# HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

## A Cultural Approach

**Most of us are born geographers.** We are curious about the distinctive character of places and peoples. W vink in terms of territory and space. Take a look outside your window right now. The houses and commercial buildings, streets and highways, gardens and lawns all tell us something interesting and profound about who we are as a culture. If you travel down the road, or on a jet to another region or country, that view outside your window will change, sometimes subtly, sometimes drastically. Our geographical imaginations will push us to look and think and begin to make sense of what is going on in these different places, environments, and landscapes. It is this curiosity about the world—about how and why it is structured the way it is, what it means, and how we have changed it and continue to change it—that is at the heart of human geography. You are already geographers; we hope that our book will make you better ones.

If all places on Earth were identical, we would not need geography, but each is unique. Every place, however, does share characteristics with other places. Geographers define the concept of **region** as a grouping of similar places or of places with similar characteristics. The existence of different regions endows the Earth's surface with a mosaiclike quality. Geography as an academic discipline is an outgrowth of both our curiosity about lands and peoples other than our own and our need to come to grips with the place-centered element within our souls. When professional, academic geographers consider the differences and similarities among places, they want to understand what they see. They first find out exactly what variations exist among regions and places by describing them as precisely as possible. Then they try to decide what forces made these areas different or alike. Geographers ask *what? where? why?* and *how?*

**region**
A grouping of like places or the functional union of places to form a spatial unit.

Our natural geographical curiosity and intrinsic need for identity were long ago reinforced by pragmatism, the practical motives of traders and empire builders who wanted information about the world for the purposes of commerce and conquest. This concern for the practical aspects of geography first arose thousands of years ago among the ancient Greeks, Romans, Mesopotamians, and Phoenicians, the greatest traders and empire builders of their times. They cataloged factual information about locations, places, and products. Indeed, **geography** is a Greek word meaning literally "to describe the Earth." Not content merely to chart and describe the world, these ancient geographers soon began to ask questions about why cultures and environments differ from place to place, initiating the study of what today we call geography.

**geography**
The study of spatial patterns and of differences and similarities from one place to another in environment and culture.

## What Is a Cultural Approach to Human Geography?

**Human geography** forms one part of the discipline of geography, complementing physical geography (which deals with the natural environment). Human geography examines the relationships between people and the places and spaces in which they live using a variety of scales ranging from the local to the global. Human geographers explore how these relationships create the diverse spatial arrangements that we see around us, arrangements that include homes, neighborhoods, cities, nations, and regions. A cultural approach to the study of human geography implies an emphasis on the meanings, values, attitudes, and beliefs that different groups of people around the world lend to and derive from places and spaces. To understand the scope of a cultural approach to human geography, we must first discuss the various meanings of **culture.**

**human geography**
The study of the relationships between people and the places and spaces in which they live.

**culture**
A total way of life held in common by a group of people, including such learned features as speech, ideology, behavior, livelihood, technology, and government; or the local, customary way of doing things—a way of life; an ever-changing process in which a group is actively engaged; a dynamic mix of symbols, beliefs, speech, and practices.

There are many definitions of culture, some broad and some narrow. For the purposes of this book, we define *culture* as learned, collective human behavior, as opposed to innate, or inborn, behavior. Learned similarities in speech, behavior, ideology, livelihood, technology, value systems, and society form a way of life common to a group of people. *Culture,* defined in this way, involves a means of communicating these learned beliefs, memories, perceptions, traditions, and attitudes that serves to shape behavior. As geographers, we tend to be interested in how these various aspects of culture take shape in particular places, environments, and landscapes.

A particular culture is not a static, fixed phenomenon, and it does not always govern its members. Rather, as geographers Kay Anderson and Fay Gale put it, "culture is a *process* in which people are actively engaged." Individual members can and do change a culture, which means that ways of life constantly change and that tensions between opposing views are usually present. Cultures are never internally homogeneous because individual humans never think or behave in exactly the same manner.

A cultural approach to human geography, then, studies the relationships among space, place, environment, and culture. It examines the ways in which culture is expressed and symbolized in the landscapes we see around us, including homes, commercial buildings, roads, agricultural patterns, gardens, and parks. It analyzes the ways in which language, religion, the economy, government, and other cultural phenomena vary or remain constant from one place to another and provides a perspective for understanding how people function spatially and identify with place and region (**Figure 1.1**).

In seeking explanations for cultural diversity and place identity, geographers consider a wide array of factors that cause this diversity. Some of these involve the **physical environment:** terrain, climate, natural vegetation, wildlife, variations in soil,

**physical environment**
All aspects of the natural physical surroundings, such as climate, terrain, soils, vegetation, and wildlife.

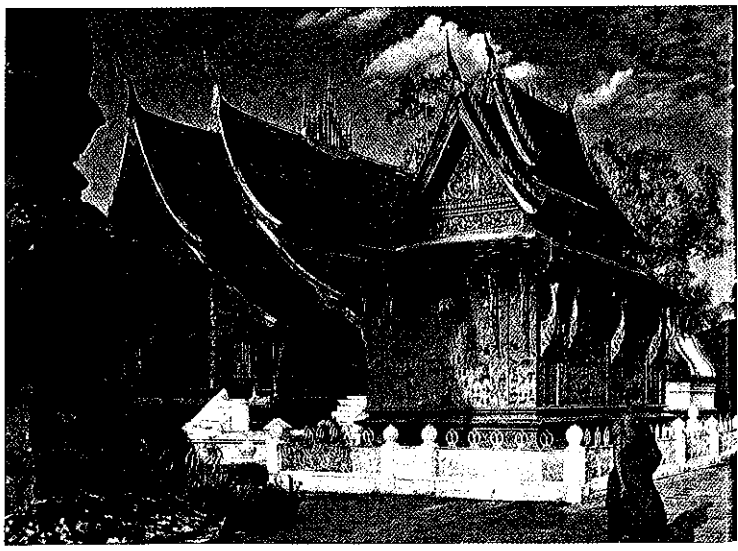


**FIGURE 1.1 Two traditional houses of worship.** Geographers seek to learn how and why cultures differ, or are similar, from one place to another. Often the differences and similarities have a visual expression. ***In what ways are these two structures—one a Catholic church in Honduras and the other a Buddhist temple in Laos—alike and different?*** *(Left: Rob Crandall/Stock Connection/Alamy; Right: Peter Adams/Alamy.)*

and the pattern of land and water. Because we cannot understand a culture removed from its physical setting, human geography offers not only a spatial perspective but also an ecological one.

Many complex forces are at work on cultural phenomena, and all of them are interconnected in very complicated ways. The complexity of the forces that affect culture can be illustrated by an example drawn from agricultural geography: the distribution of wheat cultivation in the world. If you look at **Figure 1.2**, you can see important areas of wheat cultivation in Australia but not in Africa, in the United States but not in Chile, in China but not in Southeast Asia. Why does this spatial pattern exist? Partly it results from environmental factors such as climate, terrain, and soils. Some regions have always been too dry for wheat cultivation. The land in others is too steep or infertile. Indeed, there is a strong correlation between wheat cultivation and midlatitude climates, level terrain, and good soil.

Still, we should not place exclusive importance on such physical factors. People can modify the effects of climate through irrigation; the use of hothouses; or the development of new, specialized strains of wheat. They can conquer slopes by terracing, and they can make poor soils productive with fertilization. For example, farmers in mountainous parts of Greece traditionally wrested an annual harvest of wheat from tiny terraced plots where soil had been trapped behind hand-built stone retaining walls. Even in the United States, environmental factors alone cannot explain the curious fact that major wheat cultivation is concentrated in the semiarid Great Plains, some distance from states such as Ohio and Illinois, where the climate for growing wheat is better. The human geographer knows that wheat has to survive in a cultural environment as well as a physical one.

Ultimately, agricultural patterns cannot be explained by the characteristics of the land and climate alone. Many factors complicate the distribution of wheat, including people's tastes and traditions. Food preferences and taboos, often backed by religious beliefs, strongly influence the choice of crops to plant. Where wheat bread is preferred, people are willing to put great efforts into overcoming physical surroundings hostile to growing wheat. They have even created new strains of wheat, thereby decreasing the environment's influence on the distribution of wheat cultivation. Other factors, such as public policies, can also encourage or discourage wheat cultivation. For example,

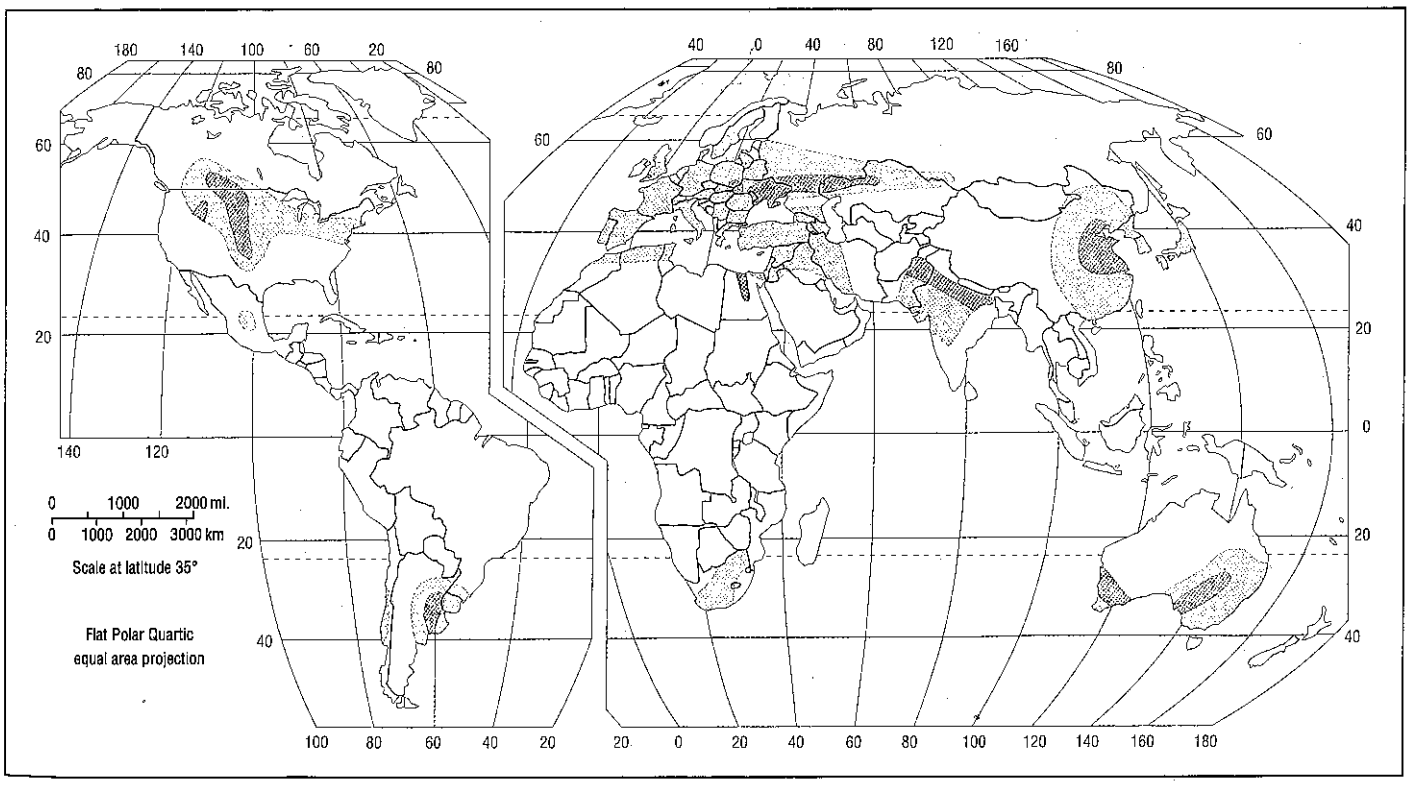



**FIGURE 1.2 Areas of wheat production in the world today.** These regions are based on a single trait: the importance of wheat in the agricultural system. This map tells us what and where. It raises the question of why. ***What causal forces might be at work to produce this geographical distribution of wheat farming?***

tariffs protect the wheat farmers of France and other European countries from competition with more efficient American and Canadian producers.

This is by no means a complete list of the forces that affect the geographical distribution of wheat cultivation. The distribution of all cultural elements is a result of the constant interplay of diverse factors. Human geography is the discipline that seeks such explanations and understandings.

## How to Understand Human Geography

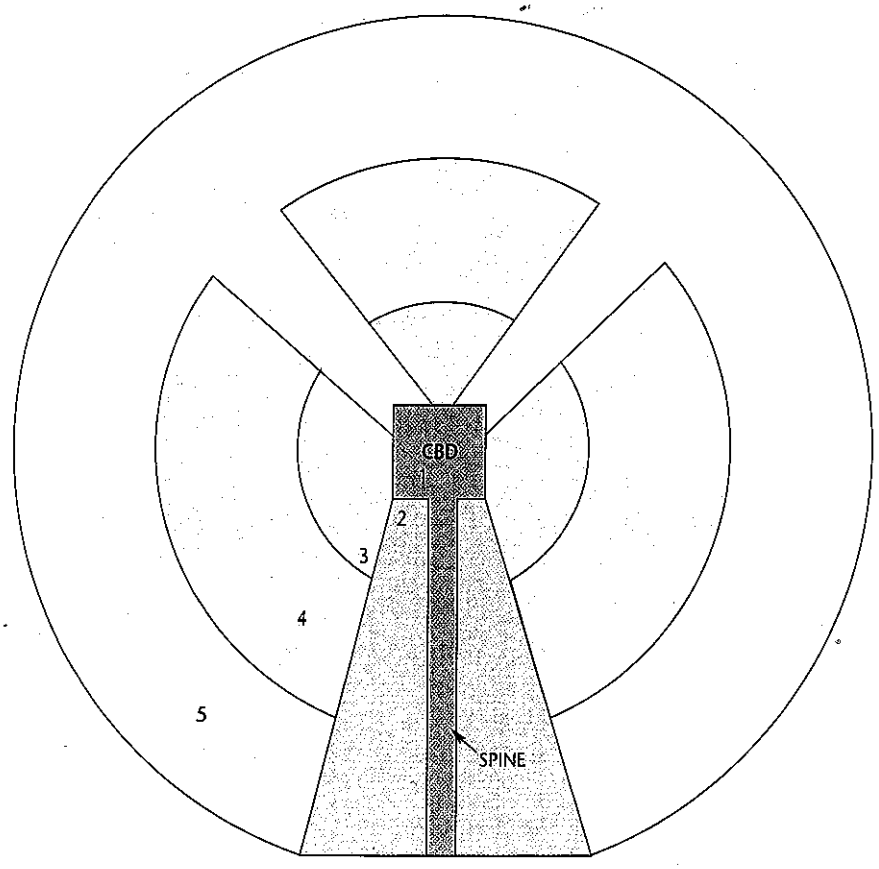
Generally speaking, geographers have taken three different perspectives in studying and understanding the complexity of the human mosaic. Each of these perspectives brings a different emphasis to studying the diversity of human patterns on the Earth.

**Spatial Models** Some geographers seek patterns and regularities amid the complexity and apply the scientific method to the study of people. Emulating physicists and chemists, they devise theories and seek regularities or universal spatial principles that apply across cultural lines, explaining all of humankind. These principles ideally become the basis for laws of human spatial behavior. **Space**—a term that refers to an abstract location on a map—is the word that perhaps best connotes this approach to cultural geography (see Doing Geography, pages 26–27).

**space**
A term used to connote the objective, quantitative, theoretical, model-based, economics-oriented type of geography that seeks to understand spatial systems and networks through application of the principles of social science.

**model**
An abstraction, an imaginary situation, proposed by geographers to simulate laboratory conditions so that they can isolate certain causal forces for detailed study.

