MANY WORLDS

Geographies of Cultural Difference

No matter where we live, if you look carefully, you will be reminded constantly of how important the expression of cultural identity is to people's daily lives. The geography of cultural difference is evident everywhere—not only in the geographic distribution of different cultures but also in the way that difference is created or reinforced by geography. For example, in the United States, the history of legally enforced spatial segregation of "whites" and "blacks" has been important in establishing and maintaining cultural differences between these groups.

In Chapter 1 we noted that human geographers are interested in studying the geographic expression of difference both among and within cultures. For example, using the concept of formal region, we can identify and map differences among cultures. This sort of analysis is usually done on a very large geographic scale, such as a continent or even the entire world. But geographers are also interested in analyses at smaller scales. When we look closer at a formal culture region, we begin to see that differences appear along racial, ethnic, gender, and other lines of distinction. Sometimes groups within a dominant culture become distinctive enough that we label them **subcultures.** These can be the result of resistance to the dominant culture or of a distinct religious, ethnic, or national group forming an enclave community within a larger culture.

subcultures
groups of people with forms, values, and material practices that differentiate them from the dominant culture to which they belong.

In this chapter, we are going to explore the geographies of cultural difference using three broad categories of classification: folk, popular, and indigenous cultures. Popular culture, as we will see, is synonymous with mass culture and so, by definition, is the dominant form of cultural expression. Folk and indigenous cultures are, to a large degree, distinguished in relation to popular culture. The term *difference* implies a relationship and a set of criteria for comparison and assessment; that is, cultures are defined relationally.

But what does it mean to speak of "geographies" in the plural? Isn't there only one "geography"? The plural form emphasizes that there is no single way of seeing the land and the landscape. Recall from Chapter 1 our discussion on the concept of subjective experience in the sense of place, which emphasizes the multiplicity of meanings versus a single, universally shared meaning. Cultural geography studies have shown, for example, that women and men often experience the same places in different ways. A certain street corner or tavern might be a comfortable and familiar hangout for men but a threatening or uncomfortable zone that women avoid. To speak of geographies, then, is to go beyond the idea of a single, objectively observable world and raise new questions about the different meanings that people give to places and landscapes; how these relate to their sense of self and belonging; and how, in multicultural societies, we deal with these different meanings politically and socially. As we explore folk, indigenous, and popular cultures in this chapter, we need to keep in mind the multiple subjectivities that operate both within and among cultures.

Many Cultures

Cultures are classified using many different criteria. The concept of culture includes both material and nonmaterial elements. **Material culture** includes all objects or "things" made and used by members of a cultural group: buildings, furniture, clothing, artwork, musical instruments, and other physical objects. The elements of material culture are visible. **Nonmaterial culture** includes the wide range of beliefs, values, myths, and symbolic meanings that are transmitted across generations of a given society. Cultures may be categorized and geographically located using criteria based on either or both of these features.

material culture
All physical, tangible objects made and used by members of a cultural group, such as clothing, buildings, tools and utensils, instruments, furniture, and artwork; the visible aspect of culture.

nonmaterial culture
The wide range of tales, songs, lore, beliefs, values, and customs that pass from generation to generation as part of an oral or written tradition.

Let's explore how these criteria are used to identify, categorize, and graphically delineate cultures. According to literary critic and cultural theorist Raymond Williams, *culture* is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, people began to speak of "cultures" in the plural form. Specifically, they began thinking about "European culture" in relation to other cultures around the world. As Europe industrialized and urbanized in the nineteenth century, a new term was invented, **folk culture,** to distinguish traditional ways of life in rural spaces from those in the new urban and industrial ones. Thus, folk culture was defined and made sense only in relation to an urban, industrialized culture. Urban dwellers began to think—in increasingly romantic and nostalgic terms—of rural spaces as inhabited by distinct folk cultures.

folk culture
A small, cohesive, stable, isolated, nearly self-sufficient group that is homogeneous in custom and race; characterized by a strong family or clan structure, order maintained through sanctions based in the religion or family, little division of labor other than that between the sexes, frequent and strong interpersonal relationships, and a material culture consisting mainly of handmade goods.

folk
Traditional, rural; the opposite of "popular."

