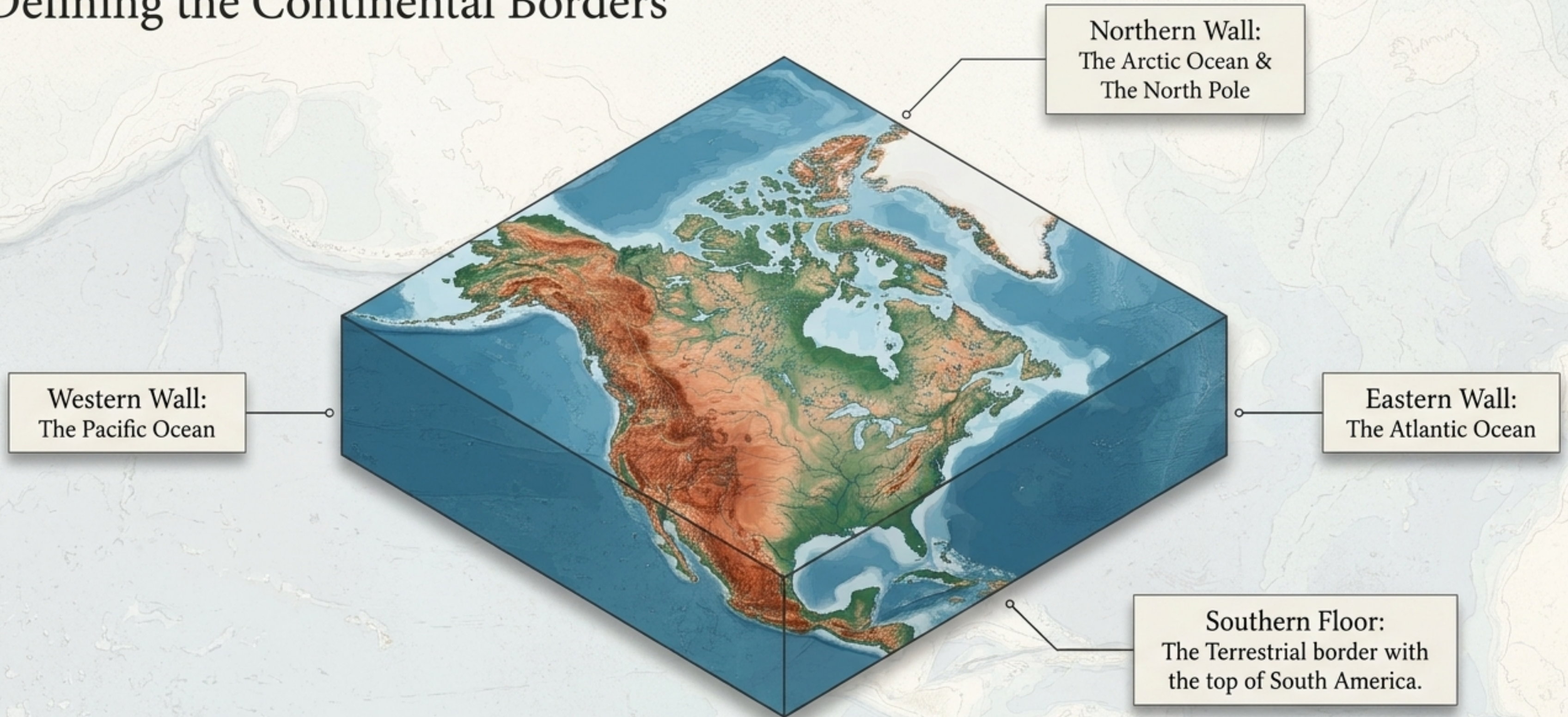


The Three-Country Myth

48.1119° N, 100.1903° W



Defining the Continental Borders



Spanning from polar ice to tropical rainforests, these oceanic and terrestrial borders contain the third-largest continent in the world.

The Bedrock of North America



Contemporary Era

A modern population of over 596 million people. English, Spanish, and French are the most common languages, alongside hundreds of enduring indigenous languages.