Social scientists face a difficult problem because, unlike physical scientists, they cannot limit the effects of diverse factors by running experiments in controlled laboratories. One solution to this problem is the technique known as **model** building. Aware that many causal forces are involved in the real world, they set up artificial situations to focus on one or more potential factors. Torsten Hägerstrand's diagrams of different ways in which ideas and people move from one place to another are examples of spatial models. Some model-building geographers devise culture-specific models to describe and explain certain facets of spatial behavior within specific cultures. They still seek regularities and spatial principles but within the bounds of individual cultures. For example, several geographers proposed a model for Latin American cities in an effort to stress similarities among them and to understand why cities are formed the way they are (**Figure 1.3**). Obviously, no actual city in Latin America




Commercial/Industrial Areas
CBD = Central business district, the original colonial city
SPINE = High-quality expansion of the CBD, catering to the wealthy

Elite Residential Sector

Zone of Maturity
Gradually improved, upgraded, self-built housing

Zone of Accretion
Transitional between zones 3 and 5, modest housing, improvements in progress

Zone of Peripheral
Squatter settlements
Slum housing

**FIGURE 1.3 A generalized model of the Latin American city.** Urban structure differs from one culture to another, and in many ways the cities of Latin America are distinctive, sharing much in common with one another. Geographers Ernst Griffin and Larry Ford developed the model diagrammed here to help describe and explain the processes at work shaping the cities of Latin America. ***In what ways would this model not be applicable to cities in the United States and Canada?*** *(After Griffin and Ford, 1980: 406.)*

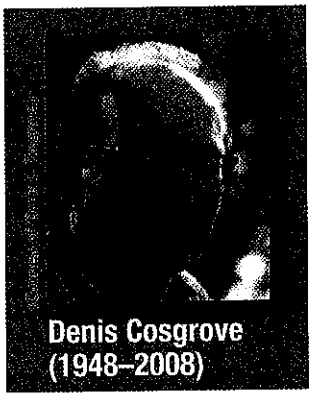
conforms precisely to their uncomplicated geometric plan. Instead, they deliberately generalized and simplified so that an urban type could be recognized and studied. The model will look strange to a person living in a city in the United States or Canada, for it describes a very different kind of urban environment, based in another culture.

**Sense of Place** Other geographers seek to understand the uniqueness of each region and place. Just as *space* identifies the perspective of the model-building geographer, **place** is the key word connoting this more humanistic view of geography. The geographer Yi-Fu Tuan coined the word *topophilia,* literally "love of place," to describe the characteristic of people who exhibit a strong sense of place and the geographers who are attracted to the study of such places and peoples. Geographer Edward Relph tells us that "to be human is to have and know your place" in the geographical sense. This perspective on cultural geography values subjective experience over objective scientific observation. It focuses on understanding the complexity of different cultures and how those cultures give meaning to and derive meaning from particular places. For example, many geographers are interested in understanding how and why certain places continue to evoke strong emotions in people, even though those people may have little direct connection with those places. Denis Cosgrove (see Practicing Geography below) has studied why Venice continues to stir people's imaginations, people as diverse as tourists from Japan and farmers from Iowa, despite the facts that the city hasn't held any political or economic power in hundreds of years and that the cultures out of which it was formed have long since ceased to exist. However, some geographers are interested in the opposite kind of places—ordinary places—and ask how and why people become attached to and derive

**place**
A term used to connote the subjective, idiographic, humanistic, culturally oriented type of geography that seeks to understand the unique character of individual regions and places, rejecting the principles of science as flawed and unknowingly biased.

## PRACTICING GEOGRAPHY

When cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove rode the bus through West Los Angeles on his way to work at UCLA, or when he took his Sunday walks through the greenspaces of London, as he did often in the summer months on his visits to his former hometown, he was "practicing" geography. As he said, "the world/landscape around me is a primary source of questions . . . life is a field course."


Denis Cosgrove (1948–2008)

Cosgrove, who was the Humboldt Chair of Geography at UCLA and one of the most prominent cultural geographers in the English-speaking world, explored, through a series of scholarly articles and books (for some of these, see Ten Recommended Books on a Cultural Approach to Human Geography at the end of this chapter), the relationships between landscape and culture in Renaissance Italy, nineteenth-century England, and twentieth-century America. His fascination with these places and times, and his enthusiasm for the study of geography in general, began early, when he was a child in Liverpool, England. His walks were important then, too. "Being raised in a great port city where our Sunday walks were often along the docks, seeing great cargo ships with words like Montevideo and Cape Town and Lagos on their sterns . . . and being given a globe at the age of eight and seeing dotted lines crossing the oceans to these same places with 'Distance to Liverpool' printed on these steamship routes . . . made me realize that I lived in a place that mattered on the globe."

As the years went by, Cosgrove found himself working as much inside as out, often in archives, looking at historical documents and closely reading maps and other images that express relationships between particular cultures and their landscapes. For example, in one project Cosgrove explored how the development of aerial views in the twentieth century—both air photos and drawings—"was a uniquely appropriate way of making sense of the new landscapes emerging then in the American West." To make this rather abstract idea more concrete, he focused his study on a particular person who was a newspaper artist in Los Angeles in the mid-twentieth century. Focusing on one person, he said, allowed him "to make contact with a life in the world with all its complexity and use it to make more general points about how geographies come about." His approach was based more in the humanities than in the social sciences, interpretative instead of explanatory. And, above all, it involved "a great respect for the role of imagination (my own and others') in the ways that we shape the world."

meaning from their local neighborhoods or communities and how those meanings can often come into conflict with each other. Many of the debates that you see in newspapers and hear about on the evening news—debates about the construction of a new high-rise building or the location of a highway, for example—can only be understood by examining the meanings and values different groups of people give to and derive from particular places.

**Power and Ideology** Cultures are rarely, if ever, homogeneous. Often certain groups of people have more power in society, and their beliefs and ways of life dominate and are considered the norm, whereas other groups of people with less power may participate in alternative cultures. These divisions are often based on gender, economic class, racial categories, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. The social hierarchies that result are maintained, reinforced, and challenged through many means. Those means can include such things as physical violence, but often social hierarchies are maintained in ways far more subtle. For example, some geographers study ideology—a set of dominant ideas and beliefs—in relationship to place, environment, and landscape in order to understand how power works culturally. For example, most nations maintain a set of powerful beliefs about their relationships to the land, some holding to the idea that there is a deep and natural connection between a particular territory and the people who have inhabited it. These ideas often form part of a national identity and are expressed so routinely in poems, music, laws, and rituals that people accept these ideas as truths. Many American patriotic songs, for example, express the idea that the country naturally spreads from "sea to sea." Yet immigrants to that culture and country, and people who have been marginalized by that culture, may hold very different ideas of identity with the land. Native Americans have claims to land that far predate those of the U.S. government and would argue against an American national identity that includes a so-called natural connection to all the land between the Atlantic and the Pacific. Uncovering and analyzing the connections between ideology and power, then, are often integral to the geographer's task of understanding the diversity within a culture.

These different approaches to thinking about human geography are both necessary and healthy. These groups ask different questions about place and space; not surprisingly, they often obtain different answers. The model-builders tend to minimize diversity through their search for universal causal forces; the humanists examine diversity *among* cultures and strive to understand the unique; those who look to power and ideology focus on diversity and contestation *within* cultures. All lines of inquiry yield valuable findings. We present all of these perspectives throughout *The Human Mosaic.*

# Themes in Human Geography

Our study of the human mosaic is organized around five geographical concepts or themes: region, mobility, globalization, nature-culture, and cultural landscape. We use these themes to organize the diversity of issues that confront human geography and have selected them because they represent the major concepts that human geographers discuss. Each of them stresses one particular aspect of the discipline, and even though we have separated them for purposes of clarity, it is important to remember that the concepts are related to each other. When discussing the theme of mobility, for example, we will inevitably bring up issues related to globalization, and vice versa. These themes give a common structure to each chapter and are stressed throughout the book.

## Region

Phrased as a question, the theme of region could be "How are people and their traits grouped or arranged geographically?" Places and regions provide the essence of geography. How and why are places alike or different? How do they mesh together into functioning spatial networks? How do their inhabitants perceive them and identify with them? These are central geographical questions. A region, then, is a geographical unit based on characteristics and functions of culture. Geographers recognize three types of regions: formal, functional, and vernacular.

### Formal Regions

A **formal region** is an area inhabited by people who have one or more traits in common, such as language, religion, or a system of livelihood. It is an area, therefore, that is relatively homogeneous with regard to one or more cultural traits. Geographers use this concept to map spatial differences throughout the world. For example, an Arabic-language formal region can be drawn on a map of languages and would include the areas where Arabic is spoken, rather than, say, English or Hindi or Mandarin. Similarly, a wheat-farming formal region would include the parts of the world where wheat is a major crop (look again at Figure 1.2).

**formal region**
A cultural region inhabited by people who have one or more cultural traits in common.

The examples of Arabic speech and of wheat cultivation represent the concept of formal region at its simplest

**FIGURE 1.4 An Inuit hunter with his dogsled team.** Various facets of a multitrait formal region can be seen here, including the clothing, the use of dogsleds as transportation, and hunting as a livelihood system. *(Bryan and Cherry Alexander Photography/Alamy.)*

level. Each is based on a single cultural trait. More commonly, formal regions depend on multiple related traits (**Figure 1.4**). Thus, an Inuit (Eskimo) culture region might be based on language, religion, economy, social organization, and type of dwellings. The region would reflect the spatial distribution of these five Inuit cultural traits. Districts in which all five of these traits are present would be part of the culture region.

Formal regions are the geographer's somewhat arbitrary creations. No two cultural traits have the same distribution, and the territorial extent of a culture region depends on what and how many defining traits are used. Why *five* Inuit traits, not four or six? Why not *foods* instead of (or in addition to) dwelling types? Consider, for example, Greeks and Turks, who differ in language and religion. Formal regions defined on the basis of speech and religious faith would separate these two groups. However, Greeks and Turks hold many other cultural traits in common. Both groups are monotheistic, worshipping a single god. In both groups, male supremacy and patriarchal families are the rule. Both enjoy certain folk foods, such as shish kebab. Whether Greeks and Turks are placed in the same formal region or in different ones depends entirely on how the geographer chooses to define the region. That choice in turn depends on the specific purpose of research or teaching that the region is designed to serve. Thus, an infinite number of formal regions can be created. It is unlikely that any two geographers would use exactly the same distinguishing criteria or place cultural boundaries in precisely the same location.

The geographer who identifies a formal region must locate borders. Because cultures overlap and mix, such boundaries are rarely sharp, even if only a single cultural trait is mapped. For this reason, we find **border zones** rather than lines. These zones broaden with each additional trait that is considered because no two traits have the same spatial distribution. As a result, instead of having clear borders, formal regions reveal a center or core where the defining traits are all present. Moving away from the central core, the characteristics weaken and disappear. Thus, many formal regions display a **core-periphery** pattern. This refers to a situation where a region can be divided into two sections, one near the center where the particular attributes that define the region (in this case, language and religion) are strong, and other portions of the region farther away from the core, called the periphery, where those attributes are weaker.

**border zones**
The areas where different regions meet and sometimes overlap.

**core-periphery**
A concept based on the tendency of both formal and functional culture regions to consist of a core or node, in which defining traits are purest or functions are headquartered, and a periphery that is tributary and displays fewer of the defining traits.

In a real sense, then, the human world is chaotic. No matter how closely related two elements of culture seem to be, careful investigation always shows that they do not cover exactly the same area. This is true regardless of the degree of detail involved. What does this chaos mean to the human geographer? First, it tells us that every cultural trait is spatially unique and that the explanation for each spatial variation differs in some degree from all others. Second, it means that culture changes continually throughout an area and that every inhabited place on Earth has a unique combination of cultural features. No place is exactly like another.

Does this cultural uniqueness of each place prevent geographers from seeking explanatory theories? Does it doom them to explaining each locale separately? The answer must be no. The fact that no two hills or rocks, no two planets or stars, no two trees or flowers are identical has not prevented geologists, astronomers, and botanists from formulating theories and explanations based on generalizations.

## Functional Regions

The hallmark of a formal region is cultural homogeneity. Moreover, it is abstract rather than concrete. By contrast, a **functional region** need not be culturally homogeneous; instead, it is an area that has been organized to function politically, socially, or economically as one unit. A city, an independent state, a precinct, a church diocese or parish, a trade area, a farm, and a Federal Reserve Bank district are all examples of functional regions. Functional regions have **nodes,** or central points where the functions are coordinated and directed. Examples of such nodes are city halls, national capitals, precinct voting places, parish churches, factories, and banks. In this sense, functional regions also possess a core-periphery configuration, in common with formal regions.

**functional region**
A cultural area that functions as a unit politically, socially, or economically.

**node**
A central point in a functional culture region where functions are coordinated and directed.

Many functional regions have clearly defined borders. A metropolitan area is a functional region that includes all the land under the jurisdiction of a particular urban government (**Figure 1.5**). The borders of this functional region may not be so apparent from a car window, but they will be clearly delineated on a regional map by a line distinguishing one jurisdiction from another. Similarly, each state in the United States and each Canadian province is a functional region, coordinated and directed from a capital, with government control extended over a fixed area with clearly defined borders.

Not all functional regions have fixed, precise borders, however. A good example is a daily newspaper's circulation area. The node for the paper would be the plant where it is produced. Every morning, trucks move out of the plant to distribute the paper throughout the city. The newspaper may have a sales area extending into the city's suburbs, local bedroom communities, nearby towns, and rural areas. There its sales area overlaps with the sales territories of competing newspapers published in other cities. It would be futile to try to define exclusive borders for such an area. How would you draw a sales area boundary for the *New York Times?* Its Sunday edition is sold in some quantity even in California, thousands of miles from its node, and it is published simultaneously in different cities.

Functional regions generally do not coincide spatially with formal regions, and this disjuncture often creates problems for the functional region. Germany provides an example (**Figure 1.6**). As an independent state, Germany forms a functional region. Language provides a substantial basis for political unity. However, the formal region of the German language extends beyond the political borders of Germany and includes part or all of eight other independent states. More important, numerous formal regions have borders cutting through German territory. Some of these have endured for millennia, causing differences among northern, southern, eastern, and western Germans. These contrasts make the functioning of the German state more difficult and help explain why Germany has been politically fragmented more often than unified.

## Vernacular Regions

A **vernacular region** is one that is *perceived* to exist by its inhabitants, as evidenced by the widespread acceptance and use of a special regional name. Some vernacular regions are based on physical environmental features. For example, there are many regions called simply "the valley." Wikipedia lists more than 30 different regions in the United States and Canada that are referred to as such, places as varied as the Sudbury Basin in Ontario and the Lehigh Valley in Pennsylvania. In the 1980s, "the valley" became synonymous with the San Fernando Valley in Southern California (**Figure 1.7**) and became associated with a type of landscape (suburban), person (a white, teenage girl, called the "valley girl"), and

**vernacular region**
A culture region perceived to exist by its inhabitants, based in the collective spatial perception of the population at large and bearing a generally accepted name or nickname (such as "Dixie").