The word **folk** describes a rural people who live in an old-fashioned way—a people holding onto a lifestyle less influenced by modern technology. Folk cultures are rural, cohesive, largely self-sufficient groups that are homogeneous in custom and ethnicity. In terms of nonmaterial culture, folk cultures typically have strong family or clan structures and highly localized rituals. Order is maintained through sanctions based in

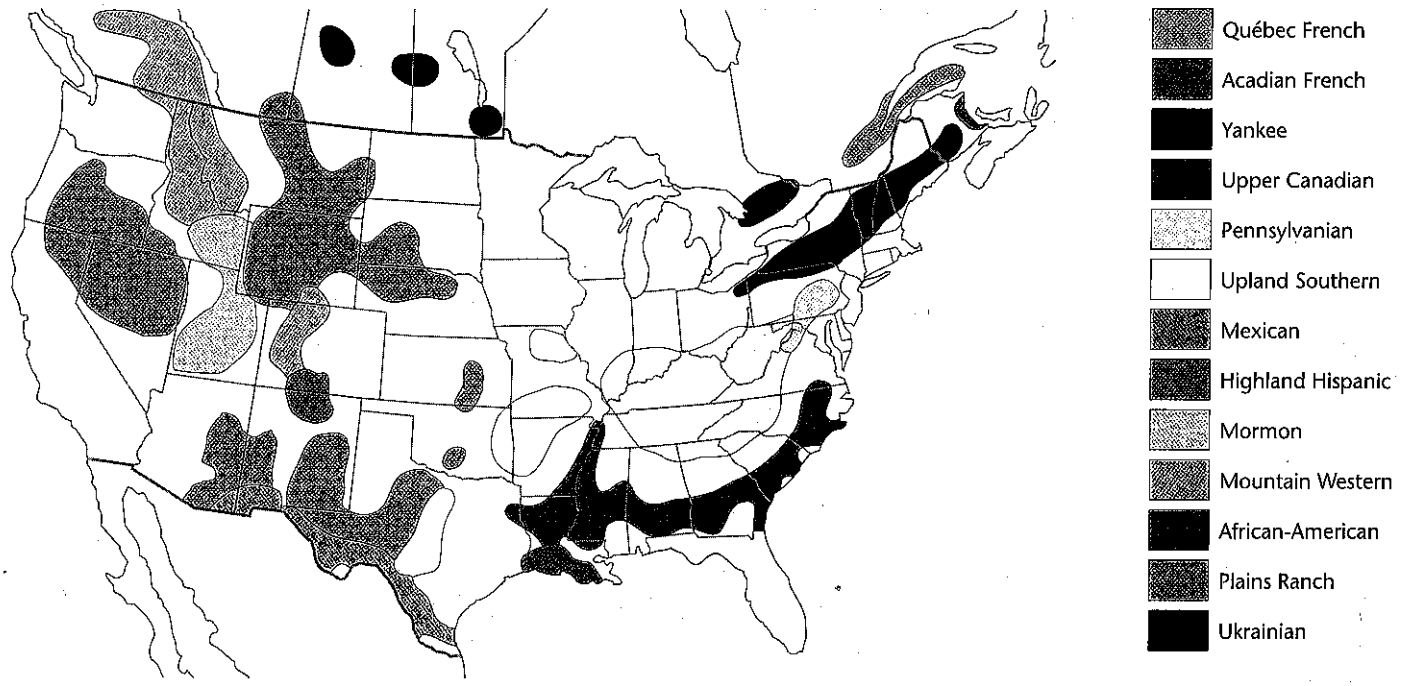


FIGURE 2.1 Folk cultural survival regions of the United States and southern Canada. All are now in decay and retreat, and no true folk cultures survive in North America.

religion or the family, and interpersonal relationships are strong. In terms of material culture, most goods are handmade, and a subsistence economy prevails. Individualism is generally weakly developed in folk cultures, as are social classes.

In the poorer countries of the underdeveloped world, some aspects of folk culture still exist, though few if any peoples have been left untouched by the forces of globalization. In industrialized countries, such as the United States and Canada, unaltered folk cultures no longer exist, though many remnants can be found (**Figure 2.1**). **Folk geography,** a term coined by Eugene Wilhelm, may be defined as the study of the spatial patterns and ecology of these traditional groups.

folk geography
The study of the spatial patterns and ecology of traditional groups; a branch of cultural geography.

