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photo to come
To celebrate the millennium, the Royal Bank of Canada produced a 60-minute video entitled *Royal Bank’s Over Canada*. It consists of stunningly photographed aerial views of this country, carefully edited to take us on a journey from Newfoundland to Nunavut to British Columbia. It highlights the enormity of this country and the great differences in physical geography that exist across it. But it also makes evident the great impact on the landscape of human endeavour, whether it be from roads, railroads, canals, fortifications, farms, villages, or cities. Even the unsettled and supposedly wild or remote areas of Canada have been included in the video. These are all places that have been mapped, named, and appropriated by us as an important part of our image of “Canada.”

Over the course of the hour-long video, viewers realize that human impacts have combined to create distinctive patterns across the landscape. For example, the small, scattered cottages and wharves of Newfoundland fishing villages such as Twillingate are strung out around small bays, facing the sea, the source of their livelihood. In Manitoba, on the other hand, viewers catch a glimpse of the regimented line of grain elevators along the railroad at Inglis and the small grid-planned town laid out behind them. In the distance stretch hectares of farmland laid out according to vast rectangular surveys, dotted with regularly spaced farmhouses, each surrounded by a windbreak of trees. Such a view contrasts with other agricultural scenes, such as one shown along Quebec’s Richelieu River, where the “long lot” field boundaries of the first French colonists still survive in today’s landscape.

Geographers suggest that an important reason why these human landscapes are so distinctive is that they have been shaped by different cultures. Cultures may respond differently to the challenges of the physical realm, and different cultural attitudes toward living arrangements or land ownership can have very different impacts on the “look of the land.” In short, that “look of the land” is what geographers have called the cultural landscape.

Culture has been and continues to be a central concept in geography, although our understanding of its meaning and its impact have changed considerably over the last two decades. In this chapter, we examine the many ways that geographers have explored the concept of culture and the insights they have gained from these explorations. We explore the questions, What counts as culture? How do geographers study it?

In this chapter, we distinguish between a geographer’s approach and an anthropologist’s approach to culture. After providing background on some of the earliest approaches to cultural geography, we examine the many new ways that geographers have begun to address culture.

**Main Points**

- Though culture is a central, complex concept in geography, it may be thought of as a way of life involving a particular set of skills, values, and meanings.
- Geographers are particularly concerned about how place and space shape culture and, conversely, how culture shapes place and space. They recognize that culture is dynamic, and is contested and altered within larger social, political, and economic contexts.
- Like other fields of contemporary life, culture has been profoundly affected by globalization. However, globalization has not produced a homogenized culture so much as it has produced distinctive impacts and outcomes in different societies and geographical areas as global forces come to be modified by local cultures.

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Contemporary approaches in cultural geography seek to understand the roles played by politics and the economy in establishing and perpetuating cultures, cultural landscapes, and global patterns of cultural traits and cultural complexes.

Cultural geography has been broadened to include analysis of gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity, stage in the life cycle, and so on, in recognizing that important differences can exist within, as well as between, cultures.

Cultural ecology, an offshoot of cultural geography, focuses on the relationship between a cultural group and its natural environment.

Political ecologists also focus on human–environment relationships but stress that relationships at all scales, from the local to the global, are intertwined with larger political and economic forces.

Culture as a Geographical Process

Geographers have long been involved in trying to understand the manifestations and impacts of culture on geography, and of geography on culture. While anthropologists are concerned with the ways in which culture is created and maintained by human groups, geographers are interested not only in how place and space shape culture but also the reverse—how culture shapes place and space.

Anthropologists, geographers, and other scholars who study culture, such as historians, sociologists, and political scientists, agree that culture is a complex concept. Over time, our understanding of culture has been changed and enriched. A simple understanding of culture is that it is a particular way of life, such as a set of skilled activities, values, and meanings surrounding a particular type of economic practice. Scholars also describe culture in terms of classical standards and esthetic excellence in, for example, opera, ballet, or literature.

By contrast, the term culture has also been used to describe the range of activities that characterize a particular group, such as working-class culture, corporate culture, or teenage culture. Although all of these understandings of culture are accurate, for our purposes they are only partial. Broadly speaking, culture is a shared set of meanings that are lived through the material and symbolic practices of everyday life (Figure 5.1). The “shared set of meanings” can include values, beliefs, practices, and ideas about religion, language, family, gender, sexuality, and other important identities. Culture is often subject to re-evaluation and redefinition, and ultimately altered from both within and outside a particular group.

Culture is a dynamic concept that revolves around complex social, political, economic, and even historical factors. This definition of culture is part of a longer, evolving tradition within geography and other disciplines such as anthropology and sociology. We will look more closely at the development of the cultural tradition in geography in the following section, in which we discuss the debates surrounding culture within the discipline.

For much of the twentieth century, geographers, like anthropologists, have focused most of their attention on material culture as opposed to its less tangible symbolic or spiritual manifestations. Thus, while geographers have been interested in religion as an object of study, for a long time they have largely confined their work to examining its material basis. For example, they have explored the spatial extent of particular religious practices (for example, the global distribution of Buddhism) and the expression of religiosity (for example, the appearance of wayside shrines in Quebec, Figure 5.2). In the last 20 or so years, the near-exclusive focus on material cultural practices has changed—driven by the larger changes that are occurring in the world around us.

As with agriculture, politics, and urbanization, globalization has also had complex effects on culture. Terms such as world music and international television are a reflection of the sense that the world has become a very small place, indeed, and people everywhere are sharing aspects of the same culture through the widespread
influence of television and other media. Yet, as pointed out in Chapter 2, while powerful homogenizing global forces are certainly at work, the world has not become so uniform that place no longer matters. With respect to culture, just the opposite is true. Place matters more than ever in the negotiation of global forces, as local forces confront globalization and translate it into unique place-specific forms. Nothing perhaps better illustrates this than music, which has both the formalism to preserve traditional cultural forms and the fluidity to adopt new characteristics. For example, the traditional French lyrics and tunes of the Acadians deported from Nova Scotia were merged in the Cajun music of Louisiana with African and Aboriginal-American rhythms, and played on a variety of instruments— including the French fiddle, the German accordion, and the washboard, a local addition. This distinctive style, with variants such as zydeco, was altered yet again and became part of “world music” when Paul Simon combined it with the rhythmic pulses of South Africa’s Ladysmith Black Mbaza in his 1986 Graceland album. International attention has not harmed traditional Cajun music, which, if anything, has enjoyed renewed interest in the last 20 years as Cajuns have sought to re-establish their regional identity as a French-speaking culture in North America.

The place-based interactions occurring between culture and global political and economic forces are at the heart of cultural geography today. Cultural geography focuses on the ways in which space, place, and landscape shape culture at the same time that culture shapes space, place, and landscape. As such, cultural geography demarcates two important and interrelated parts. Culture is the ongoing process of producing a shared set of meanings, while geography is the dynamic setting in which groups operate to shape those meanings and, in the process, to form an identity and conduct their lives. Geography in this definition can be as small as the micro space of the body and as large as the macro space of the globe.

Building Cultural Complexes

Geographers have long been interested in the interactions between people and culture, and among space, place, and landscape. One of the most influential individuals in this regard was Carl Sauer, a geographer who taught at the University of California. Sauer was largely responsible for creating the “Berkeley school” of cultural geography (Figure 5.3). He was particularly interested in trying to understand the material expressions of culture by focusing on their manifestations in the landscape. This

Figure 5.1 Youth culture The term culture has been used to describe a range of practices characterizing a group. Pictured here is a youth culture known as gothic. Hairstyle, dress, and body adornment, as well as a distinctive philosophy and music, characterize gothic culture. Yet culture is more than just the physical distinguishing aspects of a group. It is also a way in which groups derive meaning and attempt to shape the world around them.

cultural geography: study of the ways in which space, place, and landscape shape culture at the same time that culture shapes space, place, and landscape

Figure 5.2 Wayside shrines in Quebec Wayside shrines are commonly seen in the French-Catholic parts of Quebec’s countryside. Their purpose is to show respect and devotion. They are also a public display of religiosity outside of the formal bounds of church-based worship, and a particular characteristic of a regional cultural group.
interest came to be embodied in the concept of the cultural landscape, a characteristic and tangible outcome of the complex interactions between a human group—with its own practices, preferences, values, and aspirations—and a natural environment. Sauer differentiated the cultural landscape from the natural landscape. He emphasized that the former was a “humanized” version of the latter, such that the activities of humans resulted in an identifiable and understandable alteration of the natural environment. Figure 5.4 illustrates the idea through a listing of the differences between a natural and a cultural landscape.

For roughly five decades, interest in culture within geography largely followed Sauer’s important work. His approach to the cultural landscape was ecological, and his many published works reflect his interest in trying to understand the myriad ways that humans transformed the surface of Earth. In his own words:

The cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a cultural group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape is the result. Under the influence of a given culture, itself changing through time, the landscape undergoes development, passing through phases, and probably reaching ultimately the end of its cycle of development. With the introduction of a different—that is an alien—culture, a rejuvenation of the cultural landscape sets in, or a new landscape is superimposed on remnants of an older one.2

In Europe, geographers interested in human interactions with the landscape produced slightly different approaches. For example, in Great Britain, the approach to understanding the human imprint on the landscape was given the term historical geography, while in France it was conceptualized as genre de vie. Historical geography, very simply defined, is the geography of the past. One of its most famous practitioners was H.C. Darby, who attempted to understand how past geographies changed, or evolved, into more recent geographies (Figure 5.5). Genre de vie, a key concept in Vidal de la Blache’s approach to cultural geography in France, refers to a functionally organized way of life that is seen to be characteristic of a particular cultural group (Figure 5.6). Genre de vie centres on the livelihood practices of a group, which are seen to shape physical, social, and psychological bonds. Although emphasizing some landscape components over others or giving a larger or smaller role to the physical environment, all of these approaches placed the cultural landscape at the heart of their study of human–environment interactions. You will remember from Chapter 1 how important the concept of region was for Vidal de la Blache. The region is still very important as a concept in today’s cultural geography.

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H.C. Darby most successfully implemented his historical approach to geography by developing a geography of the *Domesday Book*. William the Conqueror ordered the survey that became known as “Domesday” (from the Saxon word *dom*, or “judgment”) to be compiled in 1085, so that he could have a list of his spoils of war. The book provides a rich catalogue of the ownership of every tract of land in England and of the conditions and contents of the lands at that time. For geographers like Darby, such data are invaluable for reconstructing past geographies, but they often emphasize economic factors at the expense of a cultural approach to the study of the past.

Vidal de la Blache, on the other hand, emphasized the need to study small, homogeneous areas in order to uncover the close relationships that exist between people and their immediate surroundings. He constructed complex descriptions of pre-industrial France that demonstrated how the various *genres de vie* emerged from the possibilities and constraints posed by local physical environments. Subsequently, he wrote about the changes in French regions brought on by industrialization, observing that regional homogeneity was no longer the unifying element. Instead, the increased mobility of people and goods had produced new, more complex geographies wherein previously isolated *genres de vie* were being integrated into a competitive, industrial economic framework. Anticipating the widespread impacts of globalization, de la Blache also recognized how people in various places struggled to mediate the big changes that were transforming their lives.

Geographers have also been interested in understanding specific aspects of culture, ranging from single attributes to complex systems. One simple aspect of culture of interest to geographers is the idea of special traits, which include such things as distinctive styles of dress, dietary habits, and styles of architecture. A cultural trait is a single aspect of the complex of routine practices that constitute a particular cultural group. As an illustration, let us pursue the example of folk and vernacular architecture since this is a topic beloved by cultural geographers. In one of the most important pieces of work in North American cultural geography, Fred B. Kniffen showed how patterns of folk housing in the United States could be used to distinguish three major American cultural regions on the eastern seaboard and to track the subsequent diffusion of those cultures across the continent. In the years that have followed, a distinguished group of geographers and anthropologists (most notably Terry Jordan and Henry Glassie) have added to the research on this topic.