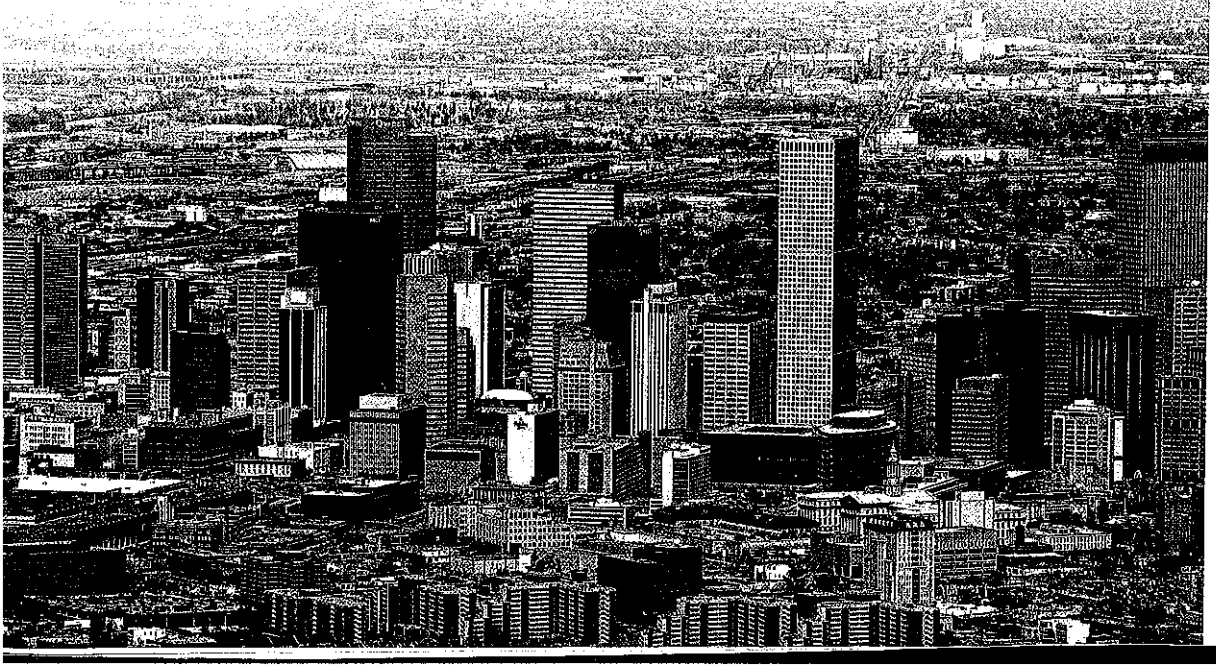


**FIGURE 1.5 Aerial view of Denver.** This image clearly illustrates the node of a functional region—here, the dense cluster of commercial buildings—that coordinates activities throughout the area that surrounds it. ***Can you identify the border of this functional region? Why or why not?*** *(Jim Wark/Airphoto.)*

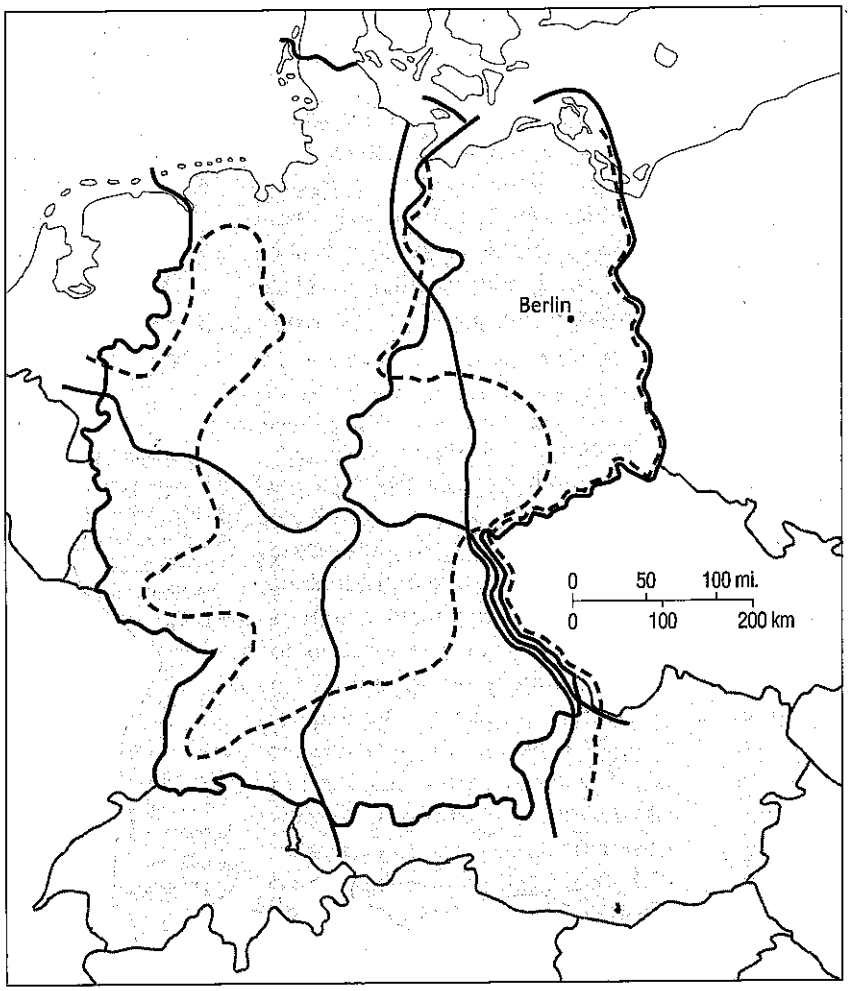



**FIGURE 1.6 East versus west and north versus south in Germany.** As a political unit and functional culture region, Germany must overcome the disruptions caused by numerous formal regions that tend to make the sections of Germany culturally different. Formal and functional regions rarely coincide spatially. ***How might these sectional contrasts cause problems for modern Germany?***

way of speaking ("valspeak"). Other vernacular regions find their basis in economic, political, or historical characteristics. Vernacular regions, like most regions, generally lack sharp borders, and the inhabitants of any given area may claim residence in more than one such region. They vary in scale from city neighborhoods to sizable parts of continents.

At a basic level, a vernacular region grows out of people's sense of belonging to and identification with a particular region. By contrast, many formal or functional regions lack this attribute and, as a result, are often far less meaningful for people. You're more likely to hear people say "we're fighting to preserve 'the valley' from further urban development" than to see people rally under the banner of "wheat-growing areas of the world"! Self-conscious regional identity can have major political and social ramifications.

### Reflecting on Geography

What examples can you think of that show how identification with a vernacular region is a powerful political force?

Vernacular regions often lack the organization necessary for functional regions, although they may be centered around a single urban node, and they frequently do not display the cultural homogeneity that characterizes formal regions.

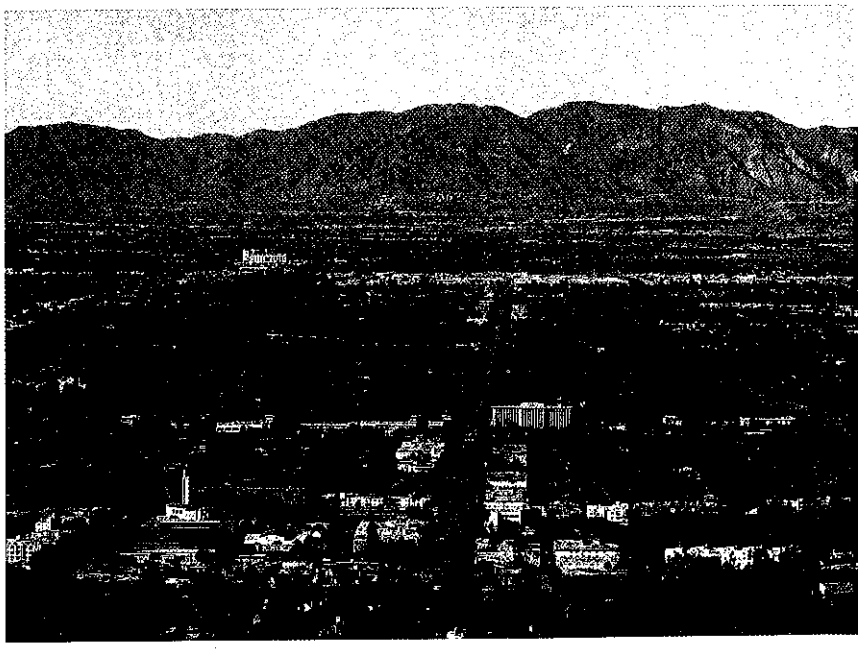


**FIGURE 1.7 The San Fernando Valley.** Referred to locally as "the valley," the San Fernando Valley is located in the northwestern area of Los Angeles. Despite its reputation as a white, suburban area, portions of the valley are densely populated, and the area is home to a wide range of peoples from many different backgrounds. ***Can you think of other examples of regions that are locally known as "the valley"?*** *(Robert Landau/drr.net.)*

## Mobility

The concept of regions helps us see that similar or related sets of elements are often grouped together in space. Equally important in geography is understanding how and why these different cultural elements move through space and locate in particular settings. Regions themselves, as we have seen, are not stable but are constantly changing as people, ideas, practices, and technologies move around in space. Are there some patterns to these movements? These questions define our second theme, **mobility.**

**mobility**
The relative ability of people, ideas, or things to move freely through space.

**diffusion**
The movement of people, ideas, or things from one location outward toward other locations.

One important way to study mobility is through the concept of diffusion. **Diffusion** can be defined as the movement of people, ideas, or things from one location outward toward other locations where these items are not initially found. Through the study of diffusion, the human geographer can begin to understand how spatial patterns in culture emerged and evolved. After all, any culture is the product of almost countless innovations that spread from their points of origin to cover a wider area. Some innovations occur only once, and geographers can sometimes trace a cultural element back to a single place of origin. In other cases, **independent invention** occurs: the same or a very similar innovation is separately developed at different places by different peoples.

**independent invention**
A cultural innovation that is developed in two or more locations by individuals or groups working independently.

## Types of Diffusion

Geographers, drawing heavily on the research of Hägerstrand, recognize several different kinds of diffusion (**Figure 1.8**). **Relocation diffusion** occurs when individuals or groups with a particular idea or practice migrate from one location to another, thereby bringing the idea or practice to their new homeland. Religions frequently spread this way. An example is the migration of Christianity with European settlers who came to America. In **expansion diffusion,** ideas or practices spread throughout a population, from area

**relocation diffusion**
The spread of an innovation or other element of culture that occurs with the bodily relocation (migration) of the individual or group responsible for the innovation.

**expansion diffusion**
The spread of innovations within an area in a snowballing process, so that the total number of knowers or users becomes greater and the area of occurrence grows.

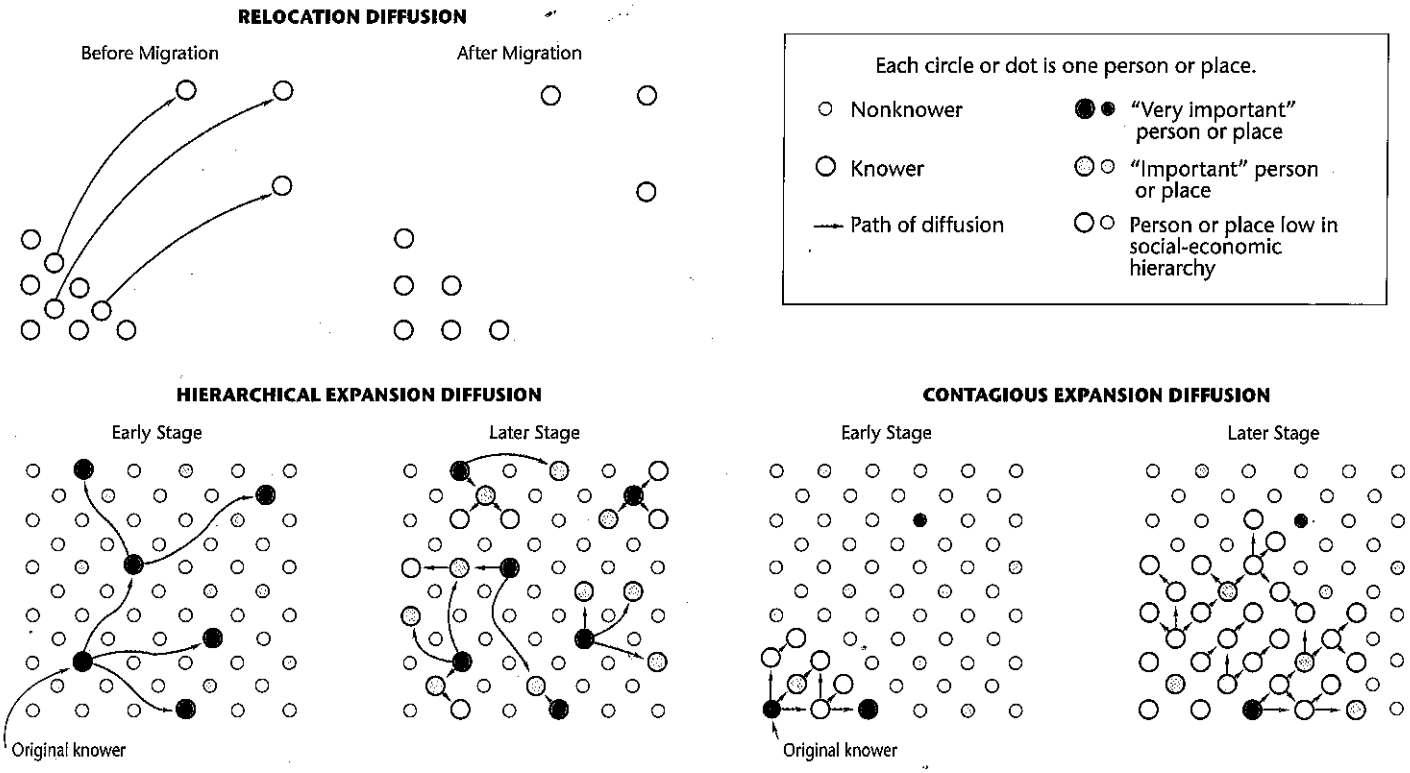



**FIGURE 1.8 Types of cultural diffusion.** These diagrams are merely suggestive; in reality, spatial diffusion is far more complex. In hierarchical diffusion, different scales can be used, so that, for example, the category "very important person" could be replaced by "large city."

**hierarchical diffusion**
A type of expansion diffusion in which innovations spread from one important person to another or from one urban center to another, temporarily bypassing other persons or rural areas.

to area, in a snowballing process, so that the total number of knowers or users and the areas of occurrence increase.

Expansion diffusion can be further divided into three subtypes. In **hierarchical diffusion,** ideas leapfrog from one important person to another or from one urban center to another, temporarily bypassing other persons or rural territories. We can see hierarchical diffusion at work in everyday life by observing the acceptance of new modes of dress or foods. For example, sushi restaurants originally diffused from Japan in the 1970s very slowly because many people were reluctant to eat raw fish. In the United States, the first sushi restaurants appeared in the major cities of Los Angeles and New York. Only gradually throughout the 1980s and 1990s did sushi eating become more common in the less urbanized parts of the country. By contrast, **contagious diffusion** involves the wavelike spread of ideas in the manner of a contagious disease, moving throughout space without regard to hierarchies. Hierarchical and contagious diffusion often work together. The worldwide spread of HIV/AIDS provides a sobering example of how these two types of diffusion can reinforce each other. As you can see from **Figure 1.9**, HIV/AIDS diffused first to urban areas (hierarchical diffusion) and from

**contagious diffusion**
A type of expansion diffusion in which cultural innovation spreads by person-to-person contact, moving wavelike through an area and population without regard to social status.