Popular culture, by contrast, is generated from and concentrated mainly in urban areas (**Figure 2.2**). Popular material goods are mass-produced by machines in factories, and a cash economy, rather than barter or subsistence, dominates. Relationships among individuals are more numerous but less personal than in folk cultures, and the family structure is weaker. Mass media such as film, print, television, radio, and, increasingly, the Internet are more influential in shaping popular culture. People are more mobile, less attached to place and environment. Secular institutions of authority—such as the police, army, and courts—take the place of family and church in maintaining order. Individualism is strongly developed.

Another major category is **indigenous culture.** A simple definition of

popular culture
A dynamic culture based in large, heterogeneous societies permitting considerable individualism, innovation, and change; having a money-based economy, division of labor into professions, secular institutions of control, and weak interpersonal ties; producing and consuming machine-made goods.

indigenous culture
A culture group that constitutes the original inhabitants of a territory, distinct from the dominant national culture, which is often derived from colonial occupation.

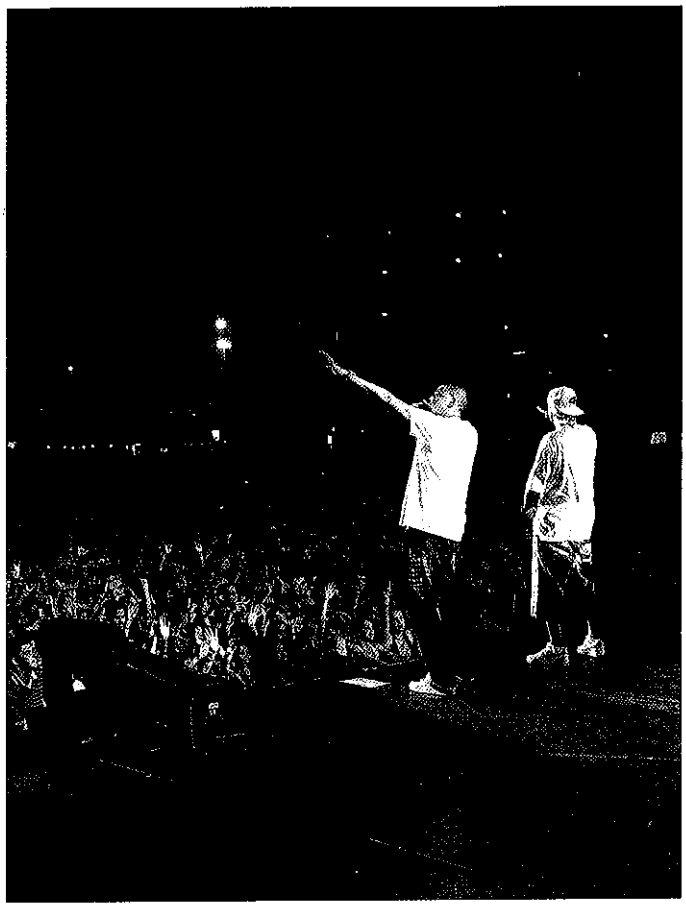


FIGURE 2.2 Popular culture is reflected in every aspect of life, from the clothes we wear to the recreational activities that occupy our leisure time. *(Left: Scott Olson/Getty Images; Right: Mikhael Subotzky/Corbis.)*

indigenous is "native" or "of native origin." In the modern world of sovereign nation-states, the word has acquired much greater cultural and political meanings. In fact, the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169 (Article 1.1) presents a legal definition that recognizes indigenous peoples as comprising a distinct culture. According to the ILO, indigenous peoples are self-identified tribal peoples whose social, cultural, and economic conditions distinguish them from the national society of their host state. Indigenous peoples are regarded as descending from peoples present in the state territory at the time of conquest or colonization. Although they may share some of the material and nonmaterial characteristics of folk cultures, their histories (and geographies) are quite distinct. Indigenous cultures are, in effect, those peoples who were colonized—mostly, but not exclusively—by European cultures and are now minorities in their homelands.

This definition is applied globally, suggesting that indigenous cultures worldwide share common traits and face similar perils and opportunities. The United Nations helped focus global attention on indigenous cultures when it declared 1995–2004 to be the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. Then, in 2007, the UN General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Though not binding in international law, the declaration prohibits discrimination against indigenous peoples and defends their right to maintain their cultures, identities, traditions, and institutions. Only the United States and Canada, two countries with a long history of conflict between indigenous peoples and European settlers, declined to sign the declaration.