Following in this tradition, recent research on Canada by Peter Ennals and Deryck Holdsworth has shown us how the single cultural trait of architecture can be studied and how it can contribute to the broader identification of cultural regions in this country (Figure 5.7). Ennals and Deryck show that in the areas of Canada first settled by Europeans, migrants built houses that were very similar in style and building technique to those found in the areas of Europe from which they had come. In Newfoundland, versions of English and Irish cottages were erected. In Acadia and Quebec, houses were built that copied the regional patterns found in France at the time.

Obviously, having no time to experiment and heavily conditioned by their own images of what a house should look like, these early settlers simply replicated the styles they knew. In this way, at least, Canada was “a simplification of Europe overseas,” as some Canadian cultural geographers have described it. Certainly, as we shall see from Chapter 6, these settlers were engaged in their own version of “place-making” and re-creating in this country a world they knew.

From about 1750, however, another element is added to the mix—that of fashion. By now, many Canadian settlers had become a little more prosperous and could afford to rebuild their houses. In doing so, they turned to styles affected by new...
ideals of domestic privacy and by the “polite” architecture of the neo-Georgian houses being built by Canada’s elite for themselves. In this way, Ennals and Holdsworth argue that earlier folk styles were replaced by what they call vernacular architecture. This “everyday” or “common” architecture, developed in Canada, maintains a set of distinct regional styles, ranging from the exuberance of the porches of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, to the “eyebrow” designs of the nineteenth-century Ontario farmhouse with its distinctive dormer window. The latter has become so quintessentially Ontarian that its design elements are echoed in many subdivisions currently under development across the province (Figure 5.8).

Increased immigration and growing urbanization in the nineteenth century did little to erode these patterns. In fact, they added their own distinctive contributions since the need to adapt vernacular styles to the high-density demands of

Figure 5.7 Vernacular architectural regions in Canada Geographers have shown that architectural style is an important characteristic of the cultural region and that differences in architecture are one way of distinguishing different cultural regions. This map shows the major types of vernacular (that is, “everyday”) domestic architecture found in Canada at the end of the nineteenth century. The pattern reflects the traditional, or “folk,” architectural styles of Canada’s major European colonizers, adapted to this country’s environment and modified over time as more modern ideas about style diffused across Canada. (Sources: Based on drawings by Karine Arakelian. House types a and c-f based on Peter Ennals and Deryck W. Holdsworth, “The Look of Domestic Building, 1891.” In William Dean et al., Concise Historical Atlas of Canada, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998, Plate 30; house types b, g, and h from Peter Ennals and Deryck W. Holdsworth, Home-place: The Making of the Canadian Dwelling over Three Centuries. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998, pp. 195–196, 210.)
Canada’s cities was met in different ways. In Montreal, for example, the duplex and triplex styles were developed, designs almost unique in North America, possibly inspired by the city’s Scottish immigrants with their memories of Glaswegian tenement life. In Toronto, the classic farmhouse morphed into the gothic row house. During early twentieth-century expansion in Vancouver, the bungalow, perhaps inspired by immigrants from California, was the leading suburban form of housing.

Meanwhile, out on the Prairies, history was repeating itself with new waves of immigration. By the late nineteenth century, settlers from central Europe were building farmhouses in the styles of that region. From Verigin, Saskatchewan, to Dauphin, Manitoba, the farm architecture of Ukraine, Poland, and Russia was adopted as the design for barns, houses, and churches. Prosperity, when it occurred, was marked this time by the purchase of plans or ready-made houses from the T. Eaton Co. The vernacular architecture of the Prairies became a literally off-the-shelf, central Canadian design made in Toronto that could be seen in countless small towns across the West.

A love of rational planning and the lure of profit from mass production served to suppress regional differences in building styles during the second half of the twentieth century. However, Postmodernism’s rejection of uniformity (see Chapter 6) and the real estate industry’s realization that “difference sells” have been more than sufficient to rejuvenate interest in Canadian regional patterns of vernacular architecture in recent times.

A concept key to traditional approaches in cultural geography is the cultural region. Although a cultural region may be quite extensive or very narrowly described and even discontinuous in its extension, it is the area within which a particular cultural system prevails. A cultural region is an area where certain cultural practices, beliefs, or values are more or less practised by the majority of the inhabitants.

Illustrations of cultural regions abound in Canada. For example, parts of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island comprise the Acadian cultural region. The population of the area is made up mainly of a long-settled community of French-speaking, Roman Catholic people who have a series of distinct cultural traits, as we have already seen, for example, in connection with music, folk architecture, and, as we shall see below, language.

To take another example, the Manitoba lowlands (sometimes known as the Manitoba plain or the Agassiz region, after the glacial lake that once covered the area) is an area that was settled by hundreds of thousands of immigrants from continental Europe, who farmed this part of the province in the years before 1914. The settlers’ adherence to an agricultural way of life and to their central European cultural region: the area within which a particular cultural system prevails
traditions serves to define this area as a cultural region. At a finer scale of analysis, this region is, in fact, made up of a great variety of subregions—each the home of a distinctive culture, which gives a specific flavour to a particular community. In their study *The Last Best West*, Yossi Katz and John Lehr provide a detailed analysis of the varied cultural landscapes that were established. They show, for example, how Mennonites, who emigrated from southern Russia in the 1870s, created very distinctive agricultural landscapes around Winkler, Altona, and Steinbach. The European nucleated village form and open-field system of collective farming that they initially reproduced in Manitoba were unusual in an area whose Anglo-American immigrants favoured dispersed settlement on land that was individually farmed. Although abandoned as a way of life in the 1920s, these settlement forms gave a social cohesion to Mennonite society that has contributed to the retention of their culture in this region of varied cultures. In describing this variety, John Warkentin has written, “Distinctive communities such as Icelanders at Gimli, Mennonites in Southern Manitoba, Ukrainians in the Dauphin area, French in St. Boniface and St. Pierre, Métis in southeast Manitoba, and Ontarians in Portage la Prairie are still visible.”

To these well-known and established illustrations, we should add examples of ones that are still coalescing around shared cultural values. Around Nelson, in southeast British Columbia, for example, a long countercultural tradition has attracted a considerable number of artists, environmentalists, and community activists in recent years. Their impact on the landscape can be seen in developments as varied as the renovation of old Main Street stores into cooperatively-run stores selling local art and the individually designed houses and organic farms that can be found scattered along the nearby Slocan Valley.

**Cultural Systems**

Broader than the cultural complex concept is the concept of a cultural system, a collection of interacting components that, taken together, shape a group’s collective identity. A cultural system includes traits, territorial affiliation, and shared history, as well as other more complex elements such as language. In a cultural system, it is possible for internal variation to exist in particular elements at the same time that broader similarities lend coherence. For example, Christianity unites all Protestant religions, yet the practices of particular denominations—Lutherans, Episcopalians, and Quakers—vary. And, while Mexicans, Bolivians, Cubans, and Chileans exhibit variations in pronunciation, pitch, stress, and other aspects of vocal expression, they all speak Spanish. This means they share a key element of a cultural system (which, for these nationalities, also includes Roman Catholicism and a Spanish colonial heritage).

**Geography and Religion**

Two key components of a cultural system for most of the world’s people are religion and language. Religion is a belief system and a set of practices that recognize the existence of a power higher than humans. Although religious affiliation is on the decline in some parts of the world’s core regions, it still acts as a powerful shaper of daily life, from eating habits and dress codes to coming-of-age rituals and death ceremonies in both the core and the periphery. And, like language, religious beliefs and practices change as new interpretations are advanced or as new spiritual influences are adopted. The most important influence on religious change has been

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5See, for example, the Nelson and District Chamber of Commerce website at [www.discovernelson.com](http://www.discovernelson.com) and click on “Arts and Culture” under “Attractions.”
conversion from one set of beliefs to another. From the onset of globalization in the fifteenth century, religious *missionizing*—propagandizing and persuasion—and the conversion of non-Christian souls were key elements. In the 500 years since the onset of the Columbian Exchange, conversion of all sorts has escalated throughout the globe. In fact, since 1492, traditional religions have become dramatically dislocated from their sites of origin through missionizing and conversion, as well as diaspora and emigration. Whereas missionizing and conversion are deliberate efforts to change the religious views of a person or people, diaspora and emigration involve the involuntary and voluntary movement of people who bring their religious beliefs and practices to their new locales.

**Diaspora** is a spatial dispersion of a previously homogeneous group. The processes of global political and economic change that led to the massive movement of the world’s populations over the last five centuries have also meant the dislodging and spread of the world’s many religions from their traditional sites of practice. Religious practices have become so spatially mixed that it is a challenge to present a map of the contemporary global distribution of religion that reveals more than it obscures. This is because the global scale is too gross a level of resolution to portray the wide variation that exists among and within religious practices. **Figure 5.9** identifies the contemporary distribution of what are considered by religious scholars to be the world’s major religions because they contain the largest number of practitioners globally. As with other global-scale representations, the map is useful in that it helps to present a generalized picture.

**Figure 5.10** identifies the source areas of four of the world’s major religions and their diffusion from those sites over time. The map illustrates that the world’s major religions originated and diffused from two fairly small areas of the globe.

**Figure 5.9  World distribution of major religions** The map shows a generalized picture of the world’s major religions. Most of the world’s peoples are members of one of these religions. Not evident on this map are the local variations in practices, as well as the many other different religions that are practised worldwide. (Although known in the West primarily as philosophies, Taoism and Confucianism both also developed religious traditions, and so are included on this map.) (Source: Map projection, Buckminster Fuller Institute and Dymaxion Map Design, Santa Barbara, CA. The word Dymaxion and the Fuller Projection Dymaxion™ Map design are trademarks of the Buckminster Fuller Institute, Santa Barbara, California, ©1938, 1967, & 1992. All rights reserved.)
The first, where Hinduism and Buddhism (as well as Sikhism) originated, is an area of the lowlands of the subcontinent of India drained by the Indus (Punjab on the map) and Ganges rivers. The second area, where Christianity and Islam (as well as Judaism) originated, is in the deserts of the Middle East.

Hinduism was the first religion to emerge, among the peoples of the Indo-Gangetic Plain, about 4000 years ago. Buddhism and Sikhism evolved from Hinduism as reform religions, with Buddhism appearing around 500 B.C. and Sikhism developing in the fifteenth century. It is not surprising that Hinduism shaped and helped to produce new religions because India has long been an important cultural crossroads. As a result, ideas and practices originating in India spread rapidly at the same time that other ideas and practices were being brought to India from far-flung places and then absorbed and translated to reflect Indian needs and values. For example, Buddhism emerged as a branch of Hinduism in an area not far from the Punjab. At first, a very small group of practitioners surrounding Prince Gautama, the founder of the religion, was confined to northern India. Slowly and steadily, however, Buddhism dispersed to other parts of India and was carried by missionaries and traders to China (100 B.C. to A.D. 200), Korea and Japan (A.D. 300–500), South-east Asia (A.D. 400–600), Tibet (A.D. 700), and Mongolia (A.D. 1500) (see Figure 5.11). Not surprisingly, as Buddhism spread, it developed many different regional forms such that Tibetan Buddhism is distinct from Japanese Buddhism.

Christianity, Islam, and Judaism all developed among the Semitic-speaking people of the deserts of the Middle East. Like the Indo-Gangetic religions, these three religions are also related. Although Judaism is the oldest, it is the least widespread. Judaism originated about 4000 years ago, Christianity about 2000 years ago, and Islam about 1300 years ago. Judaism developed out of the cultures and beliefs of Bronze Age peoples and was the first monotheistic (belief in one God) religion. Although the oldest monotheistic religion and one that spread widely and rapidly, Judaism is numerically small because it does not seek new converts. Christianity developed in
Jerusalem among the disciples of Jesus; they proclaimed that he was the Messiah expected by the Jews. As it moved east and south from its hearth area, Christianity's diffusion was helped by missionizing and imperial sponsorship. The diffusion of Christianity in Europe is illustrated in Figure 5.12. Although we discuss Islam and Islamism elsewhere in this chapter, it is important to point out here that Islam, like Christianity, was for centuries routinely spread by the force of conversion for the purposes of political control.