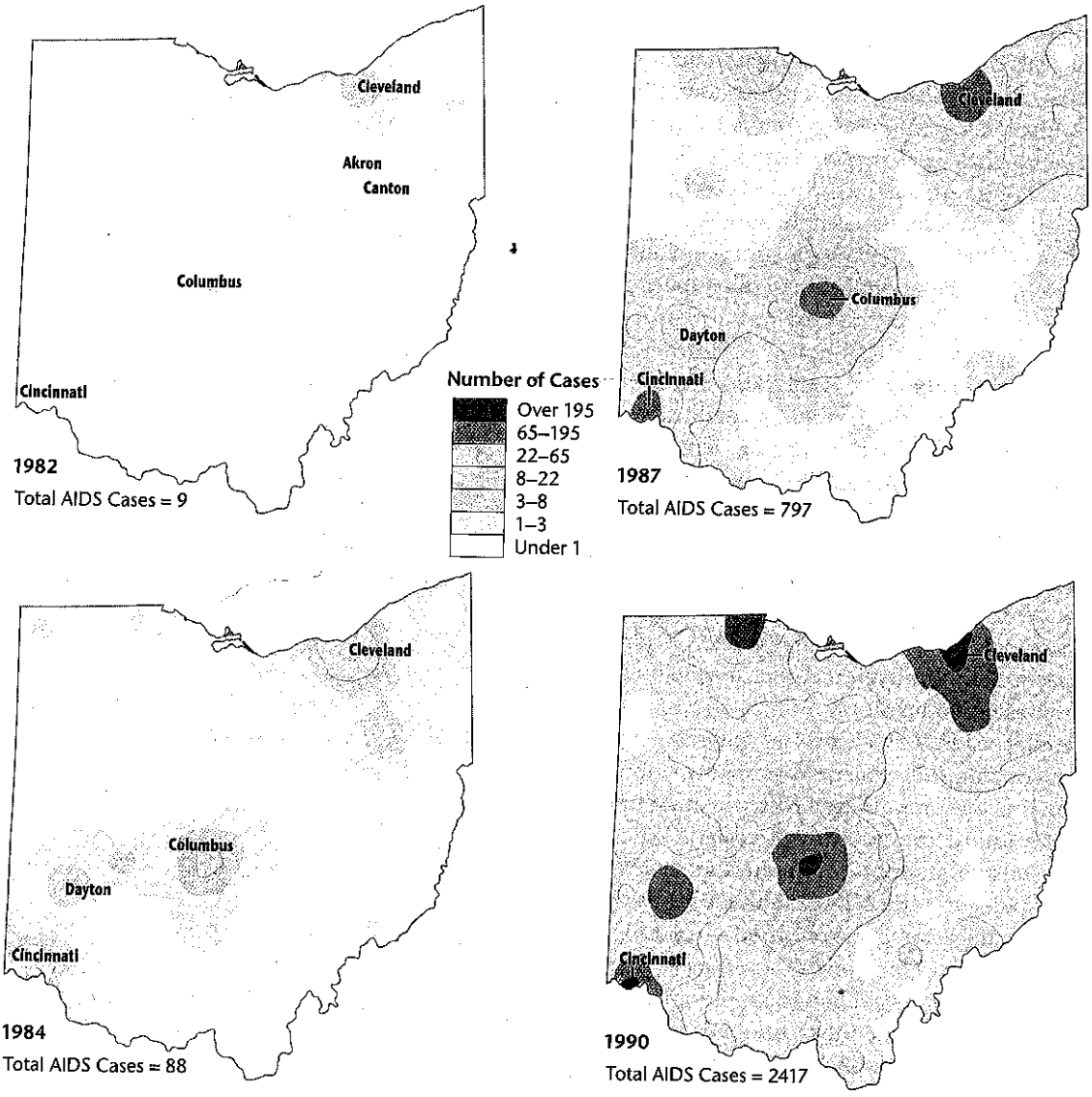



**FIGURE 1.9 Diffusion of HIV/AIDS in Ohio.** As you can see from this map, HIV/AIDS spread through both hierarchical and contagious diffusion processes. ***Do you think a similar pattern is evident at the national scale? At the global scale?*** *(Source: Gould, 1993.)*

**stimulus diffusion**
A type of expansion diffusion in which a specific trait fails to spread but the underlying idea or concept is accepted.

there spread outward (contagious diffusion). Sometimes a specific trait is rejected but the underlying idea is accepted, resulting in **stimulus diffusion.** For example, early Siberian peoples domesticated reindeer only after exposure to the domesticated cattle raised by cultures to their south. The Siberians had no use for cattle, but the idea of domesticated herds appealed to them, and they began domesticating reindeer, an animal they had long hunted.

If you throw a rock into a pond and watch the spreading ripples, you can see them become gradually weaker as they move away from the point of impact. In the same way, diffusion becomes weaker as a cultural innovation moves away from its point of origin. That is, diffusion decreases with distance. An innovation will usually be accepted most thoroughly in the areas closest to where it originates. Because innovations take increasing time to spread outward, time is also a factor. Acceptance generally decreases with distance and time, producing what geographers call **time-distance decay.** Modern mass media, however, along with relatively new technologies like the Internet and cell phones, have greatly accelerated diffusion, diminishing the impact of time-distance decay.

**time-distance decay**
The decrease in acceptance of a cultural innovation with increasing time and distance from its origin.

**absorbing barrier**
A barrier that completely halts diffusion of innovations and blocks the spread of cultural elements.

In addition to the gradual weakening or decay of an innovation through time and distance, barriers can retard its spread. **Absorbing barriers** completely halt diffusion, allowing no further progress. For example, in 1998 the fundamentalist Islamic Taliban government of Afghanistan decided to abolish television, videocassette recorders, and videotapes, viewing them as "causes of corruption in society." As a result, the cultural diffusion of television sets was reversed, and the important role of television as a communication device to facilitate the spread of ideas was eliminated.

Extreme examples aside, few absorbing barriers exist in the world. More commonly, barriers are permeable, allowing part of the innovation wave to diffuse through but acting to weaken or retard the continued spread. When a school board objects to students with tattoos or body piercings, the principal of a high school may set limits by mandating that these markings be covered by clothing. However, over time, those mandates may change as people get used to the idea of body markings. More likely than not, though, some mandates will remain in place. In this way, the principal and school board act as a **permeable barrier** to cultural innovations.

**permeable barrier**
A barrier that permits some aspects of an innovation to diffuse through it but weakens and retards continued spread; an innovation can be modified in passing through a permeable barrier.

### Reflecting on Geography

The Internet has certainly made the diffusion of many forms of cultural change much more rapid. Some scholars have argued that, in fact, the Internet has eliminated barriers to diffusion. Can you think of examples where this is true? Untrue?

Although all places and communities hypothetically have equal potential to adopt a new idea or practice, diffusion typically produces a core-periphery spatial arrangement. Hägerstrand offered an explanation of how diffusion produces such a regional configuration. The distribution of innovations can be random, but the overlap of new ideas and traits as they diffuse through space and time is greatest toward the center of the region and least at the peripheries. As a result of this overlap, more innovations are adopted in the center, or core, of the region.

Some other geographers, most notably James Blaut and Richard Ormrod, regard the Hägerstrandian concept of diffusion as too narrow and mechanical because it does not give enough emphasis to cultural and environmental variables and because it assumes that information automatically produces diffusion. They argue that nondiffusion—the failure of innovations to spread—is more prevalent than diffusion, a condition Hägerstrand's system cannot accommodate. Similarly, the Hägerstrandian system assumes that innovations are equally beneficial to all people throughout geographical space. In reality, susceptibility to an innovation is far more crucial, especially in a world where communication is so rapid and pervasive that it renders the friction of distance almost meaningless. The inhabitants of two regions will not respond identically to an innovation, and the geographer must seek to understand this spatial variation in receptiveness to explain diffusion or the failure to diffuse. Within the context of their culture, people must perceive some advantage before they will adopt an innovation.

Diffusion provides a useful, yet limited, way of thinking about mobility because it emphasizes movement from a core to a periphery. In today's world, however, we see many other examples of mobility, such as the almost instant communication about new ideas and technologies through computers and other digital media, the rapid movement of goods from the place of production to that of consumption, and the seemingly nonstop movement of money around the globe through digital financial networks. These types of movements through space do not necessarily follow the pattern of core-periphery but instead create new and different types of patterns. The term **circulation** might better fit many of these forms of mobility because this term implies an ongoing set of movements

**circulation**
A term that implies an ongoing set of movements of people, ideas, or things that have no particular center or periphery.

**migrations**
The large-scale movements of people between different regions of the world.

with no particular center or periphery. Other types of mobilities, such as large-scale movements of people between different regions, can be best thought of as **migrations** from one region or country to another through particular routes. In today's globalizing world, with better and faster communication and transportation technologies, many migrants more easily maintain ties to their homelands even after they have migrated, and some may move back and forth between their home countries and those to which they have migrated. Scholars refer to these groups of people as **transnational migrants** (**Figure 1.10**). We will discuss much more about these different patterns of mobility—diffusion, circulation, and migration—in the rest of the book.

**transnational migrations**
The movements of groups of people who maintain ties to their homelands after they have migrated.


**FIGURE 1.10 Demonstrations in Hamburg, Germany, against the deportation of immigrants.** Many migrant-worker groups are fighting to maintain rights of transnational migrants who would like to be able to move freely between their home countries and those that currently provide work for them. *(Vario Images GmbH & Co. KG/Alamy.)*

## Globalization

***How and why are different cultures, economies, and societies linked around the world? And given all these new linkages, why do so many differences exist between different groups of people in the world?*** The modern technological age, in which improved worldwide transport and communications allow the instantaneous diffusion of ideas and innovations, has accelerated the phenomenon called **globalization.** This term refers to an increasingly linked world in which international borders are diminished in importance and a worldwide marketplace is created. This interconnected world has been created from a set of factors: faster and more reliable transportation, particularly the jet plane; the almost-instantaneous communication that computers, phones, faxes, and so on have allowed; and the creation of digital sources of information and media, such as the Internet. Thus, globalization in this sense is a rather recent phenomenon, dating from the late twentieth century. Yet we know that long before that time different countries and different parts of the world were linked. For example, in early medieval times overland trade routes connected China with other parts of Asia, the British East India Company maintained maritime trading routes between England and large portions of South Asia as early as the seventeenth century, and religious and political wars in Europe and the Middle East brought different peoples into direct contact with each other. Some geographers refer to such moments as early global encounters and suggest that they set the background for contemporary globalization. Beginning in the early twentieth century, but strengthening in the 1970s with new and advanced communication technologies, encounters between different cultures began to take place not face-to-face but rather mediated through technologies such as telephones, film, computers, and the Internet. These new media forms allowed those encounters to happen at any time, in many different places, and all at the same time. This new sense of interlinked and spontaneous communication between different peoples around the world is what most people mean by globalization.

**globalization**
The binding together of all the lands and peoples of the world into an integrated system driven by capitalistic free markets, in which cultural diffusion is rapid, independent states are weakened, and cultural homogenization is encouraged.

These increasingly linked economic, political, and cultural networks around the world might lead many to believe that different groups of people around the globe are becoming more and more alike. In some ways this is true, but what these new global encounters have enabled is an increasing recognition of the differences between groups of people, and some of those differences have been caused by

globalization itself. Some groups of people have access to advanced technologies, more thorough health care, and education, whereas others do not. Even within our own neighborhoods and cities, we know that there are people who are less able to afford these things. If we mapped certain indicators of human well-being on a global scale, such as life expectancy, literacy, and standard of living, we would find quite an uneven distribution. **Figure 1.11** shows us that different cultures around the world have different access to these types of resources. These differences are what scholars mean when they refer to stages of development. In Figure 1.11, you can see that there are regions of the world that have a fairly high Human Development Index (HDI) and those that have a relatively low HDI. Scholars often refer to these two types of regions as developed (relatively high HDI) and developing (relatively low HDI). This inequitable

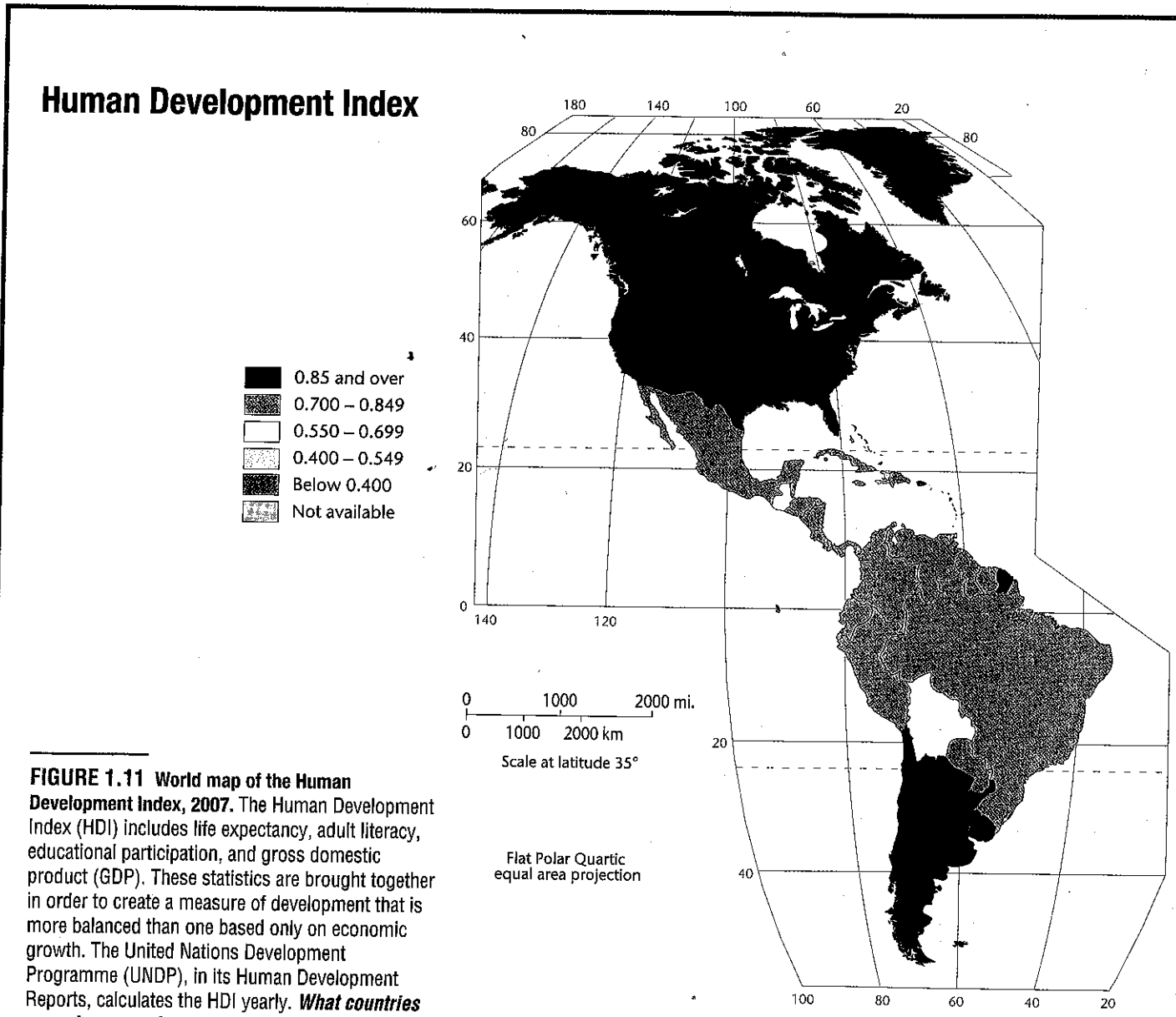
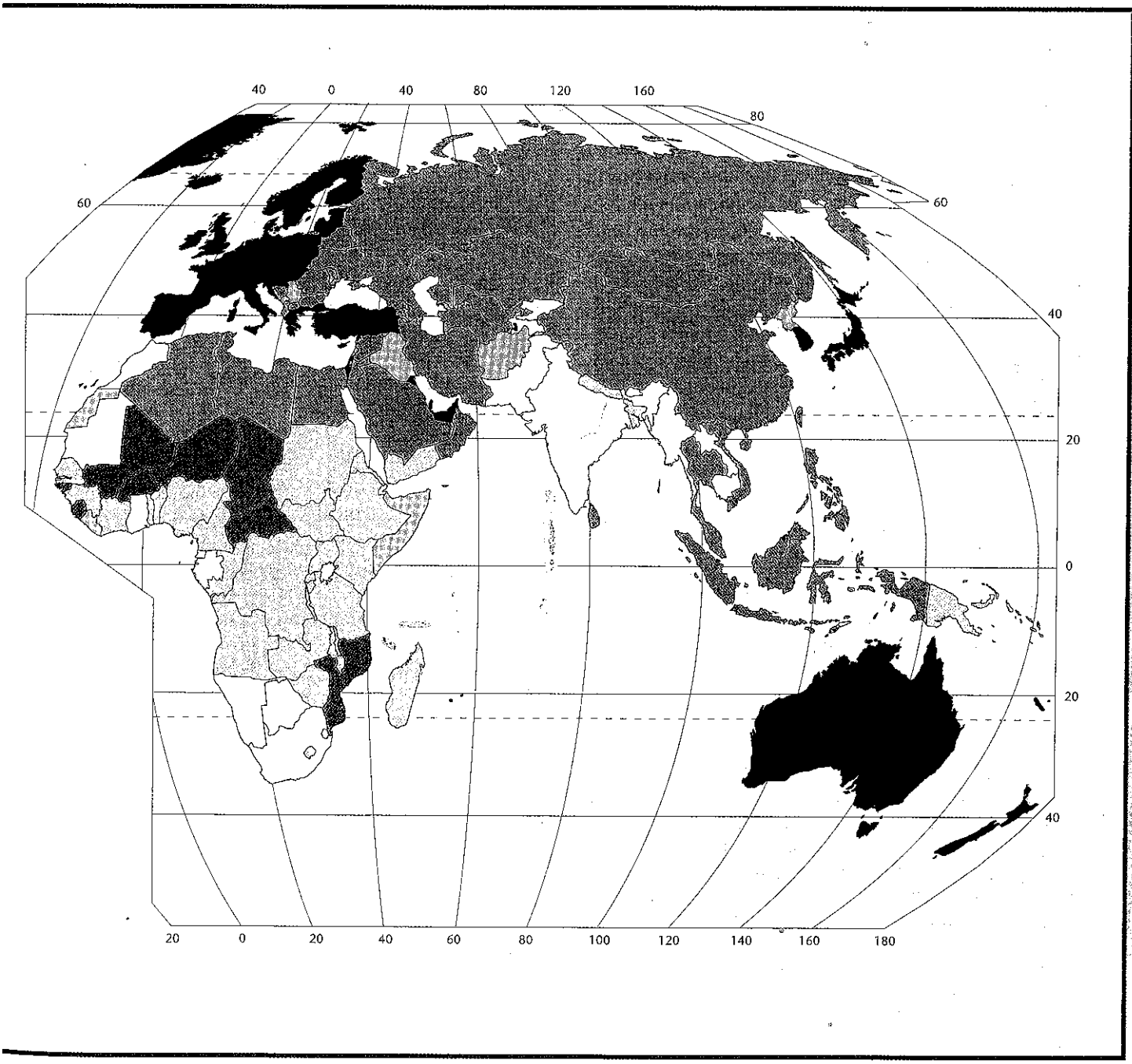



**FIGURE 1.11 World map of the Human Development Index, 2007.** The Human Development Index (HDI) includes life expectancy, adult literacy, educational participation, and gross domestic product (GDP). These statistics are brought together in order to create a measure of development that is more balanced than one based only on economic growth. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its Human Development Reports, calculates the HDI yearly. ***What countries or regions surprise you in terms of their HDI measure? Why?*** *(Human Development Report, 2007/2008. Accessed at http://hdr.undp.org.)*

**uneven development**
The tendency for industry to develop in a core-periphery pattern, enriching the industrialized countries of the core and impoverishing the less industrialized periphery. This term is also used to describe urban patterns in which suburban areas are enriched while the inner city is impoverished.

distribution of resources is referred to as **uneven development.** We will be discussing much more about development in Chapters 3 and 9.