In most cases, folk and indigenous cultures can be thought of as subcultures in relation to a dominant popular culture. In reality, none of these categories are homogeneous. We can use our five themes—region, mobility, globalization, nature-culture, and cultural landscape—to study geographies of cultural difference.

Region

How do cultures vary geographically? Some cultures exhibit major material and nonmaterial variations from place to place with minor variations over time. Others display less difference from region to region but change rapidly over time. For this reason, the theme of culture region is particularly well suited to the study of cultural difference. Formal culture regions can be delineated on the basis of both material and nonmaterial elements.

Material Folk Culture Regions

Although folk culture has largely vanished from the United States and Canada, vestiges remain in various areas of both countries. Figure 2.1 (page 32) shows culture regions in which the material artifacts of 13 different North American folk cultures survive in some abundance, but even these artifacts are disappearing. Each region possesses many distinctive relics of material culture.

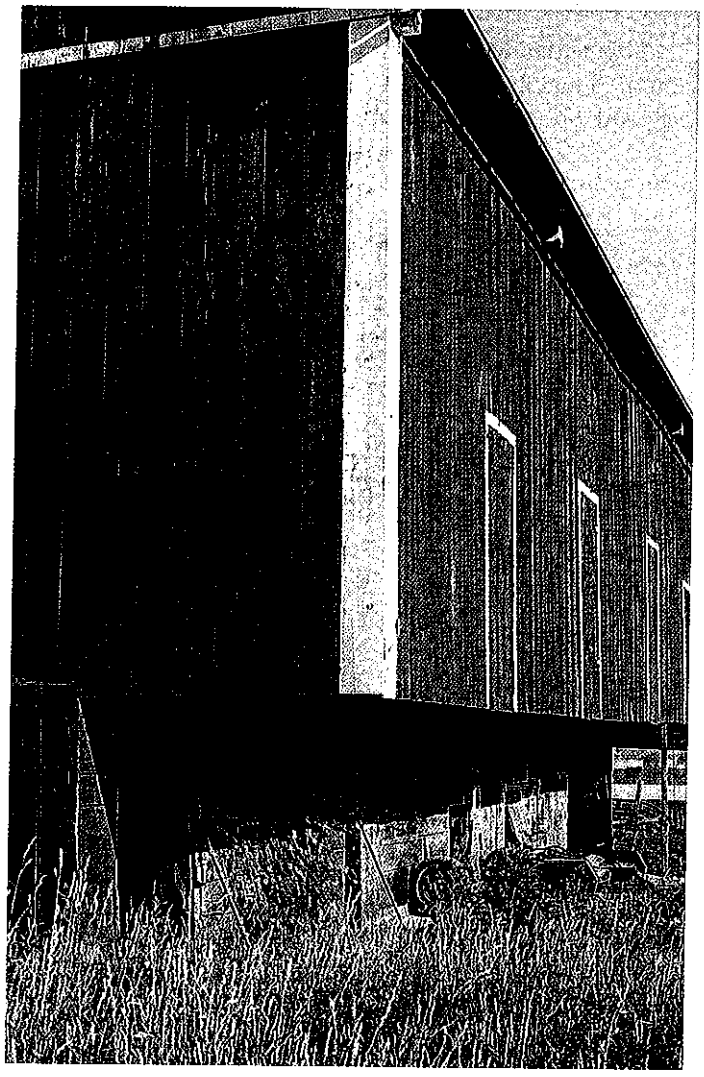


FIGURE 2.3 A multilevel barn with projecting forebay, central Pennsylvania. Every folk culture region possesses distinctive forms of traditional architecture. Of Swiss origin, the forebay barn is one of the main identifying material traits of the Pennsylvanian folk culture region. *(Courtesy of Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov.)*

FIGURE 2.4 A scraped-earth folk graveyard in East Texas. The laborious removal of all grass from such cemeteries is an African-derived custom. Long ago, this practice diffused from the African-American folk culture region to European-Americans in the southern coastal plain of the United States to become simply a "southern" custom. *(Courtesy of Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov.)*