An excellent illustration of the global forces behind the changing geography of religion is the Columbian contact with the New World. Before Columbus and later Europeans reached the continents of North and South America, the people living there practised, for the most part, various forms of animism and related rituals. They viewed themselves holistically, as one part of the wider world of animate and inanimate nature. They used religious rituals and charms to guide and enhance the activities of everyday life as well as the more extreme situations of warfare. Shamanism, in which spiritually gifted individuals are believed to possess the power to control preternatural forces, is one important aspect of the belief system that existed among Native American populations at the time of European contact (Figure 5.13).

European contact with the New World was, from the beginning, accompanied by Christian missionizing efforts directed at changing the belief systems of the Aboriginal peoples and converting them to what the missionizers believed to be...
Figure 5.12 Spread of Christianity in Europe  Christianity diffused through Europe largely through missionary efforts. Monks and monasteries were especially important as hubs of diffusion in the larger network. The shaded areas indicate those places where Christian converts dominated by the year A.D. 300.  (Source: C. Park, Sacred Worlds. London; Routledge, 1994, p. 107.)

Figure 5.13 Pre-Columbian religions in North America  Before European contact, the indigenous populations in North America had developed a range of religious practices, as shown on the map. Religious traditions based on agrarian practices diffused from south to north, while those religious traditions based on hunting diffused from north to south.  (Sources: Atlas of the North American Indian by Carl Waldman, maps and illustrations by Molly Braun. Copyright © 1985 Carl Waldman. Reprinted by permission of Facts on File, Inc.)
“the one, true religion” (Figure 5.14). Religion, especially for the Spanish colonizing agents, was especially important in integrating the indigenous population into the feudal system.

Perhaps what is most interesting about the present state of the geography of religion is how, during the colonial period, religious missionizing and conversion flowed from the core to the periphery. In the current postcolonial period, however, the opposite is becoming true. For example, the fastest-growing religion in the United States today is Islam, and it is in the core countries where Buddhism is making the greatest number of converts. While Pope John Paul II has been the most widely travelled pontiff in Roman Catholic history, the same can be said for the Tibetan Buddhist religious leader, the Dalai Lama, who is also a tireless world traveller for Buddhism. The Pope’s efforts are mostly directed at maintaining Roman Catholic followers and attempting to dissuade their conversion to other religions, such as evangelicalism in the United States and Latin America. We should also note that the bulk of the world’s Roman Catholics will be located in Latin America if present population growth trends continue (see Chapter 3). The Dalai Lama is promoting conversion to Buddhism by carrying its message to new places, especially in the core (Figure 5.15).

One other impact of globalization on religious change occurs by conversion through the electronic media. The rise of television evangelism, or televangelism—especially in the United States—has led to the conversion of large numbers of people to Christian fundamentalism. Figure 5.16 maps the Sunday audiences for the five leading independent religious television programs in the United States, illustrating a loosely formed televangelism cultural region that stretches from Virginia and northern Florida in the East and from the Dakotas to central Texas in the West.

**Geography and Language**

Geographers have also been interested in understanding other aspects of cultural systems, such as languages. Language is an important focus for study because it is a central aspect of cultural identity. Without language, cultural accomplishments could not be transmitted from one generation to the next. The distribution and diffusion of languages tells much about the changing history of human geography and the impact of globalization on culture. Before looking more closely at the geography of language and the impacts of globalization on the changing distribution of languages, however, it is necessary to become familiar with some basic vocabulary.

**Figure 5.14  Mission at Sainte-Marie-Among-the-Hurons** This historically exact re-creation was built in the 1960s on the actual site of a seventeenth-century Jesuit mission to the Hurons, in what is now Midland, Ontario.

**Figure 5.15  The Dalai Lama** China’s refusal to acknowledge an independent Tibet has sent the Dalai Lama on numerous international tours to broadcast the plight of Tibetans, who are experiencing extreme persecution. The practices of Buddhism are increasingly being accepted by Westerners over the teachings of Christianity and Judaism. High-profile practitioners, such as the actor Richard Gere, have helped to give Buddhism cachet.
Language is a means of communicating ideas or feelings by means of a conventionalized system of signs, gestures, marks, or articulate vocal sounds. In short, communication is symbolic, based on commonly understood meanings of signs or sounds. Within standard languages (also known as official languages because they are maintained by offices of government, such as education and the courts), regional variations, known as dialects, exist. Dialects emerge and are distinguishable through differences in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary that are place-based in nature.

For the purposes of classification, languages are divided into families, branches, and groups. A language family is a collection of individual languages believed to be related in their prehistoric origin. About 50 percent of the world’s people speak a language that originated from the Indo-European family. A language branch is a collection of languages that possess a definite common origin but have split into individual languages. A language group is a collection of several individual languages that are part of a language branch, share a common origin in the recent past, and have relatively similar grammar and vocabulary. Spanish, French, Portuguese, Italian, Romanian, and Catalan are a language group, classified under the Romance branch as part of the Indo-European language family.

Language is probably one of our greatest cultural creations and, as we shall see, a creation that is inherently geographical in its place-marking and place-making abilities. Through language, we describe our world in our own words and, by our use of that language, provide others with some indication of where we are from. Regional accents can enable those familiar enough with our language to tell exactly where within a region we were brought up. And, within the vocabulary and structure of our languages, we preserve a distant memory of where our distant ancestors originated. Let us briefly consider the most important aspects of each of these three points.

The Memory of Language Language is such a sophisticated cultural creation that it retains a memory of its past within its present form. One of the first people to realize this was Sir William Jones, an employee of the British East India Company. In 1786, he recognized the close similarities between Sanskrit (an extinct East Indian language retained for sacred use) and many European languages, both extinct (such as Latin) and extant (such as English or French). If you look at Table 5.1 you will see the often astonishing similarities in vocabulary between these languages.
The proto-Indo-European language may have originated about 6000 years ago in a steppe region somewhere between the Black Sea and the Caspian, or in Anatolian Turkey. Its vocabulary (here shown by the use of an asterisk to denote a reconstructed word) has been reconstructed by linguistic experts on the basis of correspondences between daughter languages (the name given to those languages that are descended from a common original) and known rules of linguistic change over time. P-I-E is believed to be the ancestor of extinct languages (such as Latin and Sanskrit) and many languages of the Indo-European family (such as English, French, and Hindi) currently spoken in the world today. The difference between these languages and those from other language families can be seen in the comparison with Japanese.


Jones asserted, correctly as it turned out, that all of these languages are related to one another (the “Indo-European” language family, see Figure 5.17) and that they have all descended from a now lost language called “proto-Indo-European.” The passage of time and the migration of peoples, who then lost contact with one another, have been sufficient to change proto-Indo-European into the many languages of the Indo-European language family we hear today. (Note that the present global distribution of Indo-European languages is much greater than that shown in Figure 5.17, which describes the situation before European expansion and globalization carried the languages of the colonizers around the world.)

The obvious questions about where and when proto-Indo-European was originally spoken can also be investigated by again examining the language itself. Scholars of linguistics have been able to reconstruct some of the vocabulary of proto-Indo-European (for some examples, see Table 5.1). On the basis of that vocabulary, they have suggested that it developed between 6500 and 4500 years ago. This is because proto-Indo-European had words for domesticated crops (such as wheat and barley), domesticated animals (horse and goat), and for wheeled vehicles (chariot), but not for iron. In other words, its date of origin is likely to be after the agricultural revolution of the Neolithic Age but before the Iron Age.

Pinpointing a region of origin is much harder. Some scholars, for example, have used references to types of trees (such as beech) or fish (the salmon) in the reconstructed vocabulary as indicators of the original environment in which proto-Indo-European developed. Unfortunately, however, these species are too widely distributed across Eurasia for such environmental information to be of great help.
On the other hand, the fact that the proto-language contains no words for plants such as the olive is generally agreed to rule out a Mediterranean origin. (This type of reasoning is called an argument from silence.) These difficulties have not prevented continued speculation about the cultural hearth (geographical origin or source of innovations, ideas, or ideologies) where proto-Indo-European first developed. Using assumptions based on the diffusion of agriculture, the spread of early peoples, and archaeological evidence, a variety of regions have been proposed. These range from Anatolia in Turkey (Professor Renfrew’s view) to the steppes land between the Black Sea and the Caspian (Dr. Mallory’s suggestion). Whether view ultimately proves correct, it now seems almost certain, in the words of two Russian scholars, that “Europe is seen, therefore, as the destination, rather than the source, of Indo-European migration.”\(^6\)

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That migration seems to have spared four areas in Europe where Indo-European languages are not indigenous (see Figure 5.17). Finnish, Estonian, and Hungarian are members of the Uralic language family (believed to have originated in the northern Urals around 6000 B.C.). The Basque language of northeastern Spain and southwest France is an isolate, a language that has no known relationship with any other and cannot be assigned to a language family. We can gain an impression of how different Basque is from its vocabulary for the numerals 1 through 10, which are bat, bi, biru, lau, bost, sei, zazpi, zortzi, beheratzi, and hamar. Recent research by L.L. and F.C. Cavalli-Sforza on European genetics also indicates the distinctiveness of the Basques. Whether they are descended from a pre-Neolithic people who were not completely absorbed by a westward-moving, Indo-European–speaking Neolithic people is an intriguing possibility.

The story of Europe’s indigenous languages is only one of many that linguists have attempted to unravel. Work on the languages of the Pacific, for example, seems to support the current theories of migration and settlement we examined in Chapter 1. Indeed, it was Captain Cook who first recognized the similarities between Hawaiian and the indigenous languages of the South Pacific islands he knew. Alone among the great navigators of his day, he believed that these apparently “primitive” peoples had the abilities to navigate the great distances involved, and saw that the connection of language supported his view.

Let us now consider Canada. Historical linguists speculate that the thousands of indigenous languages that probably existed in the Americas on the eve of European contact can be divided into just three groups. These are known as the Amerindian, Na-Dene, and Eskimo-Aleut language families. Languages within each of these families can still be found within what is now Canada (see Figure 5.17). Scholars also believe that there may have been three separate phases of migration from Asia to the Americas (see Chapter 4, Figure 4.8).

Putting these two ideas together has led to speculation that these three language families might be descended from three “proto-languages” brought over at different times by Asian settlers to the New World. Certainly, the fact that Eskimo-Aleut is both the least differentiated of the language families (its only member is the Inuit language, Inuktitut), and the most recent arrival in Canada (moving across the Canadian Arctic about 4000 years ago) is evidence for this claim. Amerindian and Na-Dene, on the other hand, were introduced into this continent at least 10 000 years ago and rapidly developed into the hundreds of indigenous languages of the Americas.

Of course, such a model is highly speculative, but if we leave it aside, the fact that Canada’s West Coast contains a far greater number of Aboriginal languages than either the Prairies or the Eastern Woodlands is probably indicative of the much greater antiquity of language development in British Columbia than in the rest of this country.

Language and Regional Identity Because language is spoken by people who occupy space and is an intrinsic part of culture, it is not surprising that language has always been seen as an important characteristic of the cultural region. Many groups speak with pride about their language and will strongly identify with it, using language as part of the means to establish ethnic, regional, and national differences.

Canada is no exception in this regard. Indeed, many see disputes over language as a particularly distressing part of this country’s identity. Figure 5.18 shows the provincial and territorial distribution of the leading languages spoken as a mother tongue, or first language learned at home in childhood and still understood, across this country. Canada has two official languages, English and French, in which the business of the federal government is conducted. Government policies of “multiculturalism” indicate a tolerance of other languages, but the reality of the

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workplace shows that a proficiency in English or French is an important determinant of an individual’s economic success. As a result, although recent immigrants to this country are not required to learn the official languages, many decide to do so.

According to the 1996 census, 17.1 million Canadians reported English as their mother tongue, an increase of almost a third since 1971. This English-speaking, or anglophone, portion of the population made up about 60 percent of the country’s population in 1996 (approximately the same proportion of Canadians it represented).
in 1971). A considerable range existed around this national average. The highest proportion of anglophones was found in Newfoundland (where 98.6 percent of the population recorded their mother tongue as English); the lowest in Quebec (9.2 percent). Provinces with large recent immigrant populations, such as Ontario and British Columbia, recorded anglophone figures of 74.6 percent and 78.9 percent respectively.