Globalization helps make us aware of these uneven developments and contributes to some of them. How does this happen? Globalization can be thought of as both a set of processes that are economic, political, and cultural in nature, and as the effects of those processes. For example, economic globalization refers to the interlinked networks of money, production, transportation, labor, and consumption that allow, say, the parts of an automobile to be manufactured in several countries, assembled in yet another, and then sold throughout large portions of the world. These economic networks and



processes in turn have significant and often uneven effects on the economies of different countries and regions. Some regions gain employment, whereas others lose jobs; some consumers are able to afford these cars because they are less expensive, whereas other potential consumers who have become unemployed cannot afford to purchase these cars. These global economic processes and effects are in turn linked to politics and culture. In other words, globalization entails not only certain processes and effects but also the relationships among these things. For example, those countries chosen by the automobile manufacturer as sites of production might see the standard of living of their populations improve, leading to larger consumer markets, better communications and media, and often changing political sensibilities. And these changing political ideas in turn will shape economic decisions and so on. Globalization, therefore, involves looking at complex interconnections between a set of related processes and their effects.

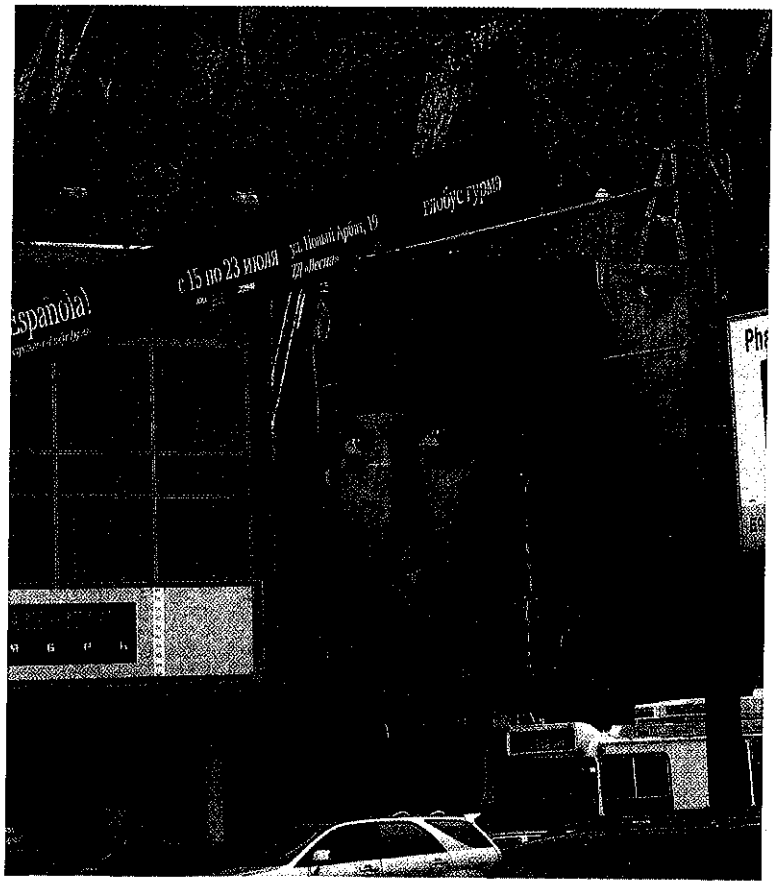



**FIGURE 1.12 Global culture on the streets of Moscow.** A karaoke bar (a much globalized Japanese cultural form) occupies the storefront of a Soviet-era building on the Arbat (a main street) in downtown Moscow; the building is now almost hidden behind an advertisement for the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movie. Meanwhile, an advertisement for a Spanish festival drapes across the street. *(Courtesy of Mona Domosh.)*

Culture, of course, is a key variable in these interactions and interconnections. In fact, as we have just suggested, globalization is occurring through cultural media, for example, in films, on television, and on the Internet (**Figure 1.12** and Mona's Notebook). In addition, if we consider culture as a way of life, then globalization is a key shaper of culture and in turn is shaped by it. Some scholars have suggested that globalizing processes and an increase in mobility will work to homogenize different peoples, breaking down culture regions and eventually producing a single global culture. Other scholars see a different picture, one where new forms of media and communication will allow local cultures to maintain their distinct identities, reinforcing the diversity of cultures around the world. Throughout *The Human Mosaic,* we will return to these issues, asking and considering the complex role of culture and cultures in an increasingly global world.

## Nature-Culture

The themes of region, mobility, and globalization help us understand patterns, movements, and interconnections that characterize the ways in which people create spatial patterns on the Earth. Our fourth theme, **nature-culture,** adds a different dimension to this analysis; it focuses our attention literally on how people inhabit the Earth, their relationships to the physical environment. This theme helps us investigate how groups of people interact with the Earth's biophysical environment and examine how the culture, politics, and economies of those groups affect their ecological situation and resource use. Human geographers view the relationship between people and nature as a two-way interaction. People's cultural values, beliefs, perceptions, and practices have ecological impacts, and ecological conditions in turn influence cultural perceptions and practices. The human geographer must study the interaction between culture and environment to understand spatial variations in culture.

**nature-culture**
A term that refers to the complex relationships between people and the physical environment, including how culture, politics, and economies affect people's ecological situation and resource use.

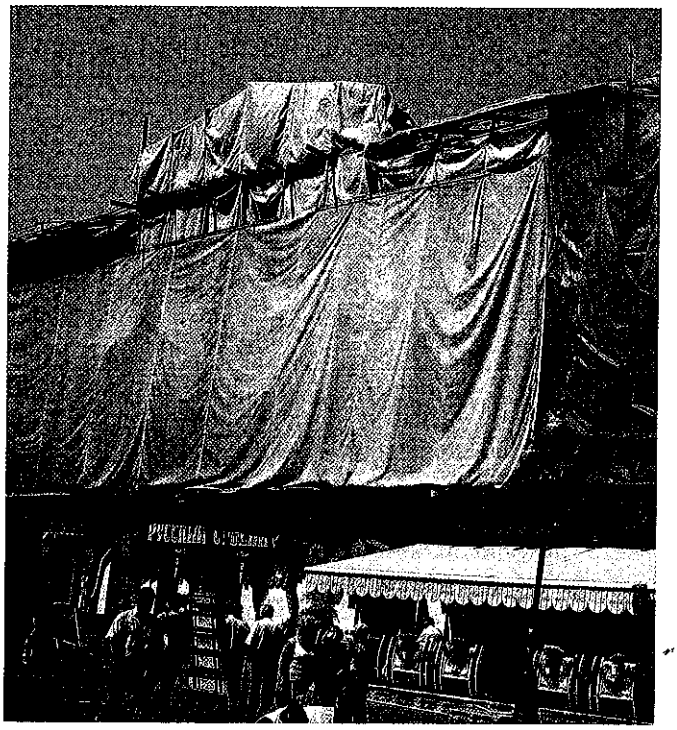
The term *ecology* was coined in the nineteenth century to refer to a new biological science concerned with studying the complex relationships among living organisms and their physical environments. Geographers borrowed this term in the mid-twentieth century and joined it with the term *culture* in order to

**cultural ecology**
Broadly defined, the study of the relationships between the physical environment and culture; narrowly (and more commonly) defined, the study of culture as an adaptive system that facilitates human adaptation to nature and environmental change.

# Mona's Notebook

## Early-Twentieth-Century Globalization vs. Contemporary Globalization in Russia

Mona Domosh



**Nineteenth-century commercial buildings being renovated in downtown Moscow.** ***What other signs of globalization can you see in this image?*** *(Courtesy of Mona Domosh.)*

I took the photo at left during my second research trip to Moscow in 2006, when I hoped to spend my time in archives hunting down information about how and in what ways U.S.-based corporations had expanded into Russia in the early twentieth century. Russia was America's largest foreign market at the time, so I knew it held one of the keys to figuring out my primary research question: how and why early globalization was different from and similar to contemporary globalization. The archives were indeed filled with information (though extremely difficult to access), but I soon understood that I could learn almost as much from walking the streets as I could from sitting, squinting, and typing in closed-off archival rooms. What I saw was a city in the midst of a huge consumer revolution, funded with money from Russian natural gas and oil, and capitalized by global corporations. Construction cranes were everywhere because large, globally based development companies saw profitable opportunities in the skyrocketing demand for housing, entertainment, and shopping spaces.

One hundred years earlier, as I found out in the archives, Moscow was in a similar situation, though the scale and pace of globalization was much smaller and slower. In addition to German, French, and British companies, U.S.-based companies sought out Russia as a market because of its large population and relatively underdeveloped industrial sector. Parts of downtown Moscow in 1915 began to resemble Wall Street and Broadway: a landscape filled with corporate headquarters, bank and insurance buildings, department stores, and even a stock exchange. Of course, as we all know from our history classes, all of this came to an abrupt halt in 1917, when those not benefiting from globalization (or the czar's government!) changed the entire system. Today the outcome seems markedly different. If what I learned from walking the streets of Moscow today is indicative, twenty-first-century globalization is there to stay.

Posted by Mona Domosh

delineate a field of study—**cultural ecology**—that dealt with the interaction between culture and physical environments. Later, another concept, the ecosystem, was introduced to describe a territorially bounded system consisting of interacting organic and inorganic components. Plant and animal species were said to be adapted to specific conditions in the ecosystem and to function so as to keep the system stable over time.

It soon became clear, however, that human cultural interactions with the environment were far too complex to be analyzed with concepts borrowed from biology. Furthermore, the idea that groups of people interacted with their ecosystems in isolation from larger-scale political, economic, and social forces was difficult to defend. We can readily observe, for example, that trade goods come into communities, agricultural commodities flow out, money circulates, taxes are collected, and people migrate in and out for work. So geographers now use the term *nature-culture* to refer to the complex interactions among all these variables and to reflect the fact that studies of local human-environment relations need to include political, economic, and social forces operating on national, and even global, scales.

The theme of nature-culture, the meeting ground of cultural and physical geographers, has traditionally provided a focal point for the academic discipline of geography. In fact, some geographers have proposed that *the* theme of geography is nature-culture, that the study of the intricate relationships between people and their physical environments unites cultural and physical geography to form the entire academic discipline. Although few accept this narrow definition of geography, most will agree that an appreciation of the complex people-environment relationship is necessary for concerned citizens of the twenty-first century.

Through the years, human geographers have developed various perspectives on the interaction between humans and the land. Four schools of thought have developed: environmental determinism, possibilism, environmental perception, and humans as modifiers of the Earth.

## Environmental Determinism

**environmental determinism**
The belief that cultures are directly or indirectly shaped by the physical environment.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many geographers accepted **environmental determinism:** the belief that the physical environment is the dominant force shaping cultures and that humankind is essentially a passive product of its physical surroundings. Humans are clay to be molded by nature. Similar physical environments produce similar cultures.

For example, environmental determinists believed that peoples of the mountains were predestined by the rugged terrain to be simple, backward, conservative, unimaginative, and freedom loving. Desert dwellers were likely to believe in one God but to live under the rule of tyrants. Temperate climates produced inventiveness, industriousness, and democracy. Coastlands pitted with fjords produced great navigators and fishers. Environmental determinism had serious consequences, particularly during the time of European colonization in the late nineteenth century. For example, many Europeans saw Latin American native inhabitants as lazy, childlike, and prone to vices such as alcoholism because of the tropical climates that cover much of this region. Living in a tropical climate supposedly ensured that people didn't have to work very hard for their food. Europeans were able to rationalize their colonization of large portions of the world in part along climatic lines. Because the natives were "naturally" lazy and slow, the European reasoning went, they would benefit from the presence of the "naturally" stronger, smarter, and more industrious Europeans who came from more temperate lands.

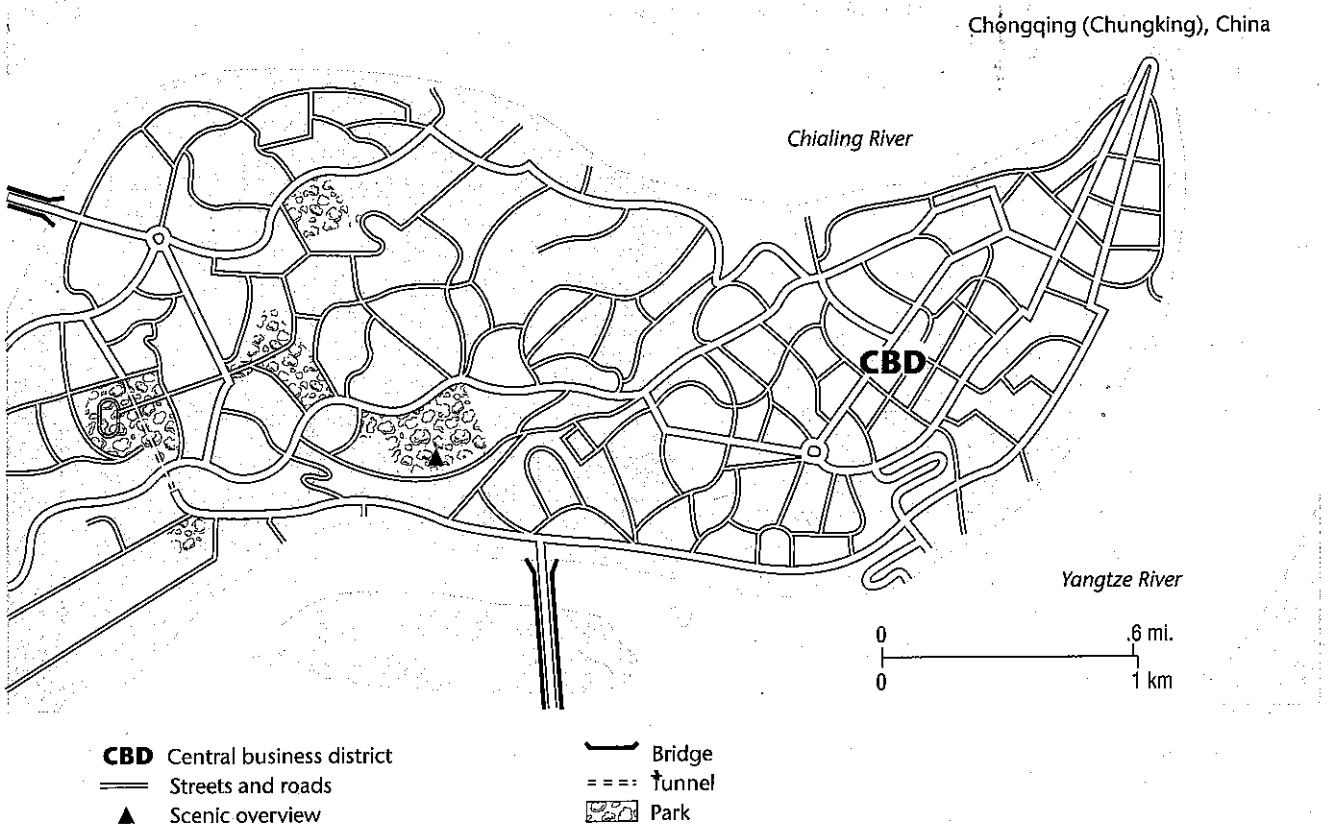
Determinists overemphasize the role of environment in human affairs. This does not mean that environmental influences are inconsequential or that geographers should not study such influences. Rather, the physical environment is only one of many forces affecting human culture and is never the sole determinant of behavior and beliefs.