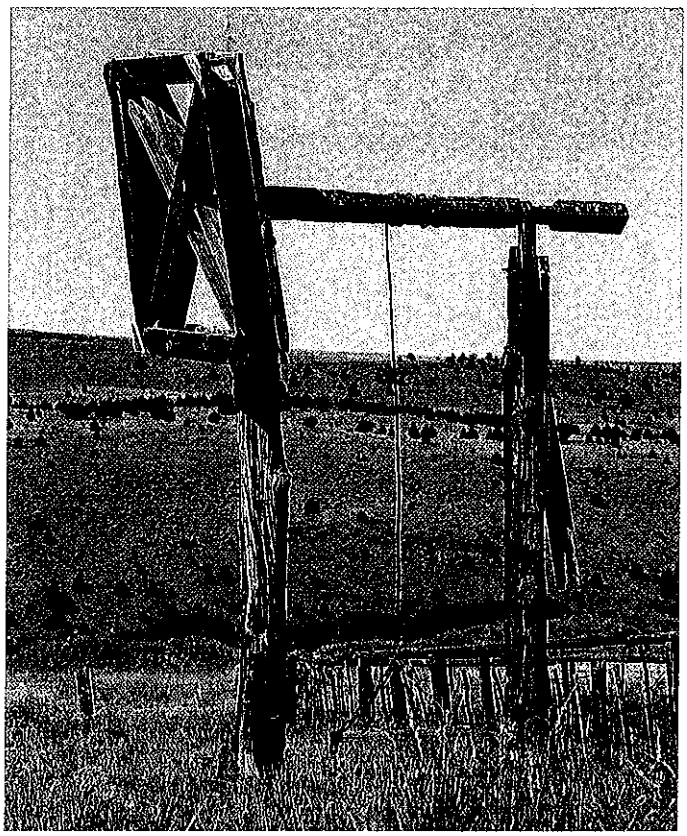


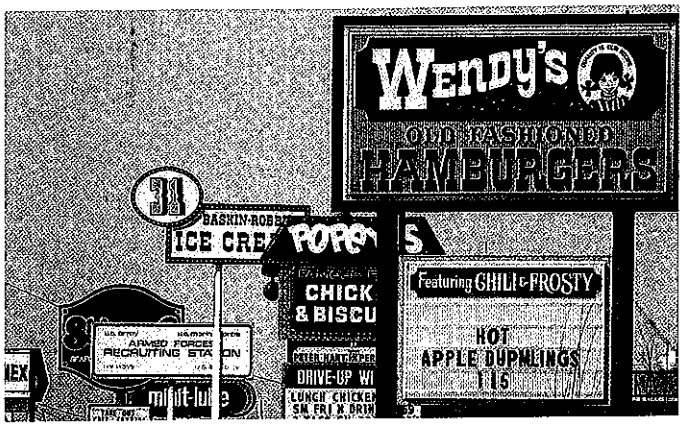
FIGURE 2.5 Beef wheel in the ranching country of the Harney Basin in central Oregon. This windlass device hoists the carcass of a slaughtered animal to facilitate butchering. Derived, as was much of the local ranching culture, from Hispanic Californians, the beef wheel represents the folk material culture of ranching. *(Courtesy of Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov.)*

For example, the strongly Germanic Pennsylvanian folk culture region features an unusual Swiss-German type of barn, distinguished by an overhanging upper-level "forebay" on one side (**Figure 2.3**). In contrast, barns are usually attached to the rear of houses in the Yankee folk region, which is also distinguished by an elaborate traditional gravestone art, featuring "winged death heads." The Upland South is noted in part for the abundance of a variety of distinctive house types built using notched-log construction. The African-American folk region displays such features as the "scraped-earth" cemetery, from which all grass is laboriously removed to expose the bare ground (**Figure 2.4**); the banjo, an instrument of African origin; and head kerchiefs worn by women. Grist windmills with sturdy stone towers and pétanque (a bowling game played with small metal balls), among other traits, characterize the Québec French folk region. The Mormon folk culture is identifiable by distinctive hay derricks and clustered farm villages conforming to a checkerboard street pattern. The western plains ranch folk culture produced such material items as the "beef wheel," a windlass used during butchering (**Figure 2.5**). These examples of material artifacts are only a few of the many that survive from various folk regions.

Is Popular Culture Placeless?