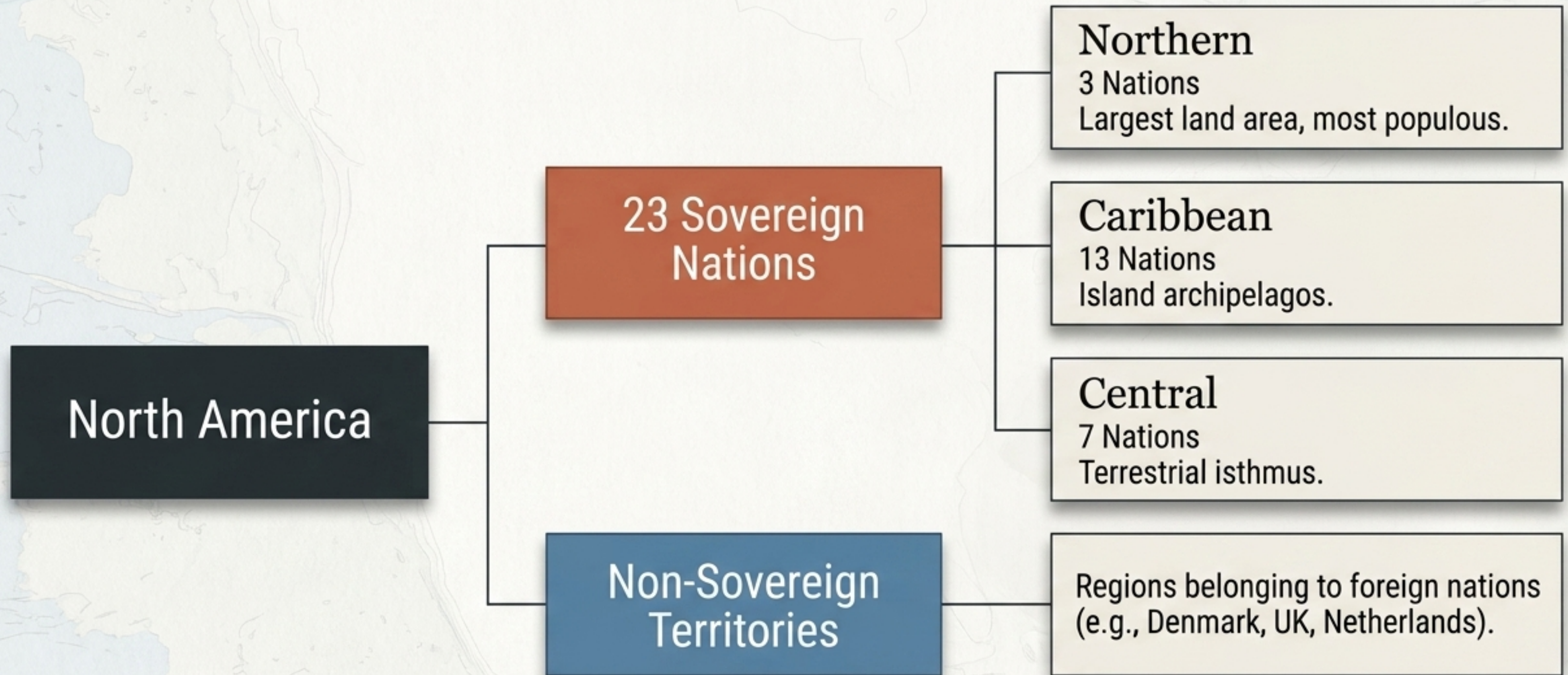
Colonialism & Disruption (Late 1400s–1865)

European settlers (Spain, Portugal, France, Britain) established colonies. Marked by violent decimation of indigenous populations through disease, and the transatlantic slave trade which treated individuals mostly from Africa as chattel property until the end of the American Civil War.

Pre-Contact (12,000–40,000+ Years Ago)

Hundreds of unique linguistic and ethnic indigenous groups established extensive trade networks, unique agriculture, and monumental architecture.

The Political Architecture



Regional Diagnostic Matrix

The Northern Nations



Nations: 3

Typology: Massive
Continental Landmass

Population Scale: Hundreds
of millions
(Most populous region)

The Caribbean Nations



Nations: 13

Typology: Oceanic
Archipelagos & Islands

Population Scale: Tens of
thousands to low millions

The Central Nations



Nations: 7

Typology: Terrestrial Land
Bridge (Isthmus)

Population Scale: Single to
double-digit millions

The Northern Giants



Canada

Capital: Ottawa | Population: 35 million

Field Note: The northernmost independent country, stretching to the North Pole. Features the world's longest uninterrupted coastline.