## Possibilism

**possibilism**
A school of thought based on the belief that humans, rather than the physical environment, are the primary active force; that any environment offers a number of different possible ways for a culture to develop; and that the choices among these possibilities are guided by cultural heritage.

Since the 1920s, **possibilism** has been the favored view among geographers. Possibilists claim that any physical environment offers a number of possible ways for a culture to develop. In this way, the local environment helps shape its resident culture. However, a culture's way of life ultimately depends on the choices people make among the possibilities that are offered by the environment. These choices are guided by cultural heritage and are shaped by a particular political and economic system. Possibilists see the physical environment as offering opportunities and limitations; people make choices among these to satisfy their needs. **Figure 1.13** provides an interesting example: the cities of San Francisco and Chongqing both were built on similar physical terrains that dictated an overall form, but differing cultures lead to very different street patterns, architecture, and land use. In short, local traits of culture and economy are the products of culturally based decisions made within the limits of possibilities offered by the environment.

Most possibilists think that the higher the technological level of a culture, the greater the number of possibilities and the weaker the influences of the physical environment. Technologically advanced cultures, in this view, have achieved some mastery over their physical surroundings. Geographers Jim Norwine and Thomas Anderson, however, warn that even in these advanced societies "the quantity and quality of human life are still strongly influenced by the




**CBD** Central business district
Streets and roads
Scenic overview
Bridge
Tunnel
Park

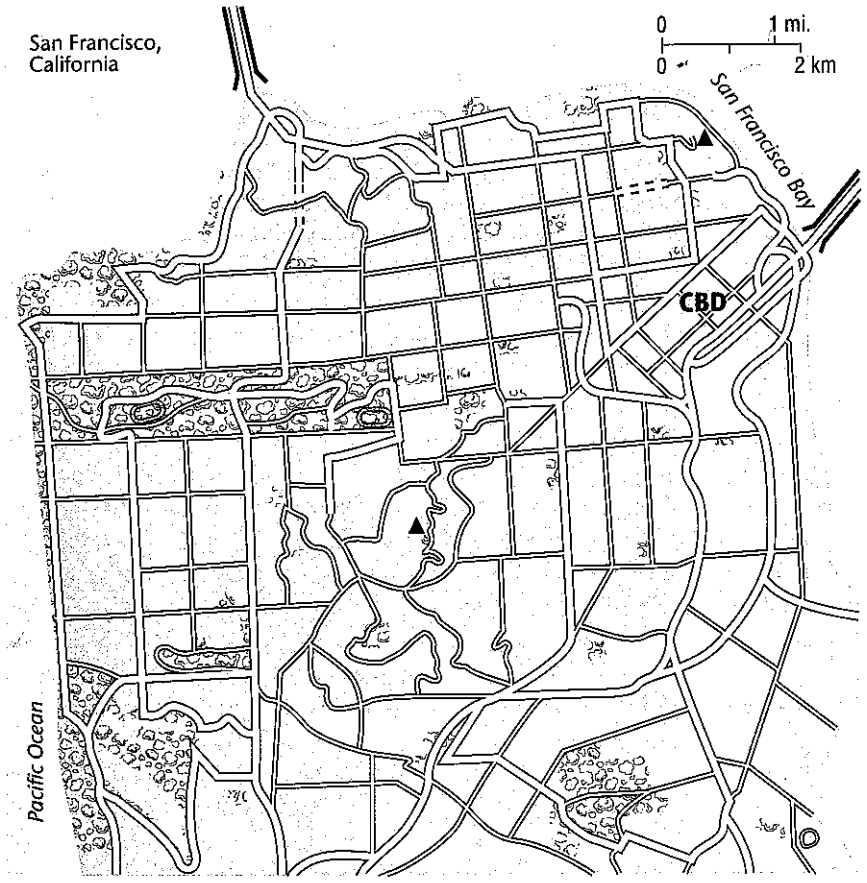



**FIGURE 1.13 Chongqing (Chungking) and San Francisco.** Both of these cities are among the largest in their respective countries. Both developed on elongated, hilly sites flanked on all but one side by water, and both were connected in the twentieth century by bridges leading to adjacent land across the water. In certain other respects, too—such as the use of tunnels for arterial roads—the cities are similar. Note, however, the contrast in street patterns. In Chongqing, the streets were laid out to accommodate the rugged terrain, but in San Francisco, relatively little deviation from a gridiron pattern was permitted. Note, too, that although San Francisco has a much smaller population than Chongqing, it covers a far larger area. ***What do these contrasts suggest about the relative merits of environmental determinism and possibilism? About the role of culture?***

natural environment," especially climate. They argue that humankind's control of nature is anything but supreme and perhaps even illusory. One only has to think of the devastation caused by the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti or the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan to underscore the often-illusory character of the control humans think they have over their physical surroundings.

## Environmental Perception

**environmental perception**
The belief that culture depends more on what people perceive the environment to be than on the actual character of the environment; perception, in turn, is colored by the teachings of culture.

Another approach to the theme of nature-culture focuses on how humans perceive nature. Each person and cultural group has mental images of the physical environment, shaped by knowledge, ignorance, experience, values, and emotions. To describe such mental images, human geographers use the term **environmental perception.** Whereas the possibilist sees humankind as having a choice of different possibilities in a given physical setting, the environmental perceptionist declares that the choices people make will depend more on what they perceive the environment to be than on the actual character of the land. Perception, in turn, is colored by the teachings of culture.

**natural hazard**
An inherent danger present in a given habitat, such as floods, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, or earthquakes; often perceived differently by different peoples.

Some of the most productive research done by geographers who are environmental perceptionists has been on the topic of **natural hazards,** such as floods, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, insect infestations, and droughts. All cultures react to such hazards and catastrophes, but the reactions vary greatly from one group to another. Some people reason that natural disasters and risks are unavoidable acts of the gods, perhaps even divine retribution. Often they seek to cope with the hazards by placating their gods. Others hold government responsible for taking care of them when hazards yield disasters. In Western culture, many groups regard natural hazards as problems that can be solved by technological means. In the United States, one of the most common manifestations of this belief has been the widespread construction of dams to prevent flooding. This belief in the use of technology to mitigate the impacts of natural hazards was sorely tested in the United States during Hurricane Katrina in August of 2005, when the numerous dams and levees that had been built to keep floodwaters out of the city of New Orleans failed (**Figure 1.14**). More than 1800 people lost their lives as a result, and tens of thousands of people were left homeless, calling into question the belief that natural disasters can be avoided through technology.

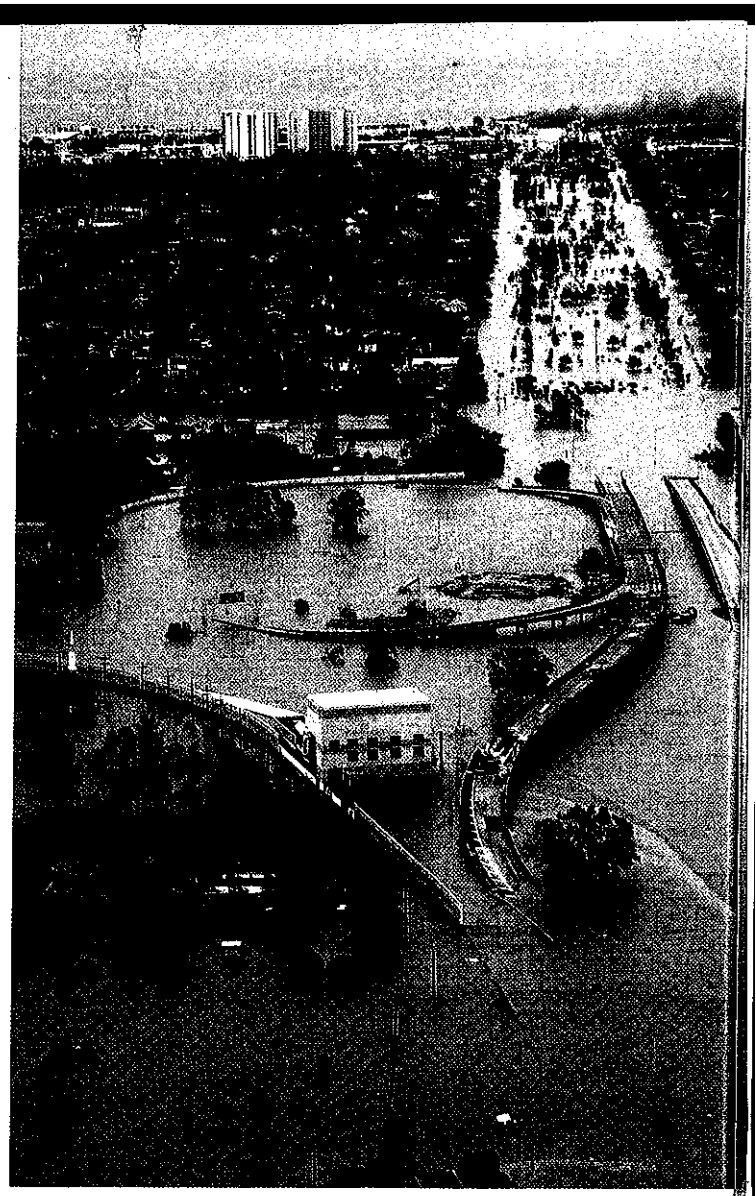


**FIGURE 1.14 Post-Katrina New Orleans.** The dams and levees built along the Mississippi River as it enters the Gulf of Mexico were unable to stop the flooding waters of Hurricane Katrina from inundating many portions of the city. *(U.S. Coast Guard/Getty Images.)*

In virtually all cultures, people knowingly inhabit hazard zones, especially floodplains, exposed coastal sites, drought-prone regions, and the environs of active volcanoes. More Americans than ever now live in areas likely to be devastated by hurricanes along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico and atop earthquake faults in California. How accurately do they perceive the hazard involved? Why have they chosen to live there? How might we minimize the eventual disasters? The human geographer seeks the answers to such questions and aspires, with other geographers, to mitigate the inevitable disasters through such devices as land-use planning.

Perhaps the most fundamental expression of environmental perception lies in the way different cultures see nature itself. We must understand at the outset that nature is a culturally derived concept that has different meanings to

**organic view of nature**
The view that humans are part of, not separate from, nature and that the habitat possesses a soul and is filled with nature-spirits.

**mechanistic view of nature**
The view that humans are separate from nature and hold dominion over it and that the habitat is an integrated mechanism governed by external forces that the human mind can understand and manipulate.

different peoples. In the **organic view,** held by many traditional groups, people are part of nature. The habitat possesses a soul, is filled with nature-spirits, and must not be offended. By contrast, most Western peoples believe in the **mechanistic view of nature.** Humans are separate from and hold dominion over nature. They see the habitat as an integrated system of mechanisms governed by external forces that can be rendered into natural laws and understood by the human mind.

## Humans as Modifiers of the Earth

Many human geographers, observing the environmental changes people have wrought, emphasize humans as modifiers of the habitat. This presents yet another facet of the theme of nature-culture. In a sense, the human-as-modifier school of thought is the opposite of environmental determinism. Whereas the determinists proclaim that nature molds humankind, and possibilists believe that nature presents possibilities for people, those geographers who emphasize the human impact on the land assert that humans mold nature.

In addition to deliberate modifications of the Earth through such activities as mining, logging, and irrigation, we now know that even seemingly innocuous behavior, repeated for millennia, for centuries, or in some cases for mere decades, can have catastrophic effects on the environment. Plowing fields and grazing livestock can eventually denude regions (**Figure 1.15**). The use of certain types of air conditioners or spray cans apparently has the potential to destroy the planet's very ability to support life. And the increasing release of fossil-fuel emissions from vehicles and factories—what are known as greenhouse gases—is arguably leading to global warming, with potentially devastating effects on the Earth's environment (see Subject to Debate, page 22). Clearly, access to energy and technology is the key variable that controls the magnitude and speed of environmental alteration. Geographers seek to understand and explain the processes of environmental alteration as they vary from one culture to another and, through applied geography, to propose alternative, less destructive modes of behavior.

**FIGURE 1.15 Human modification of the Earth includes severe soil erosion.** This erosion could have been caused by road building or poor farming methods. The scene is in the Amazon Basin of Brazil. ***How can we adopt less destructive ways of modifying the land?*** *(Michael Nichols/ National Geographic.)*

Human geographers began to concentrate on the human role in changing the face of the Earth long before the present level of ecological consciousness developed. They learned early on the fact that different cultural groups have widely different outlooks on humankind's role in changing the Earth. Some, such as those rooted in the mechanistic tradition, tend to regard environmental modification as divinely approved, viewing humans as God's helpers in completing the task of creation. Other groups, organic in their view of nature, are much more cautious, taking care not to offend the forces of nature. They see humans as part of nature, meant to be in harmony with their environment (for more on this topic, see Chapter 7).

**ecofeminism**
A doctrine proposing that women are inherently better environmental preservationists than men because the traditional roles of women involved creating and nurturing life, whereas the traditional roles of men too often necessitated death and destruction.

Gender differences can also play a role in the human modification of the Earth. **Ecofeminism,** a term derived from a book by Karen Warren, maintains that because of socialization, women have been better ecologists and environmentalists than men. (We should not forget that the modern environmental preservation movement grew in no small part out of Rachel Carson's 1962 book *Silent Spring.* ) Traditionally, women—as childbearers, gardeners, and nurturers of the family and home—dealt with the daily chores of gaining food from the Earth, whereas men—as hunters, fishers, warriors, and forest clearers—were involved with activities that were more associated with destruction. Regardless of whether we agree with this rather deterministic and essentializing viewpoint (understanding gender differences as biologically determined rather than culturally constructed), we can see that in many situations through time, and around the globe, women and men have had different relationships to the natural world.

# Subject to Debate

## Human Activities and Global Climate Change

One of the most important and vexing scientific and political issues of the early twenty-first century is understanding the causes of recent global climate change and deciding what policies to pursue to mitigate its effects. It's also an issue that human geographers, with their emphasis on understanding nature-culture relationships, are well prepared to discuss.

According to a report by the National Academies of the United States (a joint body comprised of the National Academy of Science, the National Academy of Engineering, the Institute of Medicine, and the National Research Council), the Earth's temperatures are rising. Since the early twentieth century, the surface temperature of the Earth has risen 1.4°F, with the greatest amount of increase occurring since 1978. Global climate, of course, is always changing. What is critical today, however, is the degree to which scientists have been able to correlate global warming trends with the rise in the levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide is one of several greenhouse gases that keep radiative energy (and therefore warmth) trapped in the Earth's atmosphere. It occurs naturally in the atmosphere but is also released when fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas are burned. Changes in the levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, therefore, lead to changes in the Earth's temperature. Changes in temperature, in turn, lead to other changes in the environment, such as the melting of glacial caps and the rising of sea levels.