The size of Canada's francophone, or French-speaking, population was 6.7 million in 1996. Although this figure has increased in absolute terms since 1971, as a proportion of the total population of Canada, it has fallen from 29 percent in 1951 to less than 24 percent in 1996. (Quebec's low francophone fertility rates and the relatively small number of francophone immigrants to Canada are the main causes of this decline.) According to 1996 census figures, 86 percent of Canada's francophones lived in Quebec (where they represent 82 percent of that province's population).

In Quebec, the use of French is very much seen as an intrinsic part of the “nationalist project” and is also an established part of provincial government policy. Both of the leading provincial political parties (the Liberals and the Parti Québécois) have been conscious of the minority position of the French language in Canada and North America as a whole. Realizing that this position was further weakened by a decline in the provincial birth rate among francophones and an increase in the number of allophone immigrants to the province (those whose mother tongue is neither English nor French) who adopted English, both parties have taken legislative steps to encourage the greater use of French in Quebec. Through legislation such as Bill 101, the government has acted to ensure the use of French in government, in public schools, and even on street signs. A provincial agency (l'Office de la langue française) has the responsibility for monitoring public compliance (Figure 5.19).

Although initially the target of much opposition, especially from Quebec's large anglophone and allophone communities, which represented 8.8 percent (622,000 people) and 9.7 percent (682,000 people) of Quebec's population in 1996, this policy has now become accepted as a fact of life in the province, and one that no political party can afford to oppose (Figure 5.20).²

Outside of Quebec, the francophone population totals 970,000 and is found mainly in the two provinces of Ontario and New Brunswick, where it is declining in relative size. “Language islands,” to use geographer Donald Cartwright's phrase, that historically contained significant numbers of francophones just inside the Ontario border (from Hawkesbury to Cochrane) and anglophones within Quebec (such as the Eastern Townships) have steadily eroded over the years to leave a much starker geographical divide between French-speaking Quebec and the rest of the country.

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²A well-received discussion of these issues in English can be found in the recent work of two scholars at Montreal's Institut national de la recherche scientifique. Annick Germain and Damaris Rose, Montréal: The Quest for a Metropolis. Chichester: Wiley, 2000, Chapter 7 “Language, Ethnic Groups, and the Shaping of Social Space,” especially pp. 230–247.
Bilingualism in English and French, a necessary feature of the language islands, is also the hallmark of a federal government policy to show Quebec that Canada as a whole could also be a home for francophones. The 1996 census records that 17 percent (4.8 million) of the country’s population were bilingual in English and French, a figure that had increased from 13 percent in 1971. The highest rates of bilingualism were recorded in Quebec (38 percent of the population) and New Brunswick (33 percent). Urban centres such as Montreal (50 percent), Ottawa-Hull (44 percent), and Sudbury (40 percent) also have sizeable bilingual populations.

In terms of Canada’s allophone population, the 1996 census records that there were 4.7 million people in this country who spoke neither English nor French as their mother tongue. This represents nearly 17 percent of the total population, a figure that had risen from 13 percent in 1971, fuelled by Canada’s large immigration flows from non-English, non-French speaking countries (see Chapter 3). Indeed, as Table 5.2 shows, there were significant changes even over those 25 years. In Canada, in 1971, the leading allophone languages most often spoken at home (the **home language**) were German, Italian, and Ukrainian. In 1996, the top three were Chinese, Italian, and Punjabi.

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**Table 5.2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Francophones as a percentage of total population, 1991</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 79.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anglophones as a percentage of total population, 1991</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 79.9%</td>
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<td>over 80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Figure 5.20 The language divide in Montreal**  As these maps based on 1991 census data show clearly, the English- and French-speaking populations of Montreal (the anglophone and francophone communities) maintain separate existences. The traditional boundary of St. Laurent Boulevard can still be seen as demarcating these two groups. Bridging the “two solitudes,” the allophone communities (made up of people who speak neither English nor French as their mother tongue) have developed language geographies of their own.  *(Source: R.A. Murdie and C. Teixeira, “The City as Social Space,” in T. Bunting and P. Filion (eds.), Canadian Cities in Transition: The Twenty-First Century, 2nd ed. Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2000, Figure 9.8, p. 218.)*

**home language:** the language most often spoken at home by an individual (as defined by Statistics Canada)
TABLE 5.2 Canada’s Top 10 Home Languages, 1971 and 1996
(Excluding English and French)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>1971</th>
<th>Home Language</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Italian</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. German</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ukrainian</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Punjabi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Greek</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Chinese</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Portuguese</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Polish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Polish</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>7.</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Hungarian</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Hungarian</td>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>Aboriginal</td>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Aboriginal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Canada 1996 Census Results Teacher’s Kit (www.statcan.ca/english/kits/kits.htm). The 1996 results combine single and multiple responses to the question of which language (other than English or French) is spoken most often at home.

Interestingly, of those 4.7 million people in 1996 who reported allophone languages as their mother tongue, only 2.8 million said that they continued to use an allophone language as their home language. The discrepancy between mother tongue and home language provides demographers and statisticians with a way of recording the degree of language shift that has occurred as newcomers slowly take up one of this country’s official languages. The 1996 census data, for example, shows us that 40 percent of allophones now speak English or French at home, a figure somewhat smaller than in 1991, perhaps because of the relative youth of the current immigrant cohorts in this country.

Given the recent pattern of immigration, it is not surprising to see that allophones account for 22 percent of the population in both British Columbia and Ontario. Given immigration’s urban focus, the fact that almost 20 percent of all people under 15 years of age in Toronto and Vancouver used an allophone language at home in 1996 (two and a half times the national average of 8 percent) should not be a surprise either, although it is evidently one that now stretches the educational resources of those two cities as they struggle to teach students from many different language backgrounds and to meet the demand for English as a Second Language (ESL) courses.

Statistics Canada’s first reports on the 2001 census show that changes in the composition of Canada’s language groups have continued the major trends shown in the 1996 Census. In 2001, almost 5.34 million people (or 1 in 6 people) were allophones, with over 100 different languages reported as mother tongues. Of these languages, Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin) reaffirmed its dominance as the leading allophone mother tongue, being reported as such by 872 400 people in 2001.

Nevertheless, despite the increasing size of the allophone population, official languages predominated overall. The 2001 census recorded that 9 out of 10 people spoke English or French most often at home. Language shift remains an important

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language shift: an indicator of the number of people who adopt a new language, usually measured by the difference between mother tongue and home language populations

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reason for this dominance. Thus the proportion of the population that spoke English most often at home (67.5 percent) was much higher than the proportion whose mother tongue was English (59.1 percent).

Nationally, the position of French as a mother tongue continued to decline. The 2001 census recorded that the francophone population represented 22.9 percent of Canada's population, a decline from 23.5 percent in 1996. This decline is underscored by figures on language shift: in 2001, the proportion of the population that spoke French most often at home (22 percent) was slightly lower than the 22.9 percent who reported it as their mother tongue.

French, however, is getting stronger in Montreal. The census reports that in this city, slightly over 20 percent of allophones spoke French most often at home in 2001 (compared with 16 percent in 1996), and the number of people whose mother tongue was French increased, for the first time in 30 years, by 14 500 from 1996. Overall, in 2001, the proportion of people in Montreal speaking French at home rose, reversing a 50-year trend. Despite the fact that the 2001 census also records an increase in the size of the three leading Aboriginal language groups, according to a recent UNESCO publication, Canada's Aboriginal languages are among the most endangered in the world. As of 1996, only 3 of the 50 Aboriginal languages currently spoken in this country can be considered secure, and at least a dozen are on the brink of extinction. Over the years, the numbers of native language speakers has been reduced through slaughter and disease, forced assimilation in residential schools, and the economic and political necessity of learning English or French. The death in 1829 of the last known speaker of the Beothuk language of Newfoundland was but the first of a series of Aboriginal language extinctions that continues to this day. For example, the British Columbian languages of Haida (with only 240 speakers left in 1996), Tlingit (145), and Kutenai (120) are almost certain to join that list in the very near future.

The 1996 census records approximately 800 000 Aboriginal people in Canada (a figure which, as Chapter 3 noted, is somewhat incomplete). Of this total, 25 percent reported that they spoke an Aboriginal language as a mother tongue. Of these, the majority spoke Cree (76 475), Ojibway (22 625), or the languages of the Inuktitut language family (26 840). (The 2001 census recorded the sizes of these three language groups as 80 000, 29 700, and 23 500, respectively.) However, when asked about the language most used at home, only 15 percent of the total in 1996 used an Aboriginal language. This statistic gives us an overall indication of the measure of language shift into English or French that is occurring.

For a more detailed picture of this shift, experts have derived an index of continuity. This index shows, for every 100 people with an Aboriginal mother tongue, the number who used an indigenous language most often at home. An index number below 30 is indicative of a language that is endangered, because at that point the language is not being passed on to enough children to enable it to survive. Overall, the index declined from 76 to 65 between 1981 and 1996. Over that period, the index varies from 12 for British Columbia's Salish languages to 65 for Cree and 84 for Inuktitut.

As Mary Jane Norris has recently remarked in a useful study of Canadian Aboriginal languages, the loss of language does not equate with the death of a culture, but it can severely handicap its future. The vocabulary that each language develops is unique, and its loss therefore diminishes a people's ability to describe phenomena in terms most appropriate to it. Perhaps the most famous illustration of this point is the number of words that the Inuit have for snow (Table 5.3), a range of vocabulary brought about by the importance of snow in their way of life. Given how

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12The paragraphs on Aboriginal languages are based on M.J. Norris, “Canada’s Aboriginal Languages,” Canadian Social Trends, Statistics Canada, Catalogue 11-008, Winter 1998, pp. 8–16; and Statistics Canada, “1996 Census: Aboriginal data,” The Daily, January 13, 1998 (www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/980113/d980113.htm). The distinctions between Aboriginal languages and language families are from these sources, as are the English spellings used here.
important language is to a sense of cultural identity, the issue of language extinction has to be a very important one that should concern us—whether it occurs in the global core or in the periphery (Figure 5.21).

**TABLE 5.3 Inuit Words for “Snow”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inuktitut Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>anuigaviniq</td>
<td>very hard, compressed, or frozen snow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apijaq</td>
<td>snow covered by bad weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apigiannagaut</td>
<td>the first snowfall of autumn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>katakartanaq</td>
<td>snow with a hard crust that gives way under footsteps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kavisilaq</td>
<td>snow roughened by rain or frost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kinirtaq</td>
<td>compact, damp snow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mannguq</td>
<td>melting snow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masak</td>
<td>wet, falling snow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>matsaaq</td>
<td>half-melted snow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>natiruvaq</td>
<td>drifting snow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pukak</td>
<td>crystalline snow that breaks down and separates like salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qannialaq</td>
<td>light-falling snow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qiasuqaq</td>
<td>snow that has thawed and refrozen with an ice surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qiqumaq</td>
<td>snow whose surface has frozen after a light spring thaw</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Aboriginal Times 6(8), April 2002, p. 44.

**Figure 5.21 Extinct and threatened languages in Africa** It is not absolutely certain how many languages are currently being spoken worldwide, but the estimates range between 4200 and 5600. While some languages are being created through the fusion of an indigenous language with a colonial language such as English or Portuguese, indigenous languages are mostly dying out. Although only Africa is shown in this map, indigenous languages are dying out throughout the Americas and Asia as well.
There are signs of hope. A 1991 survey of Aboriginal peoples noted that nine out of ten adults would like to relearn an Aboriginal language they once spoke. Another hopeful sign is the growth of Aboriginal languages as second languages (rather than as mother tongues or languages used most frequently at home) in a number of communities. For example, for every person with Kutenai as their mother tongue, there are two able to speak it. In light of these possibilities, it is not surprising that the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples has recommended that efforts at language retention should be actively pursued. A third hopeful development has been the establishment of the Territory of Nunavut, where the Inuit language of Inuktitut will be able to maintain its vitality (Figure 5.22).

**Dialects** The use of English and French in Canada provide us with a further insight into the place-making abilities of language. This is because the way in which these languages are now spoken in Canada differs sufficiently from the way they are spoken in England and France that native speakers on either sides of the Atlantic can tell them apart. In fact, both have developed Canadian versions, or dialects, based on distinct accents, vocabulary, and grammar. Similarly, Spanish and Portuguese have developed distinct New World variants. Indeed, we could sum up this phenomenon as “new worlds, old words.”