United States of America

Capital: Washington, D.C. | Population: 321 million

Field Note: Mainland directly south of Canada; Alaska to the northwest and Hawaii in the Pacific. Currently holds the world's largest economy.

Mexico

Capital: Mexico City | Population: 121 million

Field Note: Borders the Gulf of Mexico and Pacific Ocean. The impact site of the meteorite that wiped out the dinosaurs is located here, as well as ancient Aztec temples.

Beyond Sovereign Borders: Northern Territories

Not all landmasses in North America are independent nations. Several are semi-autonomous states or overseas territories.

Greenland



Capital: Nuuk | Status: Part of the Kingdom of Denmark (European)

Field Note: A massive landmass home to Inuit people, descendants of Vikings, and polar bears. Operates with a degree of independence and may one day become a fourth northern independent nation.

Bermuda



Capital: Hamilton | Status: British Overseas Territory

Field Note: Located far east of the USA in the Atlantic Ocean, known as a popular vacation destination.

Geographic Mechanics: Archipelago vs. Isthmus



The Caribbean Shield (The Archipelago)

A fragmented chain of independent island states and territories acting as a shield between the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. Dominated by maritime borders.



The Central Land Bridge (The Isthmus)

A continuous, narrow terrestrial land bridge connecting North America to South America. Characterized by dense jungles, shared borders, and dual coastlines (Pacific and Caribbean).

The Caribbean Sea (Part I)



The Bahamas | Capital: Nassau | Pop: 396k
Once controlled by pirates. (Northeast of Cuba).

Bahamas

ATLANTIC
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Cuba

Cuba | Capital: Havana | Pop: 11M

The biggest Caribbean country;
birthplace of Fidel Castro. Half its
plant species are found nowhere else.

Haiti |
Capital: Port-Au-Prince | Pop: 11M
Western half of its island. French is an
official language.

Haiti

**Dominican
Republic**

Puerto Rico

Jamaica

Caribbean Sea

Jamaica | Capital: Kingston | Pop: 3M
First Caribbean country to gain independence (1962).

Dominican Republic |
Capital: Santo Domingo | Pop: 10M
Eastern half of island shared with Haiti.
Home to the oldest university in the
Americas.

The Caribbean Sea (Part II)



Territories Note:
Region includes territories like Puerto Rico (US, Capital: San Juan), Aruba (Dutch, Capital: Oranjestad), and British Virgin Islands (UK, Capital: Road Town).

Antigua & Barbuda (St. John's 98k): Has no rivers or lakes.	St. Vincent & the Grenadines (Kingstown 111k): Comprised of 32 islands (only 9 inhabited).
St. Kitts & Nevis (Basseterre 55k): Smallest country in North America by geographical area.	Grenada (St. George's 113k): Features an underwater sculpture park.
Dominica (Roseau 72k): Features nine volcanoes.	Barbados (Bridgetown 287k): Easternmost country; independent from Britain since 1966.
St. Lucia (Castries 184k): Features a drive-through volcano.	Trinidad & Tobago (Port of Spain 1M): Off the coast of South America; hosts the world's oldest protected rainforest.

The Central Isthmus



Belize

(Belmopan | 404k):
Notable for many
Mayan ruins.

Honduras

(Tegucigalpa | 10M):
Gained independence
in 1821.

Guatemala

(Guatemala City | 16M):
Most UNESCO World
Heritage Sites globally.

Nicaragua

(Managua | 6M):
The largest country in
Central America.

El Salvador

(San Salvador | 6M):
Most densely populated
NA country.