To what degree are our activities—particularly our energy demands that lead to the burning of fossil fuels—responsible for this climate change? This is where the real debate starts. Some scientists are wary of pointing the finger at carbon dioxide emissions as the primary culprit, arguing along several lines that it is far from certain whether human activities have had such impacts on the Earth's climate; some are critical of the data itself that show increases in surface temperature; some believe that the recent fluctuation in climate is far more a natural occurrence than one induced by humans; and some believe that the Earth's atmospheric and climatic systems are simply so complex that it is premature to isolate one factor. Yet there is growing worldwide consensus that human activities—particularly our reliance on the burning of fossil fuels—are the primary factors responsible for the recent global warming. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a group of scientists from many different countries, concluded that because of the increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, by 2100 average temperatures on the surface of the Earth are likely to rise between 2.5°F and 10.4°F above 1990 levels. The question for this group of scientists is not what is causing these changes but what to do about it. The first step, these scientists argue, is to find ways to decrease levels of carbon dioxide released by looking to new technologies and alternative energy sources. But because the changes in climate are already occurring, the second step is finding ways to deal with the effects of global warming.

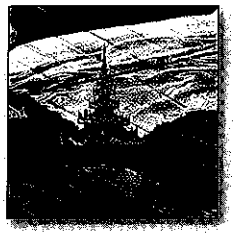
Geography is a discipline well suited to dealing with this debate because, as we have seen, one of the primary sets of issues it deals with is understanding nature-culture relationships. Figuring out to what degree, how, and why human activities interact with our physical environment is clearly the heart of what is being disputed here.

### Continuing the Debate

As geographers, we know that various cultures interact with the environment differently and have varied beliefs and ideas about the role of science in explaining physical phenomena. Keeping this all in mind, consider these questions:

- How might these cultural differences affect people's conclusions about the causes and effects of global climate change?
- How are your ideas about global climate change impacted by your position in the world?

**Polar bear on breaking ice floe, North Pole.**
One of the many consequences of global climate change is the disappearance of habitats for many species, including the polar bear. ***Are there any endangered habitats in your local region?*** *(©Yi Lu/Corbis)*



# CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

***What are the visible expressions of culture? How are peoples' interactions with nature materially expressed? What do regions actually look like?*** These questions provide the basis of our fifth and final theme, **cultural landscape.** The human or cultural landscape is comprised of all the built forms that cultural groups create in inhabiting the Earth—roads, agricultural fields, cities, houses, parks, gardens, commercial buildings, and so on. Every inhabited area has a cultural landscape, fashioned from the natural landscape, and each uniquely reflects the culture or cultures that created it (**Figure 1.16**). Landscape mirrors a culture's needs, values, and attitudes toward the Earth, and the human geographer can learn much about a group of people by carefully observing and studying the landscape. Indeed, so important is this visual record of cultures that some geographers regard landscape study as geography's central interest.

Why is such importance attached to the human landscape? Perhaps part of the answer is that it visually reflects the most basic strivings of humankind: shelter, food, and clothing. In addition, the cultural landscape reveals people's different attitudes toward the modification of the Earth. It also contains valuable evidence about the origin, spread, and development of cultures because it usually preserves various types of archaic forms. Dominant and alternative cultures use, alter, and manipulate landscapes to express their diverse identities (**Figure 1.17**)

Aside from containing archaic forms, landscapes also convey revealing messages about the present-day inhabitants and cultures. According to geographer Pierce Lewis, "the cultural landscape is our collective and revealing autobiography, reflecting our tastes, values, aspirations, and fears in tangible forms." Cultural landscapes offer "texts" that geographers read to discover dominant ideas and prevailing practices within a culture as well as less dominant and alternative forms within that culture. This "reading," however, is often a very difficult task, given the complexity of cultures, cultural change, and recent globalizing trends that can obscure local histories.

### Reflecting on Geography

As we will learn throughout this book, landscapes are often created from more than one set of cultural values and beliefs, oftentimes in conflict with each other. How then can we "read" conflict into the landscape, when it appears so natural and unified? What sort of information would we need?

Geographers have pushed the idea of "reading" the landscape further in order to focus on the symbolic and ideological qualities of landscape. In fact, as geographer Denis Cosgrove has suggested (see Practicing Geography on page 5), the very idea of landscape itself was ideological, in that its development in the Renaissance served the interests of the new elite class for whom agricultural land was valued not for its productivity but for its use as a visual subject. Land, in other words, was important to look at as a scene, and the actual activities that were necessary for agriculture were thus

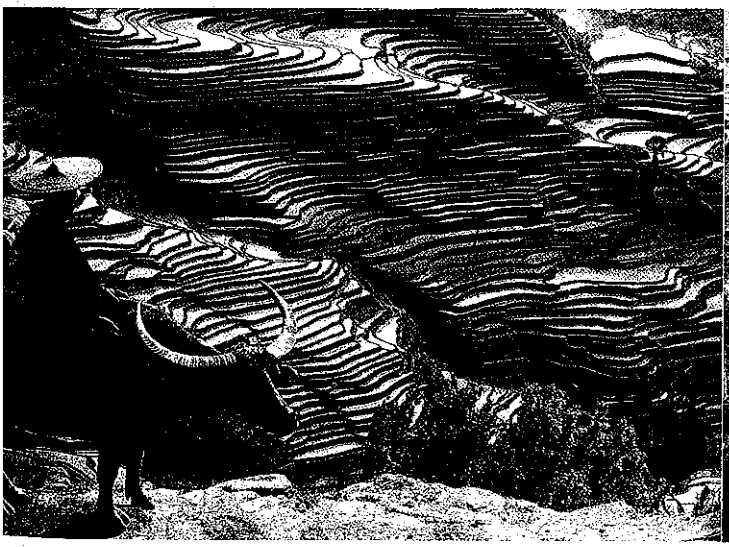


**FIGURE 1.16 Terraced cultural landscape of an irrigated rice district in Yunnan Province, China.** In such areas, the artificial landscape made by people overwhelms nature and forms a human mosaic on the land. ***Why is rice cultivated in such hilly areas in Asia, whereas in the United States rice farming is confined to flat plains?*** *(Stone.)*

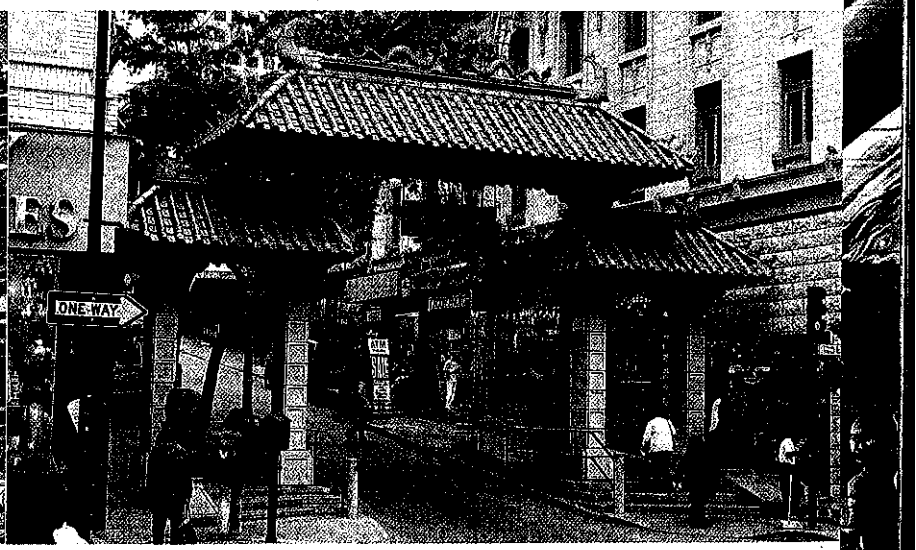



**FIGURE 1.17 Chinatown, San Francisco.** Gates are symbolically important in denoting the entry into sacred space in traditional Chinese culture; they are often used in American cities like San Francisco to mark a similar transition into a neighborhood dominated by immigrant Chinese. Most of our landscapes are dotted with such cultural symbols. ***Can you identify some in your neighborhood?*** *(© Ron Niebrugge/Alamy.)*

hidden from these views. If you go to an art museum, for example, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to find in the Italian Renaissance room any landscape paintings that depict agricultural laborers (**Figure 1.18**).

Closer to home, we need only to look outside our windows to see other symbolic and ideological landscapes. One of the most familiar and obvious **symbolic landscapes** is the urban skyline. Composed of tall buildings that normally house financial service industries, it represents the power and dominance of finance and economics within that culture (**Figure 1.19**). However, other cities are dominated by tall structures that have little to do with economics but more with religion. In medieval Europe, for example, cathedrals and churches rose high above other buildings, symbolizing the centrality and dominance of Catholicism in this culture (**Figure 1.20**).

**symbolic landscapes**
Landscapes that express the values, beliefs, and meanings of a particular culture.

Even the most mundane landscape element can be interpreted as symbolic and ideological. The typical, middle-class, suburban, American or Canadian home, for example, can be interpreted as an expression of a dominant set of ideas about culture and family structure (**Figure 1.21**). These homes are often comprised of a living room, dining room, kitchen, and bedrooms, all separated by walls. The cultural assumptions built into this division of space include the assumed value of individual privacy (everyone has his or her own bedroom); the idea that certain functions should be spatially separate from others (cooking, eating, socializing, sleeping); and the notion that a family is composed of a mother, father, and children (indicated by the "master" bedroom and smaller "children's" bedrooms). Thus, even the most common of landscapes can be seen as symbolic of a particular culture and built from ideological assumptions.

As we have seen, the physical content of the **cultural landscape** is both varied and complex. To better study and understand these complexities, geographical studies focus on three principal aspects of landscape: settlement forms, land-division patterns, and architectural styles. In the study of **settlement forms,** human geographers describe and explain the spatial arrangement of buildings, roads, and other features that people construct while inhabiting an area. One of the most basic ways in which geographers categorize settlement forms is to examine their degree of **nucleation,** a term that refers to the relative density of landscape elements. Urban centers are of course very nucleated, whereas rural farming areas tend to be much less nucleated, what geographers call **dispersed.** Another common way to think about settlement forms is the degree to which they appear standardized and planned, such as the grid form of much of the American West (**Figure 1.22**), versus the degree to which the forms appear to be organic, that is, to have

**cultural landscape**
The visible human imprint on the land.

**settlement forms**
The spatial arrangement of buildings, roads, towns, and other features that people construct while inhabiting an area.

**nucleation**
A relatively dense settlement form.

**dispersed**
A type of settlement form in which people live relatively distant from each other.

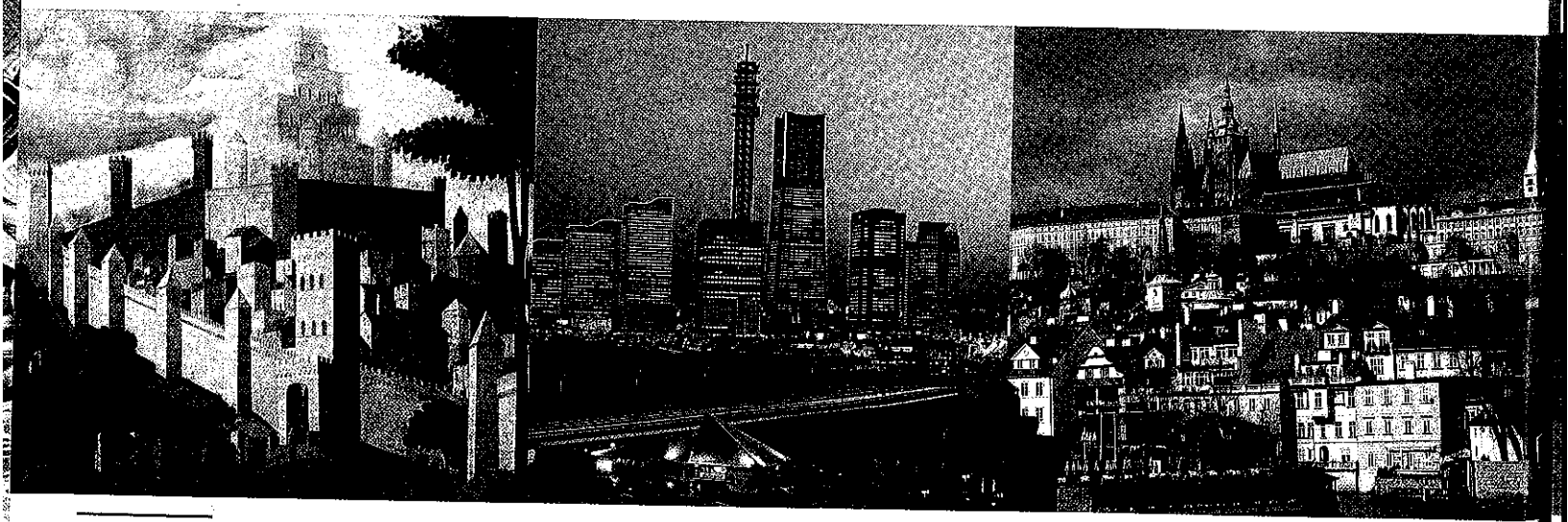


**FIGURE 1.18 Landscape triptych panel by Fra Angelico, fifteenth century.** Notice the depiction of the beautiful and orderly agricultural landscape outside the city walls but the absence of people actually doing the work to maintain that order. ***Why aren't the laborers depicted?*** *(Archivo Iconografico, S.A./Corbis.)*

**FIGURE 1.19 Yokohama at dusk.** This skyline is a powerful symbol of the economic importance of the world's largest city, Tokyo-Yokohama. ***What landscape form best symbolizes your town/city?*** *(Jose Fuste Raga/Corbis.)*

**FIGURE 1.20 Prague's skyline is dominated by church spires.** Here St. Vitus Cathedral sits majestically overlooking the Vltava River and the Small Town. *(Courtesy of Mona Domosh.)*

been built without any apparent geometric plan, such as the central areas of most European cities. Thinking about settlement forms in terms of these two basic categories helps geographers begin their analysis of the relationships between cultures and the landscapes they produce.

**land-division patterns**
A term that refers to the spatial patterns of different land uses.

**Land-division patterns** indicate the uses of particular parcels of land and as such reveal the way people have divided the land for economic, social, and political uses. Within a particular nucleated settlement form—a city, for example—you can see different patterns of land use. Some areas are devoted to economic uses, others to residential, political (city hall, for example), social, and cultural uses. Each of these areas can be further divided. Economic uses can include offices for financial services, retail stores, warehouses, and factories. Residential areas are often divided into middle-class, upper-class, and working-class districts and/or are grouped by ethnicity and race (see Chapter 11). Such patterns of course vary a great deal from place to place and culture to culture, as we will see throughout this book. One of the best ways to glimpse settlement and land-division patterns is through an airplane window. Looking down, you can see the multicolored abstract patterns of planted fields, as vivid as any modern painting, and the regular checkerboard or chaotic tangle of urban streets.

Perhaps no other aspect of the human landscape is as readily visible from ground level as the architectural style of a culture. Geographers look at the exterior materials and decoration, as well as the layout and design of the interiors. Styles tend to vary both through time, as cultures change, and across space, in the sense that different cultures adopt and invent their own stylistic detailing according to their own particular needs, aesthetics, and desires. Thus, examining architectural style is often useful when trying to date a particular landscape element or when trying to understand the particular values and beliefs that cultures may hold. In North American culture, different building styles catch the eye: modest white New England churches and giant urban cathedrals, hand-hewn barns and geodesic domes, wooden one-room schoolhouses and the new windowless school buildings of urban areas, shopping malls and glass office buildings. Each tells us something about the people who designed, built, or inhabit these spaces. Thus, architecture provides a vivid record of the resident culture (**Figure 1.23**). For this reason, cultural geographers have traditionally devoted considerable attention to examining architecture and style in the cultural landscape.