Clearly, these differences must have been caused in some way by the emigration experience. Scholars have identified two general processes, and we can easily see them at work in the Canadian case:

- When people move, their language escapes the changes in vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciation that occurs in the region of origin. The various experiences of the French language in Canada well illustrate this point. The majority of the original French settlers of Quebec came from north of the Loire River in France, a region where a variety of northern French dialects were spoken. The bulk of those who had earlier settled the Acadian regions of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick came from western France, between the Loire and the Pyrenees, where southern dialects of French were spoken (see Figure 5.23).

These differences have been preserved in the two regional dialects of French that developed in Canada (for example, Acadian French retains the southern Loire verb éparer, meaning “to hang a net out to dry” whereas Quebec French uses the verb étendre). Another variant of Acadian French is the Cajun dialect of Louisiana, in the southern United States, where many Acadians settled after their deportation from Nova Scotia. Ne lache pas la patate (literally, “Don’t drop the potato”) is a popular Cajun expression, meaning “Don’t give up,” which would be expressed as N’abandonne pas in France.
At the same time that these dialects were consolidating their position in Canada, they were being made obsolete in France itself. Following the French Revolution of 1789, the central government suppressed the various regional dialects and languages of France in the belief that the use of one language (Parisian French) would unite the country and promote egalitarianism. From 1789 onward, therefore, the French spoken in Canada has preserved older forms of French than found in France itself. The Quebec French verb *gager*, meaning “to bet,” has long been replaced by the verb *parier* in France. Sinclair Robinson and Donald Smith’s very useful dictionary of Quebec and Acadian French shows how extensive the difference between these long separated forms of French have now become.¹³

When people move, their language undergoes considerable changes in vocabulary as people adapt to their new surroundings. We can illustrate this process by the experience of the English language in Newfoundland. Settled from the seventeenth century onward by English-speaking fishing people from southwest England and Ireland, the Newfoundland environment was very different from anything these people had experienced before. A great variety of words were needed to describe this particular new world.¹⁴ Many were existing English words, now given new meaning or more use in these new surroundings (*cod* being a very obvious example).

Entirely new words were also created in abundance. As might be expected, many of these were for types of fish (*caplin*) and fish processing (a *water-horse* was a pile of salt cod left to drain after soaking in brine). Others were developed to describe the seal at all stages of its life cycle (a *bedlamer* being an immature seal) and the many forms of ice Newfoundlanders encountered (*ballicatter, clumper, quarr, sish, slob*). Evidence from 1578 even suggests that the word *penguin* was first developed in Newfoundland to describe the now extinct Great Auk, and may derive from the Welsh *pen gwyn* (“white head”).


Newfoundland English is spoken with an accent that echoes the pronunciation of Irish and the southwestern parts of England. In terms of grammar, our third requirement for a distinct dialect, *The Dictionary of Newfoundland English* provides a list of 10 unique constructions. These range from the use of “to be” after doing (something), as in “how many times am I after telling you,” to the addition of “–en” to adjectives for materials, as in “tinnen cup” and “glassen pole.”

We have considered these two processes of dialect formation separately for ease of comprehension, but in reality, of course, both types often worked in unison. In Nova Scotia, for example, the Acadians were confronted with a marshland environment for which they soon developed a new vocabulary (including words such as *aboiteau* to describe the special type of dam built to farm the coastal marshes). And, in Newfoundland, archaic English words have survived that have long since been abandoned in England itself (words such as *fadge*, “to manage on one’s own,” or *dwy*, “a gust of wind”).

So far, we have considered three distinct dialectical regions in this country. You might have expected that outside of these very obvious regions, we would not be able to find other dialectical areas in Canada. High levels of immigration of non-English, non-French speakers from all over the world and the relatively recent settlement of the rest of this country certainly work against the processes we have discussed above. However, even here we see the effects of the core–periphery model. Only in the metropolitan core of this country are immigration and mobility levels sufficiently high to prevent dialect formation. Outside the cities, in the Canadian periphery, where immigration levels are much lower and the length of residence much longer, it is still reasonable to expect regional accents and dialects to emerge.

Certainly, experts with a keen ear say that it is possible to divide the remainder of English-speaking Canada into additional local dialectical areas. These regions are: the Maritimes, eastern Ontario (typified by the “Ottawa Valley” accent of Irish origin), western Ontario (with its distinctive pronunciation of words such as “about,” pronounced “aboot”), the Prairies (where the presence of large numbers of rural immigrants from all over Europe has had almost a century to exert an influence over the use of English), and British Columbia (where the effects of relative isolation and much more recent immigration may be heard).

Cultural Nationalism

The protection of regional languages is part of a larger movement in which geographers and other scholars have become interested. The movement known as cultural nationalism is an effort to protect regional and national cultures from the homogenizing impacts of globalization. *Figures 5.24* and *5.25* provide a picture of two widespread aspects of U.S. culture—film and television. In addition to films and television programs, other U.S. products also travel widely outside of U.S. borders (*Figure 5.26*). While many products of U.S. culture are welcomed abroad, many are not. France, for example, has been fighting for years against the “Americanization” of its language. And Canada, as we know, is very wary of the cultural influence of the United States.

Nations can respond to the homogenizing forces of globalization and the spread of U.S. culture in any number of ways. Some groups may attempt isolationism as a way of sealing themselves off from undesirable influences. Other groups may attempt to legislate the flow of foreign ideas and values, which is the case in some Muslim countries.

Islam and Islamism

After Christianity, Islam possesses the next largest number of adherents worldwide—about 1 billion. A Muslim is a member of the community of believers whose duty is obedience and submission (*ism*lam) to the will of God. As a revealed religion, Islam recognizes the prophets of the Old and New Testaments of the bible, but Muhammad is considered the last prophet and God’s messenger on Earth. The Koran, the principal holy book of the Muslims, is considered to be the word of God.
Figure 5.24  World film production and imports, 1994  These maps show the number of films both produced by different countries around the world and imported. As expected, core countries are much more likely to be film producers, and they import fewer films as a result. For instance, the United States produces four times more films than it imports. In the semiperiphery, India, a country with an enormously popular film industry, produces eight times more films than it imports. Contrast these examples with Chile, which in the late 1990s produced only 1 film and imported 220.  (Source: UNESCO, World Culture Report, Table 2b: www.unesco.org/culture/worldreport/html_eng/table2.htm. Maps and Graphics, copyright © 1991 by Swanston Publishing Limited. Map projection, Buckminster Fuller Institute and Dymaxion Map Design, Santa Barbara, CA. The word Dymaxion and the Fuller Projection Dymaxion™ Map design are trademarks of the Buckminster Fuller Institute, Santa Barbara, California, ©1938, 1967, & 1992. All rights reserved.)
The ability to receive television broadcasts no matter who is exporting or producing them depends, of course, on access to a television set. In some areas of the periphery—for example, in some of the wealthier South American countries—there are over 300 television sets per 1000 people. In much of sub-Saharan Africa, however, there are fewer than 10 sets for every 1000 people. In the core, in countries such as Canada and Japan, there is on average one colour television set per household, as well as a high level of ownership of video-cassette recorders. (Source: Reprinted with permission from Prentice Hall, J.M. Rubenstein, The Cultural Landscape: An Introduction to Human Geography, 6th ed., ©1999, p. 142.)
as revealed to Muhammad beginning in about A.D. 610. The map in Figure 5.27 shows the relative distribution of Muslims throughout Europe, Africa, and Asia; Figure 5.28 shows the heartland of Islamic religious practice.

As the two illustrations show, the Islamic world includes very different societies and regions from Southeast Asia to Africa. Muslims comprise over 85 percent of the populations of Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, and most of the newly independent republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus (including Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan). In Albania, Chad, Ethiopia, and Nigeria, cultural systems

**Figure 5.26 Seri tribal woman and boom box** Pictured in this photograph is a Seri tribal woman from Sonora, Mexico. She is dressed in traditional garments and carries a boom box. Although their total population was probably never more than a few thousand, the Seri now number only about 500. They make their livelihood from hunting, gathering, fishing, and craft production for tourism. Living along the coastal desert of the Gulf of California, the Seri have had a great deal of contact with non-Seri peoples and have adopted and modified many of the items that have been exchanged in these contacts. Boom boxes are not an unusual consumer item among the Seri, but it is interesting to note that other traditions—in this case, dress—have changed very little through outside contact. (Source: Mujer Angel, Desierto de Sonora, Mexico, 1980. Photograph by Graciela Iturbide. © Graciela Iturbide. Collection Center for Creative Photography, The University of Arizona.)

**Figure 5.27 Muslim world** The diffusion of Islam is much more widespread than many people realize. Like the Spanish colonial effort, the rise and growth of Muslim colonization was accompanied by the diffusion of the colonizers’ religion. The distribution of Islam in Africa, Southeast Asia, and South Asia that we see today testifies to the broad reach of Muslim cultural, colonial, and trade activities. (Source: D. Hiro, Holy Wars. London: Routledge, 1989.)
Muslims make up 50 to 85 percent of the population. In India, Myanmar, Cambodia, China, Greece, Slovenia, Thailand, and the Philippines, significant Muslim minorities also exist.

Disagreement over the line of succession from the prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam, has resulted in the emergence of two main sects, the Sunni and the Shi’a. The majority of Iran’s 60 million people follow Shi’a, the official State religion of the Islamic Republic of Iran, founded in 1979. The majority of Iraq’s population is also Shi’a, even though the government headed by Saddam Hussein is Sunni. Besides the majority Sunni and Shi’a, small splinter groups and branches also exist, especially among the Shi’a.

Perhaps one of the most widespread cultural counterforces to globalization has been the rise of Islamism, more popularly—although incorrectly—known as Islamic fundamentalism. Whereas fundamentalism is a term that describes the desire to return to strict adherence to the fundamentals of a religious system, Islamism is an anti-colonial, anti-imperial, and overall anti-core political movement. The last-mentioned description is the most accurate and general one of a movement within Muslim countries to resist the core forces of globalization, namely modernization and secularization. Not all Muslims are Islamists, although Islamism is the most militant movement within Islam today.

The basic intent of Islamism is to create a model of society that protects the purity and centrality of Islamic precepts through the return to a universal Islamic State—a State that would be religiously and politically unified. Islamists object to modernization because they believe the corrupting influences of the core place the rights of the individual over the common good. They view the popularity of Western ideas as a move away from religion to a more secular (nonreligious) society. Islamists desire to maintain religious precepts at the centre of State actions, such as re-introducing principles from the sacred law of Islam into State constitutions.

As popular media reports make clear, no other movement emanating from the periphery is as widespread and has had more of an impact politically, militarily, economically, and culturally than Islamism. Yet Islamism—a radical and sometimes militant movement—should not be regarded as synonymous with the practices of Islam any more generally than Christian fundamentalism is with Christianity. Islam is not a monolithic religion, and even though all accept the basic creeds, specific practices may vary according to the different histories of countries, nations, and tribes. Some expressions of Islam are moderate and allow for the existence and integration of Western styles of dress, food, music, and other aspects of culture, while others are extreme and call for the complete elimination of Western things and ideas (Figure 5.29).
Maintaining Cultural Borders: Canada and the United States

Not only the periphery is resisting cultural imperialism. Australia, Britain, France, and Canada also have formally attempted to erect barriers to U.S. cultural products. The most aggressive moves have been made by Canada, which has developed an extensive and very public policy of cultural protection against the onslaught of U.S. music, television, magazines, films, and other art and media forms (Figure 5.30).

In early 1995, for example, the Canadian government levied an 80 percent excise tax against Time Inc.’s Canadian version of *Sports Illustrated* magazine, because it did not think the version was Canadian enough. The authorities complained that too many of the articles were directed at U.S. sports issues and not enough at Canadian ones.

Other government bodies, such as the National Film Board of Canada and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), are also active in monitoring the media for the incursion of U.S. culture. For example,
30 percent of the music on Canadian radio must be Canadian. Consequently, Nashville-based Country Music TV was discontinued from Canada’s cable system in the early 1990s and replaced with a Canadian-owned country music channel.