Panama

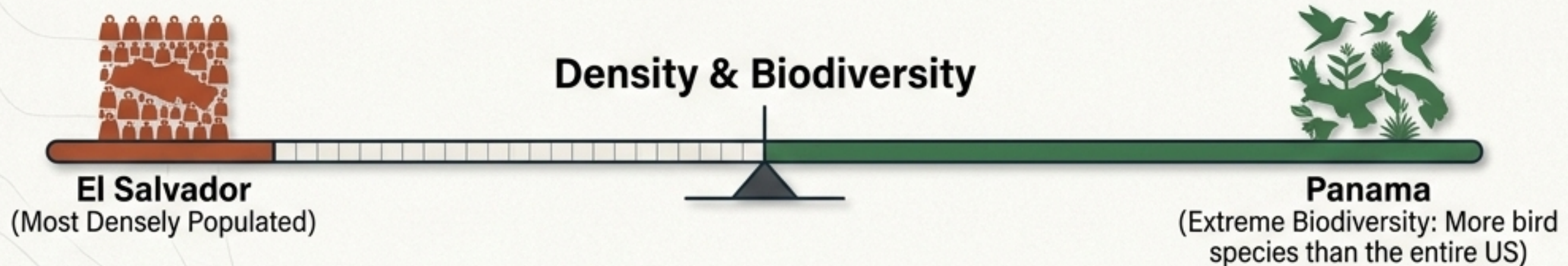
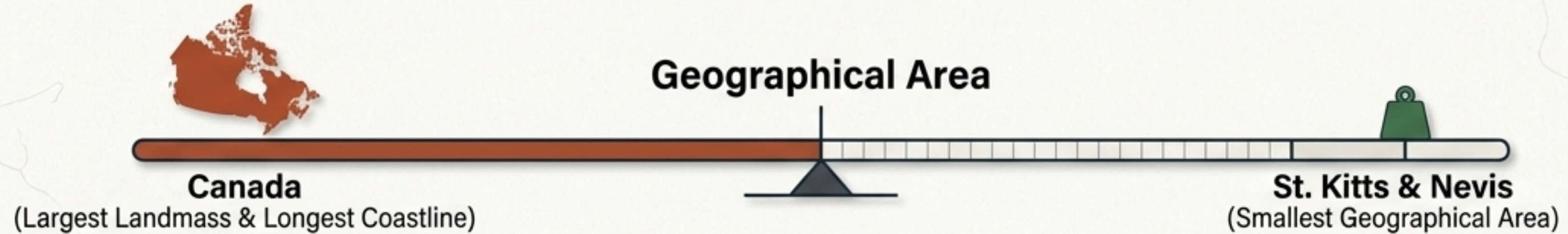
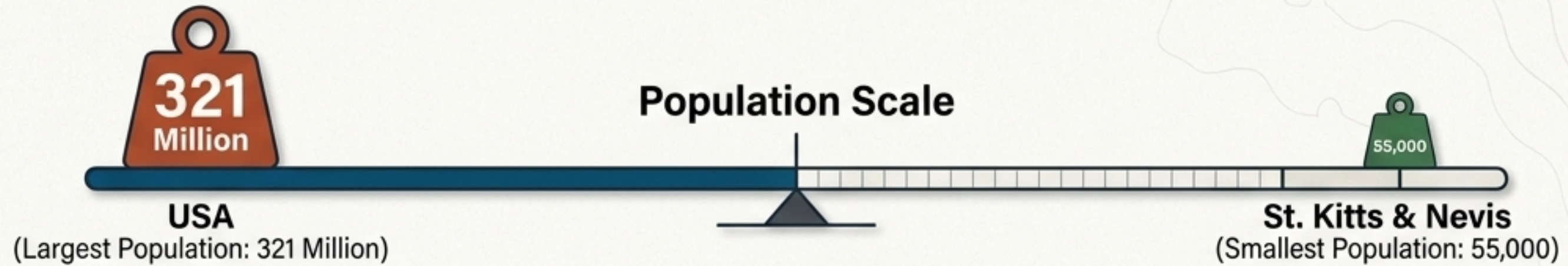
(Panama City | 4M):
The southernmost NA
country. Controls the
Panama Canal connecting
Pacific/Atlantic; hosts more
bird species than the
continental US.

Costa Rica

(San Jose | 5M):
Often mistaken for an island;
deer is the national animal.



Extremes of Scale



Takeaway Note: North America is defined by its disparities—housing both the world's largest economy (USA) and tiny, isolated micro-nations consisting of uninhabited volcanic islands.

The North American Mosaic

596 Million People.

**23
Sovereign Nations.**

**3
Dominant Colonial
Languages + Hundreds
of Indigenous Languages.**



Synthesis Statement: From polar bears in Nuuk to the drive-through volcanoes of St. Lucia, and from the Aztec temples of Mexico City to the rainforests of Trinidad—North America is far more than three nations. It is a vast, deeply interconnected network of 23 sovereign states shaped by ancient civilizations, colonial histories, and remarkable geographic diversity.