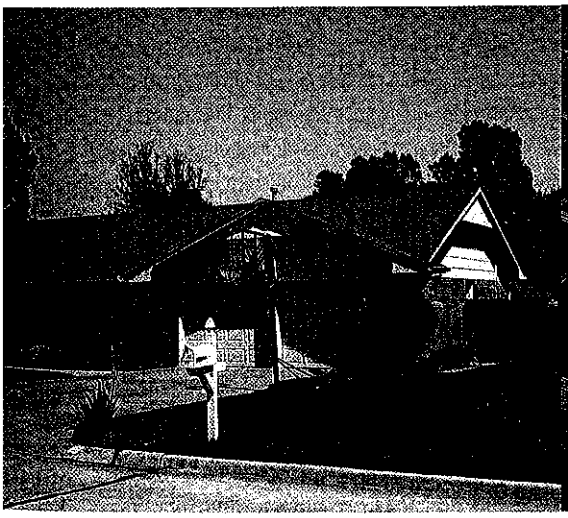


**FIGURE 1.21 American ranch house.** The horizontally expansive ranch is a common house form in the United States and Canada. ***Can you think of other countries where ranch houses are also common?*** *(Courtesy of Brad Bays.)*

**FIGURE 1.22 The town of Westmoreland in the Imperial Valley of California.** It's difficult to find a more regularized, geometric land pattern than this. ***Why do you think much of the American West was divided into these rectangles?*** *(Jim Wark/Airphoto.)*

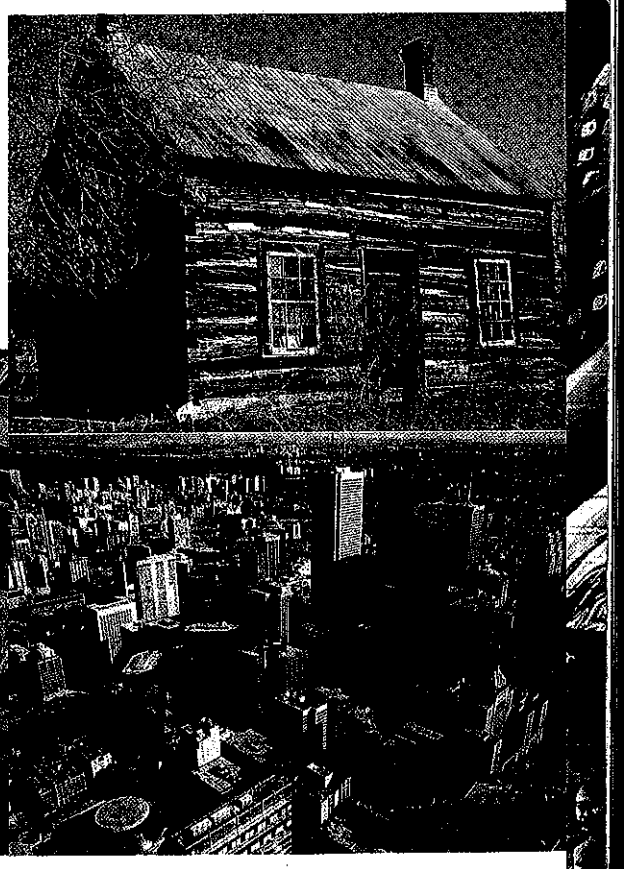


**FIGURE 1.23 Architecture as a reflection of culture.** This log house (*top*), near Ottawa in Canada, is a folk dwelling and stands in sharp contrast to the professional architecture of the Toronto skyline (*bottom*). ***What conclusion might a perceptive person from another culture reach (considering the "virtues" of height, durability, and centrality) about the ideology of the culture that produced the Toronto landscape?*** *(Top: Courtesy of Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov; Bottom: Photodisc.)*

# CONCLUSION

As we have seen and will continue to see, the interests of human geographers are diverse. It might seem to you, confronted by the various themes, subject matter, viewpoints, and methodologies described in this chapter, that geographers run off in all directions, lacking unity of purpose. What does a geographer who studies architecture have in common with a colleague who studies the political and cultural causes of environmental degradation? What interests do an environmental perceptionist and a student of diffusion share? Why do scholars with such apparently different interests belong in the same academic discipline? Why are they all geographers?

The answer is that regardless of the particular topic the human geographer studies, she or he necessarily touches on several or all of the five themes we have discussed. The themes are closely related segments of a whole. Spatial patterns in culture, as revealed by maps of regions, are reflected in and expressed through the cultural landscape, require an ecological interpretation, are the result of mobility, and are inextricably linked with globalization.

As an example of how the various themes of human geography overlap and intertwine, let's look at one element of architecture that most North Americans will be familiar with: the ranch-style, single-family house (see Figure 1.21). This house type is defined by its one-story height and its linear form. These houses are found throughout much of the United States and to a lesser extent in Canada, though they are rare in other countries. They are obviously part of the cultural landscape, and their spatial distribution constitutes a formal region that can be mapped.

Geographers who study such houses also need to employ the other themes of human geography to gain a complete understanding. They can use the concept of diffusion to learn when and by what routes this building style emerged and diffused and what barriers hindered its diffusion. In this particular case, geographers would be led back to the early years of the twentieth century, when the first suburban houses were built outside of urban centers. In this case, land was relatively inexpensive, allowing for a house type that occupied a wide expanse of space. What's more, they would learn that a dominant design motif in the United States in the early twentieth century was based on the notion that buildings should fit in with their natural surroundings instead of dominate them. As a result, low-slung housing styles like the ranch house were particularly popular. Further, the geographer would need an ecological interpretation of the ranch house. What materials were required to build such a house? Did the style vary in the different climatic and ecological regions in which such houses were built? Finally, the human geographer would want to know how the use of ranch houses was related to globalization. Did economic changes in the world raise the standard of living, leading people to accept ranch houses? Did changes in technology lead to more elaborate houses? Why did it become the quintessential house type in post–World War II America, featured in many of its popular TV shows? Do these humble structures possess a symbolism related to traditional American values and virtues? Thus, the geographer interested in housing is firmly bound by the total fabric of human geography, unable to segregate a particular topic such as ranch houses from the geographical whole. Region, cultural landscape, nature-culture relationships, mobility, and globalization are interwoven.

In this manner, the human geographer passes from one theme to another, demonstrating the holistic nature of the discipline. In no small measure, it is this holism—this broad, multithematic approach—that distinguishes the human geographer from other students of culture. We believe that, by the end of the course, you will have gained a new perspective on the Earth as the home of humankind

# DOING GEOGRAPHY

### Space, Place, and Knowing Your Way Around

We started this chapter by saying that most of us are born geographers, with a sense of curiosity about the places and spaces around us. Think, for example, of the place you call home. You are probably familiar enough with its streets and buildings and greenspaces, and with the people who inhabit these spaces, to make connections among them—you know how to "read" the place. There are many other places, however, where this is not the case. Most of you have had the experience of going somewhere new, where it is difficult to find your way around, literally and metaphorically. Many of you, for example, are attending a college or university far from home, whereas others have experienced the disorienting feeling of moving from one home to another, whether across town or across continents. How did you find your way? How did the "strange" space become a familiar place?

This activity requires you to draw on your own experiences to understand two fundamental concepts in human geography: space and place. Geographers tend to use the term *space* in a much more abstract way than *place*—as a term that describes a two-dimensional location on a map. *Place,* however, is a less dry term, one that is used to describe a location that has meaning. Your college campus, for example, may have been simply an abstract space located on a map when you applied to the school, yet now it is a place because you have filled it with your own meanings. Here are the steps for your activity.

#### Steps to Understanding Space, Place, and Knowing Your Way Around

***Step 1:*** Draw on your own experiences by picking one particular space that has become a place for you.

***Step 2:*** Identify what you knew about this space beforehand and how you knew this (for example, perhaps you looked up the place in an atlas or saw it in a movie).

***Step 3:*** In narrative form, describe the process whereby that space became a place for you.

***Step 4:*** Identify the ways in which you learned how to "read" this place. In other words, how did you learn to see this particular location as a three-dimensional, meaningful place that is different from what you knew of it as a "space"?

**Use your experiences to answer the following questions:**

- Do you have to live in a place to really "know" it?
- Do you have to experience a space for it to become a place?

**Father and son in front of college dorm.** For many young people, the transition to college is the first time they have had to find their own way and create homes for themselves. *(© Corbis Super RF/Alamy.)*

## Key Terms



## Geography on the Internet

You can learn more about the discipline of geography and the subdiscipline of human geography on the Internet at the following web sites:

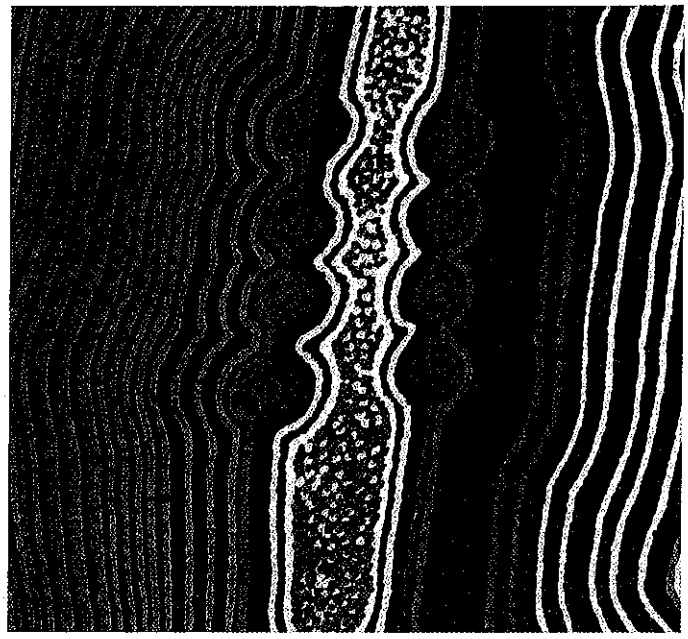
**American Geographical Society**
**http://www.amergeog.org/**
America's oldest geographical organization, with a long and distinguished record; publisher of the *Geographical Review.*

**Association of American Geographers**
**http://www.aag.org/**
The leading organization of professional geographers in the United States. This site contains information about the discipline, the association, and its activities, including annual and regional meetings.

**National Geographic Society**
**http://www.nationalgeographic.com/**
An organization that has, for more than a century, served to popularize geography with active programs of publishing and television presentations prepared for the public.

# SEEING GEOGRAPHY
## Aboriginal Topographical Painting of the Great Sandy Desert

*Why is it difficult for most of us to interpret this image as a map?*



**Painting by Helicopter Tjungurrayi depicting the Great Sandy Desert south of Balgo, Western Australia.**

As the title indicates, this is an Aboriginal painting that depicts a landscape in the Great Sandy Desert, which is located in the northwest of Western Australia. Like all maps, it is a two-dimensional rendering of three-dimensional space. In other words, it is an attempt to represent land and location on a flat surface. All cultures devise certain symbols that allow for these representations to be understood. On United States Geological Survey (USGS) maps, for example, a standardized set of symbols represent such things as roads, rivers, and cities. Similarly, this map is filled with symbols that represent such features as watering holes (the circular figures) and sandhills (the wavy lines).

As we've learned throughout this chapter, different cultures create and experience landscapes differently. Here we can see that different cultures also represent their landscapes differently. This image is part of a long tradition of Australian Aboriginal topographic representations that reflect their particular culture and their views of the lands they occupy. In general, these representations are religious in nature, depicting myths about the sites and travels of ancestors. Most of these myths concern a spiritual identification between people and their lands. Hence, these maplike representations are not meant as objective measurements of land, as in degrees of longitude and latitude or miles and kilometers. Instead, they communicate meanings about the sacred relationships between people and their physical environments.

To most Western eyes, then, these images do not look like maps because we neither recognize the symbols that Aboriginal peoples use to translate three-dimensional spaces into two dimensions nor think of maps as meaningful in and of themselves. Most likely, Western maps would look very odd to Aboriginal eyes. One of the goals of studying human geography, as we will see throughout this book, is to appreciate this diversity—this mosaic—of relationships between peoples and the places they inhabit, shape, and represent.

**Royal Geographic Society/Institute of British Geographers**
**http://www.rgs.org/**
Explore the activities of these allied British organizations, whose collective history goes back to the Age of Exploration and Discovery in the 1800s . . . and don't forget to visit The Human Mosaic Online at http://www.whfreeman.com/domosh12e/

## Sources


Anderson, Kay, and Fay Gale. 1999. *Cultural Geographies.* Melbourne: Pearson Education.

Blaut, James M. 1977. "Two Views of Diffusion." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 67: 343–349.

Carson, Rachel. 1962. *Silent Spring.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Gould, Peter. 1993. *The Slow Plague: A Geography of the AIDS Pandemic.* Cambridge: Blackwell.

Griffin, Ernst, and Larry Ford. 1980. "A Model of Latin American City Structure." *Geographical Review* 70: 397–422.

Hägerstrand, Torsten. 1967. *Innovation Diffusion as a Spatial Process.* Allan Pred (trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lewis, Peirce. 1983. "Learning from Looking: Geographic and Other Writing About the American Cultural Landscape." *American Quarterly* 35: 242–261.

Norwine, Jim, and Thomas D. Anderson. 1980. *Geography as Human Ecology?* Lanham, Md.: University Press of America.

Ormrod, Richard K. 1990. "Local Context and Innovation Diffusion in a Well-Connected World." *Economic Geography* 66: 109–122.

Relph, Edward. 1981. *Rational Landscapes and Humanistic Geography.* New York: Barnes & Noble.

Staudt, Amanda, Nancy Huddleston, and Sandi Rudenstein. 2006. *Understanding and Responding to Climate Change, a Report Prepared by the National Research Council based on National Academies' Reports.* Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Science.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1974. *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Warren, Karen J. (ed.). 1997. *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

## Ten Recommended Books on a Cultural Approach to Human Geography

(For additional suggested readings, see *The Human Mosaic* web site: www.whfreeman.com/domosh12e)

Anderson, Kay, Mona Domosh, Steve Pile, and Nigel Thrift (eds.). 2003. *Handbook of Cultural Geography.* London: Sage Publications. An edited collection of essays that push the boundaries of cultural geography into such subdisciplines as economic, social, and political geography.

Blunt, Alison, Pyrs Gruffudd, Jon May, Miles Ogborn, and David Pinder (eds.). 2003. *Cultural Geography in Practice.* London: Arnold Publishing. An edited collection of essays that take a very practical view of what it means to actually conduct research in the field of cultural geography.

Cosgrove, Denis. 1998. *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. The landmark study that outlines the relationships between the idea of landscape and social and class formation in such places as Italy, England, and the United States.

Cosgrove, Denis, and Stephen Daniels (eds.). 1990. *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. An important collection of essays that foreground an ideological reading of landscape.

Duncan, James, Nuala Johnson, and Richard Schein (eds.). 2007. *A Companion to Cultural Geography.* New York: Blackwell. A set of essays that represent contemporary thinking about the state of cultural geography in the English-speaking world.

Foote, Kenneth E., Peter J. Hugill, Kent Mathewson, and Jonathan M. Smith (eds.). 1994. *Re-Reading Cultural Geography.* Austin: University of Texas Press. A beautifully compiled representative collection of some of the best works in American cultural geography at the end of the twentieth century, and a useful companion to the book edited by Wagner and Mikesell.

Mitchell, Don. 1999. *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction.* New York: Blackwell. An introductory text on cultural geography that emphasizes the material and political elements of the discipline.

Radcliffe, Sarah (ed.). 2006. *Culture and Development in a Globalizing World: Geographies, Actors, and Paradigms.* London: Routledge. A series of essays that provide case studies from around the world showing the various ways that culture and economic development are integrally related.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1974. *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall. A Chinese-born geographer's innovative and imaginative look at people's attachment to place, a central concern of the cultural approach to human geography.

Wagner, Philip L., and Marvin W. Mikesell (eds). 1962. *Readings in Cultural Geography.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. A classic collection, edited by two distinguished Berkeley-trained cultural geographers, presenting the subdiscipline as it was in the mid-twentieth century and developing the device of five themes.

## Journals in Human Geography

*Annals of the Association of American Geographers.* Volume 1 was published in 1911. The leading scholarly journal of American geographers.

*Cultural Geographies* (formerly known as *Ecumene*). Volume I was published in 1994.

*Geographical Review.* Published by the American Geographical Society. Volume 1 was published in 1916.

*Journal of Cultural Geography.* Published semiannually by the Department of Geography, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. Volume 1 was published in 1980.

*Progress in Human Geography.* A quarterly journal providing critical appraisal of developments and trends in the discipline. Volume 1 was published in 1977.

*Social and Cultural Geography.* Volume 1 was published in 2000 by Routledge, Taylor, & Francis Ltd. in Great Britain.