Besides regulating how much and what type of U.S. culture can travel north across the border, the Canadian government also sponsors a sort of “affirmative action” grant program for this country’s own cultural industries. Critically-acclaimed television programs, such as DaVinci’s Inquest, a drama series about a Vancouver coroner, are subsidized by the government. The internationally famous music group, Crash Test Dummies, produced its first album with the help of a $60,000 grant from the Canadian government. In short, the story surrounding cultural nationalism is that the struggle to control cultural production is an intense one. This is especially true for Canada, which continues to struggle to establish an independent identity beyond the shadow of the United States.

Culture and Identity

In addition to exploring cultural forms, such as religion and language, and movements, such as cultural nationalism, geographers have increasingly begun to ask questions about other forms of identity. This interest largely has to do with the fact that certain long-established and some more recently self-conscious cultural groups have begun to use their identities as a way of asserting political, economic, social, and cultural claims.

Sexual Geographies

One such identity that has captured the attention of cultural geography is sexuality. Sexuality is a set of practices and identities that a given culture considers related to each other and to those things it considers sexual acts and desires. One of the earliest and most effective examples of the geographical study of sexuality is the examination of the spatial expression of prostitution. Research on prostitution in California found that sex work—as it is now more currently known—is spatially differentiated based on the target clientele as well as systems of surveillance. Paralleling the different classes of men that female sex workers service, those oriented to an upper-income clientele perform their work in the homes, hotels, and private areas of upper- and middle-class society. Female sex workers serving a lower-class clientele, however, tend to operate within more public spaces or to bring clients to their dwellings or hotel rooms in the locales where they are “street-walking” (Figure 5.31).

Not surprisingly, female sex workers at the lower end of the economic spectrum are more likely to be subject to police surveillance and other forms of public scrutiny because their advertising and work activities are largely carried out in public places. In contrast, those oriented toward a wealthier clientele have, in most cases, little or no obvious public identity. The distinction should be clear with respect to geography. The lower-class “red-light districts” of most cities, including Vancouver’s downtown Lower Eastside, Montreal’s St. Laurent–Ste. Catherine district, and the Barri Xines in Barcelona, are widely known to residents. But sex workers who serve a higher-income clientele do not conform to segregated workspaces. This difference was made clear in the highly publicized trial of Heidi Fleiss, who allegedly procured sex workers for some of the biggest stars in Hollywood. Although Fleiss obviously did not escape the notice of police (she was jailed), the sex workers and the clients she represented have mostly remained anonymous to the public. As these examples illustrate, sexuality is also an identity that is cross-cut with other identities such as class and certainly gender, race, and ethnicity.

More typical of contemporary work on sexuality in geography is that which explores the spatial constraints on homosexuality and the ways in which gays and lesbians respond to and reshape them. Two particular areas of research have emerged—gay and lesbian consumerism and political action.
The open expression of sexual preference in consumption has emerged in a phenomenon called pink spending. Use of the word pink is a direct reference to the pink triangle Hitler required homosexuals to wear in Nazi concentration camps. Consumer support by gays and other consumers of openly gay businesses has enabled the establishment of identifiable gay spaces in the form of shopping districts and neighbourhoods. These openly gay spaces have enabled gay communities in many of the core countries to gain significant political power in cities, regions, and even throughout the country. The gay-pride parades that occur in a number of major Canadian and U.S. cities each year are also a reminder of the demographic and political power of gays and lesbians. The parades exemplify attempts by homosexuals to resist the dominant ideology about sexuality and to occupy the spaces of cities on an equal footing with heterosexuals. The “Gay Village” along part of Montreal’s rue Ste. Catherine is now a major feature of the urban landscape and an important location for North American gay events. Recognizing the financial benefits, the City of Montreal has supported these events in recent years.

Given the emphasis that the forces of globalization have placed on commodities and consumption in the contemporary world, it is not surprising that gays and lesbians constitute a market for advertisers, retailers, clubs, and restaurants. Rejecting tourist destinations that may emphasize nuclear-family fun or romantic heterosexual vacation spots, gays and lesbians can consume different and specially marketed alternative destinations. Global gay tourism guides explicitly market places such as Amsterdam in Europe, San Francisco in the United States, and Rio de Janeiro in Brazil as “gay capitals,” offering alternative places of tourism for gay consumers.
A second approach to homosexuality has coalesced around AIDS political activism and so-called “queer tactics” employed by such groups as AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACTUP), Gay Men Fighting AIDS (GMFA), and Queer Nation. Members of these groups use direct forms of political action—more radically called *cultural terrorism*—to redefine what can be public in public space. These activists inhabit the public space in radically new ways through action meant to challenge the complacency of public agencies and conservative opponents. ACTUP, for example, has been militant in exposing the private sexual preferences of high-profile public figures. Alternatively, Queer Nation seeks a playful questioning of rigid constructions of sexuality such as gay versus straight, arguing that such rigid distinctions are misleading. Queer Nation’s direct forms of political action include kissing, holding hands, and dressing in drag in mainstream spaces such as city streets and shopping malls. All of these political actions centre around sexuality are explicit challenges to conventional ideas about what constitutes acceptable behaviour in public and private spaces.

### Ethnicity and the Use of Space

Ethnicity is another way in which geographers are exploring cultural identity. *Ethnicity* is a socially created system of rules about who belongs to a particular group based on actual or perceived commonality. A geographic focus on ethnicity is an attempt to understand how it shapes and is shaped by space, and how ethnic groups use space with respect to mainstream culture. For cultural geographers, territory is also a basis for ethnic group cohesion (see Chapter 9 for more on territory). For example, cultural groups—ethnically identified or otherwise—may be spatially segregated from the wider society in ghettos or ethnic enclaves (see Chapter 11). Or these groups may use space to declare their subjective interpretations about the world they live in and their place in it. The use of the city streets by many different cultural groups demonstrates this point (Figure 5.32).

Nineteenth-century immigrants to U.S. cities used the streets to broadcast their ideas about life in their adopted country. Ethnic parades in the nineteenth century—such as St. Patrick’s Day for the Irish and Columbus Day for the Italians—were often very public declarations about the stresses that existed among classes, cultures, and generations.

At the height of late nineteenth-century immigration, the Irish and many other immigrant groups, such as the Italians, Greeks, Poles, and Slavs, were largely shunned and vilified by the host society, and were relegated to low-paying jobs and poor housing. Publicly ridiculed in newspaper and other print venues, these groups took to the streets to reinterpret the city’s public spaces, even if only for a day. Released from a strict work routine of 10 to 15 hours a day, participants and spectators could use the parade to promote an alternative reality of pride and festivity, among other things. Participants acquired a degree of power and autonomy that was not possible in their workaday lives. Because of their festive and extraordinary nature, nineteenth-century parades temporarily helped to change the world in which they occurred.

The same can be said of cultural parades in the twentieth century. Montreal’s St. Jean Baptiste Day parade is a barometer of separatist feelings and is often a highly, politically charged event. Irish-American gay and lesbian groups in Boston and New York, with their own interpretations of “Irishness,” have been turned away from St. Patrick’s Day parades by the more mainstream interpreters of the term. Such a confrontation between ethnicity and sexuality also highlights how difficult it is to separate cultural identity into distinct categories. In different places, for different historical reasons, the complex combinations of cultural identities of race, class, gender, and sexual preference result in unique and sometimes powerful expressions.
Race and Place

Prevailing ideas and practices with respect to race have also been used to understand the shaping of places and responses to these forces. Race is a problematic classification of human beings based on skin colour and other physical characteristics. Biologically speaking, however, no such thing as race exists within the human species. Yet, consider the categories of race and place that correspond to “Chinese” and “Chinatown.” Powerful Western ideas about Chinese as a racial category enabled the emergence and perpetuation of Chinatown as a type of landscape found throughout many North American cities (Figure 5.33). In this and other cases, the visible characteristics of hair, skin, and bone structure made race into a category of difference that was (and still is) widely accepted and often spatially expressed.

The mainstream approach to neighbourhood is to see it as a spatial setting for systems of affiliation more or less chosen by people with similar skin colour. Recently, cultural geographers have begun to overturn this approach and to see neighbourhoods as spaces that affirm the dominant society’s sense of identity. For example, from the perspective of white society, nineteenth-century Chinatowns were the physical expression of what set the Chinese apart from Caucasians. The distinguishing characteristics revolved around the way the Chinese looked, what they ate, their non-Christian religion, their opium consumption, gambling habits, and other “strange” practices. Place—Chinatown—maintained and manifested differences between Caucasian and Chinese society. Furthermore, place continues

Figure 5.33 Chinatowns
Chinatowns are features of most major North American cities. (Source: Illustration, Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 77(44), December 1987.)

Race: problematic classification of human beings based on skin colour and other physical characteristics

to be a mechanism for creating and preserving local systems of racial classification within defined geographical confines. The homelands of South Africa, discussed in “Geography Matters 9.1” (Chapter 9), are also an illustration of the interaction of race and place, though at a much larger scale.

**Gender, Class, and Vulnerability**

Gender is an identity that has received a great deal of attention by cultural geographers within the last two to three decades. Gender is a category reflecting the social differences between men and women. As with other forms of identity, gender implies a socially created difference in power between groups. In the case of gender, the power difference gives males an advantage over females and is socially and culturally created rather than biologically determined. As with other forms of identity, class position can intensify the power differences among and between groups. Furthermore, the implications of these differences are played out differently in different parts of the world.

For example, Nigeria, part of the Sahelian region of central Africa, has been experiencing a severe drought that has lasted over many years (Figure 5.34). The rural populations have been particularly hard hit and, without adequate water supplies, have been unable to grow enough food for subsistence. The result has been widespread famine in the rural areas. One of these areas is Hausaland in northern Nigeria.

**Figure 5.34 Hausaland in northern Nigeria and southern Niger** This map of Hausaland shows the region of the Hausa people as straddling the political boundary between Nigeria and Niger. Standard political maps do not show the existence of Hausaland because it ceased to exist as a political entity at the beginning of the twentieth century, when it was divided between the French and the British. On both sides of the boundary, however, Hausa people make their living farming millet and sorghum in the sandy soil of the Sahelian desert.


Gender systems that identify men as more valuable than women create situations of increased vulnerability to drought and famine for women and children in Sahelian Africa. The additional constraints of Islamic law may also work against women’s ability to withstand the vicissitudes of natural disasters.
Nigeria where, because of the particularities of the gender and class systems, poor women, relative to their male counterparts, are especially vulnerable to malnourishment, undernourishment, and even starvation. Because of the gender system in Hausaland, women are more likely than men not to have access to food resources. Because of the class system in Hausaland, peasant and working-class women are more likely than their male counterparts and higher-class women born into the urban and rural aristocracy to lack access to money resources to purchase food.

In Hausaland as elsewhere, vulnerability to drought is linked to the inability to prepare for its likelihood; to make mitigating adjustments when it occurs; and to develop new strategies, after a drought occurs, to prepare for future ones. Gender vulnerability refers to the fact that contemporary gender relationships among the Hausa make it more difficult for women to cope and adjust to drought situations than men. For instance, in Muslim households men eat before women and children, who are then allowed to consume whatever is left. In periods of sustained drought and famine, it is routinely the case that after men have eaten, there is no food left for women and children.

Numerous other factors affect gender vulnerability to drought among the Hausa. As Table 5.4 indicates, these include lower pay for all forms of women’s work; restrictions on education for women; restrictions on direct access to public space; women’s dependence on child labour; and lack of job opportunities outside of the private sphere for women. In Hausa society, Islamic law operates variably among different geographically and socially located groups of women. While all of the factors listed in Table 5.4 are significant with respect to gender relations, they may operate more or less intensively on different classes of women.

In short, the power differentials of class mean that not all Muslim women in Hausaland experience the same level of vulnerability to drought. Table 5.5 outlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Effect</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low remuneration for all forms of women’s work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less ownership and control of the means of production</td>
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<td>Restrictions on education</td>
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<td>Competitive disadvantage</td>
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<td>Medium Effect</td>
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<td>Seasonal effects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spatial restriction on ability to sell labour power</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dependence on child labour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loss of parental rights through divorce</td>
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<td>Lack of job opportunities in the public sphere</td>
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<td>Discrimination in inheritance laws</td>
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<td>Summary divorce</td>
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<td>Inattention of government programs</td>
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<td>Low or Unknown Effect</td>
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<td>Virilocal (male-centred) marriage</td>
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the factors that increase Muslim peasant women’s vulnerability to drought relative to that of Muslim women in the ruling classes. In fact, women in the ruling classes tend to escape most aspects of drought vulnerability through their husbands’ or their own access to economic resources. Peasant and other poor women experience few, if any, such mitigating factors, however.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5.5</th>
<th>Factors Increasing Peasant Women’s Vulnerability (Relative to That of Women in Ruling Classes) to Drought</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Effect</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions to household subsistence</td>
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<td>Losses through sale of assets in distress</td>
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<td>Lack of investment capital</td>
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<td>Greater vulnerability to seasonal effects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smaller dowries</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Medium Effect</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Less reciprocal protection through extended family ties</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>More completely bound by domestic responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less access to child labour</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Low or Unknown Effect/Low Reliability of Data</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to educate children</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Early marriage of daughters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restriction on form of capital accumulation due to small compound size</td>
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Culture and the Physical Environment

While interest in culture and the built environment has become prominent among geographers over the last several decades, a great deal of attention continues to be paid to culture and the physical environment. As with Sauer’s original concept of the cultural landscape, geographers continue to focus their attention on people’s relationships to the natural world and how the changing global economy disrupts or shapes those relationships. In this section, we look at two related but distinct ways of understanding the relationship between culture and the natural environment—cultural ecology and political ecology.

Cultural Ecology

Cultural ecology is the study of the relationship between a cultural group and its natural environment. Cultural ecologists study the material practices (food production, shelter provision, levels of biological reproduction) as well as the non-material practices (belief systems, traditions, social institutions) of cultural groups. Their aim is to understand how cultural processes affect adaptation to the environment. Whereas the traditional approach to the cultural landscape focuses on human impacts on the landscape or its form or history, cultural ecologists seek to explain how cultural processes affect adaptation to the environment. Cultural adaptation involves the complex strategies human groups use to live successfully as part of a natural system. Cultural ecologists recognize that people are components of complex ecosystems, and that the way they manage and consume resources is shaped by cultural beliefs, practices, values, and traditions as well as by larger institutions and power relationships.
The cultural ecology approach incorporates three key points:

- Cultural groups and the environment are interconnected by systemic interrelationships. Cultural ecologists must examine how people manage resources through a range of strategies to comprehend how the environment shapes culture, and vice versa.
- Cultural behavior must be examined as a function of the cultural group’s relationship to the environment through both material and nonmaterial cultural elements. Such examinations are conducted through intensive fieldwork.
- Most studies in cultural ecology investigate food production in rural and agricultural settings in the periphery in order to understand how change affects the relationship between cultural groups and the environment.\(^{17}\)

These three points illustrate the way in which cultural geographers go about asking questions, collecting data, and deriving conclusions from their research. They also show how cultural ecology is both similar to and different from Sauer’s approach to the cultural landscape, described at the beginning of the chapter. While each point shares an emphasis on culture, in cultural ecology the cultural processes of particular groups, rather than the imprint that culture makes on the landscape, have come to take centre stage. As a result, cultural ecologists look at food production, demographic change and its impacts on ecosystems, and ecological sustainability. Additionally, the scale of analysis is not on cultural areas or cultural regions, but on small groups’ adaptive strategies to a particular place or setting.

The impact of Spanish agricultural innovations on the culture of the indigenous people of the Central Andes region of South America (an area encompassing the mountainous portions of Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador) presents an excellent case study in cultural ecology.\(^{18}\) The transformation of Andean culture began when Pizarro arrived in Peru from Spain in 1531 and set about vanquishing the politically, technologically, and culturally sophisticated Incan empire. The Spaniards brought with them not only domestic plants and animals (mainly by way of Nicaragua and Mexico), but also knowledge about how to fabricate the tools they needed and a strong sense of what was necessary for a “civilized” life.

By 1620, however, the indigenous Andean people had lost 90 percent of their population and had been forced to make significant changes in their subsistence lifestyles (an illustration of demographic collapse as discussed in Chapter 4). The Incan empire, with its large population base, had once engaged in intensive agricultural practices, including building and maintaining irrigation systems, terracing fields, and furrowing hillsides. With the severe drop in population and consequent loss of labour power, the survivors turned to pastoralism because herding requires less labour than intensive agriculture. Ultimately, it was the introduction of Old World domesticated animals that had the greatest impact on the Central Andes (Figure 5.35), another example of ecological imperialism (see Chapter 4).

Of the range of animals the peasants could have incorporated into their agricultural practices (including cattle, oxen, horses, donkeys, pigs, sheep, goats, rabbits, and turkeys), only a few animals were widely adopted. Sheep were by far the most important introduction and were kept by Andean peasants as early as 1560. In many areas, sheep herding soon replaced the herding of indigenous animals such as llamas and alpaca. By the seventeenth century, at elevations below 3500 metres (11 500 feet), sheep herding had been fully integrated into peasant economies and practices.

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Adoption of sheep herding was facilitated by several factors. Sheep wool was oilier than that produced by native animals, a quality that made wool clothing more water resistant. Sheep also provided a source of meat, tallow, and manure for farm plots and could become an important source of food to a family in times of flood, frost, or drought. Sheep had a higher fertility level and a lower mortality rate than native herd animals and did not require large inputs of labour to manage. Finally, unlike crops, sheep could be marched to market on their own feet—no small advantage in the rugged terrain of the Andes.

Pigs and goats also proved popular because they fit well into available niches of the peasant economy. Rabbits, on the other hand, even though they produced more meat, never replaced the native guinea pigs. Guinea pigs retained a high cultural value as they continued to be a featured food at Aboriginal ceremonies celebrating life-cycle events and curing rites. Likewise cows, though valued by the Spanish colonists, never became important to indigenous ways of life. Cows did not do well at higher altitudes or on steep terrain, and it was difficult to find appropriate fodder for them during the dry season. They also constituted a high risk, for they were an expensive investment and loss or theft created economic hardship for the owner.

The pattern of selective adoption among Central Andean peasants also extended to plants. Of the approximately two dozen crops they could have adopted, Andean peasants adopted only about half of them. Peasants based their planting decisions on usefulness, environmental fit, and competition from other plants. For example, of the various grain crops that were available (rye, barley, oats, and wheat), Andean peasants adopted only wheat and barley. Andean peasants began to cultivate these grains in the highlands as early as the 1540s.

Both wheat and barley found a good ecological “fit” within the Central Andes and could be integrated into the fallow cycles that the peasants had long practised. These crops also had the advantage of supplementing the peasants’ array of foods because they complemented—rather than competed with—cultivation of indigenous crops such as maize and potatoes (Figure 5.36).

By the 1590s, a “bundle” of Spanish cultural traits had been integrated into the Central Andean rural cultural complex, creating a hybrid rural culture. The hybridized culture—and cultural landscape—combined a much simplified version of Spanish material life with important (though altered) Incan practices of crop growing, herding, agricultural technology, and settlement patterns. That this hybrid cultural complex remains identifiable today, even after four centuries and in the face of contemporary globalizing forces, is due to a combination of factors: the peasants’ strong adherence to custom, their geographical isolation, and the poverty of their circumstances.

Following the three points outlined earlier, cultural ecologists have been able to understand complex relationships between cultural groups and their environment, showing how choices are shaped by both culture and environmental conditions. Some critics have argued, however, that this conceptual framework of cultural ecology leaves out other intervening influences of the relationship between culture and the environment, namely, the impact of the political and economic institutions and practices.

**Political Ecology**

During the 1980s, cultural ecologists began moving away from a strict focus on a particular group’s interactions with the environment, instead placing that relationship within a wider context. The result is political ecology, the merging of political economy with cultural ecology. **Political ecology** stresses that human–environment relationships can be adequately understood only by reference to the relationship of patterns of resource use to political and economic forces. Just as with the study of agriculture, industrialization, urbanization, and comparable geographical phenomena, this perspective requires an examination of the impact of the State and the market on the ways in which particular groups use their resource base.
Political ecology incorporates the same human–environment components analyzed by cultural ecologists. Yet, because political ecologists frame cultural ecology within the context of political and economic relationships, political ecology is seen to go beyond what cultural ecologists seek to understand.

Two studies of farming on St. Vincent and the Grenadines, an island nation in the Caribbean, illustrate this difference (Figure 5.37). You will perhaps remember from Chapter 4 that the Botanic Gardens in Georgetown, St. Vincent, was the place to which Captain Bligh brought the breadfruit specimens that he had transported from the Pacific. The Botanic Gardens remained a centre for agricultural innovation in the islands into the twentieth century, and St. Vincent’s leading export crop of the inter-war years—arrowroot—was first grown experimentally there.

Government reports from the 1940s stressed that soil erosion was the leading agricultural problem on St. Vincent. Official documents often blamed inappropriate farming methods as the cause. However, Grossman’s study of this period shows that more astute commentators realized that the political and economic constraints faced by the island’s peasantry contributed to soil loss during this period. Since the best land was owned by large agricultural estates, many of the islanders were forced to farm on slopes too steep for agriculture. Because average holdings were too small to support them, farmers could not afford to leave any land as fallow. And, because of the constant fear of eviction, farmers could not risk long-term measures needed to conserve the soil.

In recent years, agriculturalists on the main island of St. Vincent have shifted to banana production for export at the same time that local food production has begun to decline. Without recognizing the impacts of politics and the wider economy, it would be impossible to understand why these two processes are occurring simultaneously. Disincentives and incentives have both played a role. Disincentives to maintain local food production include marketing constraints, crop theft, competition from inexpensive food exports, and inadequate government agricultural extension assistance. Incentives to produce for export include state subsidies to export-oriented agriculture and access to credit for banana producers, as well as a strong British market for Caribbean bananas. As a result, local food production, although faced with the same environmental conditions as banana production, does not enjoy the same political and economic benefits. Because production for export is potentially more lucrative and an economically safer option, and to some extent because of changing dietary practices, local food production is a less attractive option for agriculturalists.

Figure 5.37  St. Vincent and the Grenadines  St. Vincent and the Grenadines are part of the island chain of the Lesser Antilles in the Caribbean Sea. The total population is about 116 400, occupying about 390 square kilometres (150 square miles).

As the St. Vincent case illustrates, the political ecology approach provides a framework for understanding how the processes of the world economy affect local cultures and practices. The St. Vincent case also indicates how State policies and practices and economic demand in the global economy shape local decision making. Furthermore, local cultural practices (especially dietary) are being abandoned as people develop a taste and preference for low-cost and convenient imported agricultural commodities (including flour and rice). Unfortunately, however, production for export also opens up the local economy to the fluctuations of the wider global economy. Recent changes in European Union policy on banana imports, for example, are having negative effects on banana production in St. Vincent. And those policy changes themselves are a response to American demands that Caribbean producers based in Europe’s ex-colonies no longer be allowed preferential access to Europe’s huge market. St. Vincent’s banana industry is therefore but another pawn in the politics of trade that globalization has caused.

Globalization and Cultural Change

The discussion of cultural geography in this chapter raises one central question: how has globalization changed culture? We have seen that it affects different cultural groups differently, and that different groups respond in different ways to these changes. With so much change occurring for so long, however, we must still ask ourselves what impact, overall, globalization is having on the multiplicity of culture groups that inhabit the globe.

Anyone who has ever travelled between major world cities—or, for that matter, anyone who has been attentive to the backdrops of movies, television news stories, and magazine photojournalism—will have noticed the many familiar aspects of contemporary life in settings that, until recently, were thought of as being quite different from one another. Airports, offices, and international hotels have become notoriously alike, and their similarities of architecture and interior design have become reinforced by near-universal dress codes of the people who frequent them. The business suit, especially for males, has become the norm for office workers throughout much of the world. Jeans, T-shirts, and athletic footwear, meanwhile, have become the norm for young people as well as those in lower-wage jobs. The same automobiles can be seen on the streets of cities throughout the world (though sometimes they are given different names by their manufacturers); the same popular music is played on local radio stations; and many of the movies shown in local theatres are the same (Titanic and Spider-Man, for example). Some of the TV programming is also the same—not just the music videos on MTV, but also CNN’s news, major international sports events, children’s series such as Sesame Street, drama series such as Baywatch, and comedy series such as Will and Grace and Friends. The same brand names also show up in stores and restaurants: Coca-Cola, Perrier, Carlsberg, Nestlé, Nike, Seiko, Sony, IBM, Nintendo, and Microsoft, to list just a few. Everywhere there is Chinese food, pita bread, pizza, classical music, rock music, and jazz.

It is these commonalities that provide a sense of familiarity among the inhabitants of the “fast world” that we described in Chapter 2. From the point of view of cultural nationalism, the “lowest common denominator” of this familiarity is often seen as the culture of fast food and popular entertainment that emanates from the United States. Popular commentators have observed that cultures around the world are being Americanized, or “McDonaldized,” which represents the beginnings of a single global culture that will be based on material consumption, with the English language as its medium (Figure 5.38).

There is certainly some evidence to support this point of view, not least in the sheer numbers of people around the world who view Sesame Street, drink Coca-Cola, and eat at McDonald’s franchises or similar fast-food chains. Meanwhile, U.S. culture is increasingly embraced by local entrepreneurs around the world. Travel writer Pico Iyer, for example, describes finding dishes called “Yes, Sir, Cheese My
Baby” and “Ike and Tuna Turner” in a local buffeteria in Guangzhou, China. It seems clear that U.S. products are consumed as much for their symbolism of a particular way of life as for their intrinsic value. McDonald’s burgers, along with Coca-Cola, Hollywood movies, rock music, and NFL and NBA insignia, have become associated with a lifestyle package that features luxury, youth, fitness, beauty, and freedom.

The economic success of the U.S. entertainment industry has helped reinforce the idea of an emerging global culture based on Americanization. In 1996, the entertainment industry was a leading source of foreign income in the United States, with a trade surplus of US$23 billion. Similarly, the United States transmits much more than it receives in sheer volume of cultural products. In 1995, the original versions of over half of all the books translated in the world (more than 20,000 titles) were written in English. In terms of international flows of everything from mail and phone calls to press-agency reports, television programs, radio shows, and movies, a disproportionately large share originates in the United States.

Neither the widespread consumption of U.S. and U.S.-style products nor the increasing familiarity of people around the world with global media and international brand names, however, adds up to the emergence of a single global culture. Rather, what is happening is that processes of globalization are exposing the inhabitants of both the fast world and the slow world to a common set of products, symbols, myths, memories, events, cult figures, landscapes, and traditions. Although, people living in Tokyo, Toronto, Turin, or Timbuktu may be perfectly familiar with these commonalities, they do not necessarily use or respond to them in uniform ways. Equally, it is important to recognize that cultural flows take place in all directions, not just outward from the United States. Think, for example, of European fashions in U.S. stores; of Chinese, Indian, Italian, Mexican, and Thai restaurants in U.S. towns and cities; and of U.S. and European stores selling exotic craft goods from the periphery.

A Global Culture?

The answer to the question, “Is there a global culture?” must therefore be no. While an increasing familiarity exists with a common set of products, symbols, and events (many of which share their origins in a U.S. culture of fast food and popular entertainment), these commonalities become configured in different ways in different places, rather than constituting a single global culture. The local interacts with the global, often producing hybrid cultures. Sometimes traditional, local cultures become the subject of global consumption; sometimes it is the other way around. This is illustrated very well by the case of two suqs (linear bazaars) in the traditional medieval city of Tunis, in North Africa. Both suqs radiate from the great Zaytuna Mosque, which was always the geographical focal point of the old city.

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One suq, which was once the suq, leads from the mosque to the gateway that connects the medieval core to the French-built new city, where most tourists tend to stay. The second sets off at right angles to another exit from the formerly walled city.

The first suq now specializes in Tunisian handicrafts, “traditional” goods, etc. It has kept its exotic architecture and multicoloured colonnades. The plaintive sound of the ancient nose flute and the whining of Arabic music provide background for the European tourists in their shorts and T-shirts, who amble in twos and threes, stopping to look and to buy. Few natives, except for sellers, are to be seen. The second suq, formerly less important, is currently a bustling madhouse. It is packed with partially veiled women and younger Tunisian girls in blouses and skirts, with men in knee-length tunic/toga outfits or in a variety of pants and shirts, with children everywhere. Few foreigners can be seen. The background to the din is blaring rock and roll music, and piled high on the pushcarts that line the way are transistor radios, watches, blue jeans (some prewashed), rayon scarves, Lux face and Omo laundry soaps.\(^{21}\)

Conclusion

Culture is a complex and exceedingly important concept within the discipline of geography. A number of approaches exist to understand culture. It may be understood through a range of elements and features from single traits to complex systems. Cultural geography recognizes the complexity of culture and emphasizes the roles of space, place, and landscape and the ecological relationships between cultures and their environments. It distinguishes itself from other disciplinary approaches, providing unique insights that reveal how culture shapes the worlds we live in at the same time that the worlds we inhabit shape culture.

Two of the most universal forms of cultural identity are religion and language. Despite the secularization of many people in core countries, religion is still a powerful form of identity, and it has been used to buffer the impacts of globalization. Globalization has caused dramatic changes in the distribution of the world’s religions as well as interaction among and between religions. Perhaps most remarkable, religious conversion to religions of the periphery is now underway in the core.

While the number of languages that exist worldwide are threatened by globalization, some cultures have responded to the threat by providing special protection for regional languages. The 500-year history of globalization has resulted in the steady erosion of many regional languages and heavy contact and change in the languages that persist. However, recently some governments are taking action to protect official and regional languages against the onslaught of globalization. Not only are religion and language at risk from globalization; other forms of cultural expression, such as art and film, are as well.

Cultural geographers are also interested in understanding how culture shapes groups’ adaptations to the natural environment. The aim of cultural ecology is to understand how the availability of resources and technology, as well as value and belief systems, shape the behaviours of culture groups as active modifiers of, and adapters to, the natural environment. Recently, geographers have begun to pay attention to the role of politics and the wider economy in understanding the relationship between adaptive strategies and the natural world. This approach is known as political ecology.

Different groups in different parts of the world have begun to use cultural identities such as gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality as a way of buffering the impacts of globalization on their lives. It is also the case that when the impacts of globalization are examined at the local level, some groups suffer more harm or reap more benefits than others. The unevenness of the impacts of globalization and the variety of responses to it indicate that the possibility of a monolithic global culture wiping out all forms of difference is unlikely.

Main Points Revisited

- Though culture is a central, complex concept in geography, it may be thought of as a way of life involving a particular set of skills, values, and meanings. Culture includes youth styles of dress as well as operatic arias and slang and ecclesiastical languages.

- Geographers are particularly concerned about how place and space shape culture and, conversely, how culture shapes place and space. They recognize that culture is dynamic, and is contested and altered within larger social, political, and economic contexts. The places in which cultural practices are produced shape cultural production as much as cultural production shapes the places in which it occurs.

- Like other fields of contemporary life, culture has been profoundly affected by globalization. However, globalization has not produced a homogenized culture so much as it has produced distinctive impacts and outcomes in different societies and geographical areas as global forces come to be modified by local cultures. Although U.S. culture, especially commercialized culture, is widely exported around the globe, it is important to recognize that foreign cultural practices affect the United States and other parts of the world as well. The French influence on Argentina, for instance, is much more pronounced than is the U.S. influence.

- Contemporary approaches in cultural geography seek to understand the roles played by politics and the economy in establishing and perpetuating cultures, cultural landscapes, and global patterns of cultural traits and cultural complexes. For example, the State often facilitates the import or export of cultural practices, such as movies or music, so that economic growth can be enhanced.

- Cultural geography has been broadened to include analysis of gender, class, sexuality, race, ethnicity, stage in the life cycle, and so on, in recognizing that important differences can exist within as well as between cultures. What geographers find important about these identities are the ways in which they are constructed in spaces and places, and how those particular geographies shape the identities.

- Cultural ecology, an offshoot of cultural geography, focuses on the relationship between a cultural group and its natural environment. It recognizes that culture is significantly shaped by the physical environment in which it occurs at the same time that certain cultures shape the ways its participants interact with the environment.

- Political ecologists also focus on human–environment relationships but stress that relationships at all scales, from the local to the global, are intertwined with larger political and economic forces. Political ecologists consider the influence of the State in shaping cultural practices since the State plays an increasingly important role in our everyday lives.
Key Terms

allophone (p. 207)  
anglophone (p. 206)  
cultural adaptation (p. 226)  
cultural ecology (p. 226)  
cultural geography (p. 192)  
cultural hearth (p. 204)  
cultural landscape (p. 192)  
cultural nationalism (p. 214)  
cultural region (p. 195)  
cultural system (p. 196)  
cultural trait (p. 193)  
culture (p. 190)  
dialects (p. 202)  
diaspora (p. 197)  
etnicity (p. 222)  
francophone (p. 207)  
gender (p. 224)  
genre de vie (p. 192)  
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home language (p. 208)  
language (p. 202)  
language branch (p. 202)  
language family (p. 202)  
language group (p. 202)  
language shift (p. 209)  
mother tongue (p. 205)  
official languages (p. 205)  
political ecology (p. 228)  
race (p. 223)  
religion (p. 196)  
sexuality (p. 220)

Additional Reading


Cartwright, D.G., “The Divided Continent: Political, Population, Ethnic and Racial Division.” In F.W. Boal and S.A. Royle (eds.), Movements, Modernizations, and Mar- 


Saunders, R. “Kickin’ Some Knowledge: Rap and the Construc-

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Exercises

On the Internet

To complete the “On the Internet” exercises, go to www.pearsoned.ca/knox. The following is a summary of the types of Internet exercises created for this chapter.

The Internet exercises for this chapter will help you not only “see” where various types of sexualities are located (place) but answer the question of “why there?” Our review exercise focuses on such topics as race and place, ethnic symbols, gender, and language. The thinking-spatially exercise looks at ethnicity and space, as well as cultural and political ecology, and more. Throughout these drills, you will encounter examples of such concepts as cultural nationalism, cultural imperialism, and cultural borders, to name a few.

Unplugged

1. Using *Billboard Magazine* (the news magazine of the record industry), construct a historical geography of the top 20 singles over the last half century in order to determine the way in which different regions of the world have risen and fallen in terms of their significance. You should also determine an appropriate interval for sampling—every three to five years is an acceptable one. You may use the hometown of the recording artist or the headquarters of the recording studio as your geographical variable. Once you have organized your data, you should be able to answer the following questions: How has the geography you have documented changed? What might be the reasons for these changes? What do these changes mean for the regions of the world that have increased or decreased in terms of their musical prominence?

2. Ethnic identity is often expressed spatially through the existence of neighbourhoods or business areas dominated by members of a particular group. One way to explore the spatial expression of ethnicity in a place is to look at newspapers over time. In this exercise, you are expected to look at ethnic change in a particular neighbourhood over time. You can do this by using your library’s holdings of local or regional newspapers. Examine change over at least a four-decade period. To do this, you must identify an area of the city in which you live or some other city for which your library has an extensive newspaper collection. You should trace the history of an area you know is now occupied by a specific ethnic group. How long has the group occupied that area? What aspects of the group’s occupation of that area have changed over time (for example, school, places of worship, sports activities, the age of the households)? If different groups have occupied the area, what might be the reasons for the changes?

3. College and university campuses generate their own cultural practices and ideas that shape behaviours and attitudes in ways that may not be obvious at first glance. For this exercise, you are asked to observe a particular practice that occurs routinely at your college or university, such as important rituals of college/university life, sports events, and even class discussions. Observe a particular cultural practice that is an ordinary part of your life at college/university. Who are the participants in this practice? What are their levels of importance? Are there gender, age, or status differences in the implementation of this ritual or practice? What are the time and space aspects of the practice? Who controls its production? What are the intended outcomes of the practice? How does the practice or ritual contribute to the maintenance or disruption of order in the larger culture?

4. Using your local library as your source, find a description of a coming-of-age ceremony for any part of the world. Summarize that description and then compare it to one you have either experienced directly or have observed in Canada. What are the differences and similarities between your experience and the one you read about? What might be some of the reasons for these?