Superficially at least, popular culture varies less from place to place than does folk culture. In fact, Canadian geographer Edward Relph goes so far as to propose that popular culture produces a profound **placelessness,** a spatial standardization that diminishes regional variety and demeans the human spirit. Others observe that one place seems pretty much like another, each robbed of its unique character by the pervasive influence of a continental or even worldwide popular culture (**Figure 2.6**, page 36). When compared with regions and places produced by folk culture, rich in their uniqueness (**Figure 2.7**, page 36), the geographic face of popular culture often seems expressionless. The greater mobility of people in popular culture weakens attachments to place and compounds the problem of placelessness. Moreover, the spread of McDonald's, Levi's, CNN, shopping malls, and much else further adds to the sense of placelessness.

placelessness
A spatial standardization that diminishes regional variety; may result from the spread of popular culture, which can diminish or destroy the uniqueness of place through cultural standardization on a national or even worldwide scale.



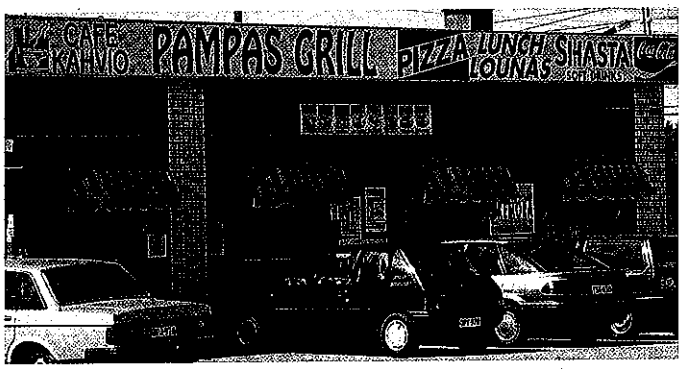


FIGURE 2.6 Placelessness exemplified: scenes almost anywhere, developed world. ***Guess where these pictures were taken.*** The answers are provided on page 69. *(See also Curtis, 1982. Photo at left: Donald Dietz/Stock Boston, Inc.; Top right: David Frazier/Photo Researchers; Bottom right: Courtesy of Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov.)*

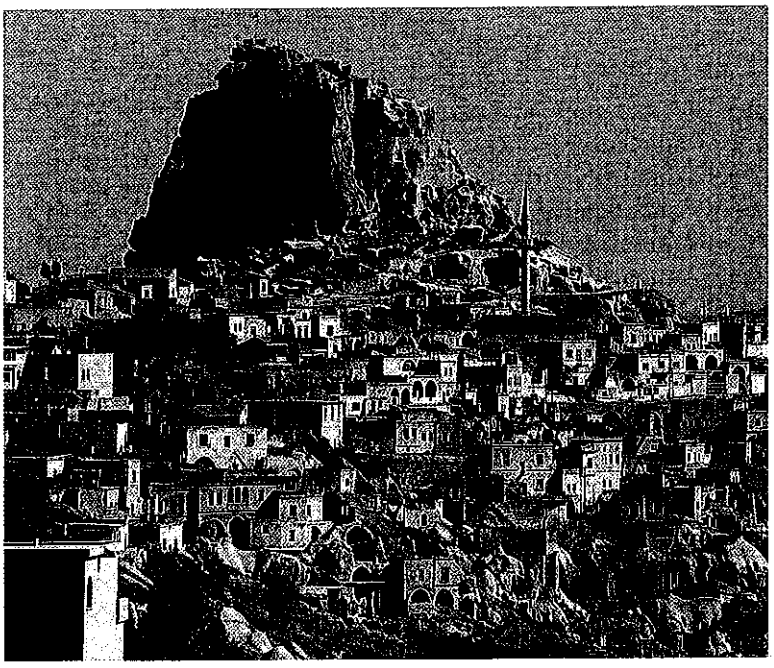


FIGURE 2.7 Retaining a sense of place: a hill town in Cappadocia Province, Turkey. This town, produced by a folk culture, exhibits striking individuality. ***How can you tell that this is not a popular culture landscape?*** *(Courtesy of Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov.)*

But is popular culture truly regionless and placeless? Many cultural geographers are more cautious about making such a sweeping generalization. The geographer Michael Weiss, for example, argues in his book *The Clustering of America* that "American society has become increasingly fragmented" and identifies 40 "lifestyle clusters" based on postal zip codes. "Those five digits can indicate the kinds of magazines you read, the meals you serve at dinner," and what political party you support. "Tell me someone's zip code and I can predict what they eat, drink, drive—even think." The lifestyle clusters, each of which is a formal culture region, bear Weiss's colorful names—such as "Gray Power" (upper-middle-class retirement areas), "Old Yankee Rows" (older

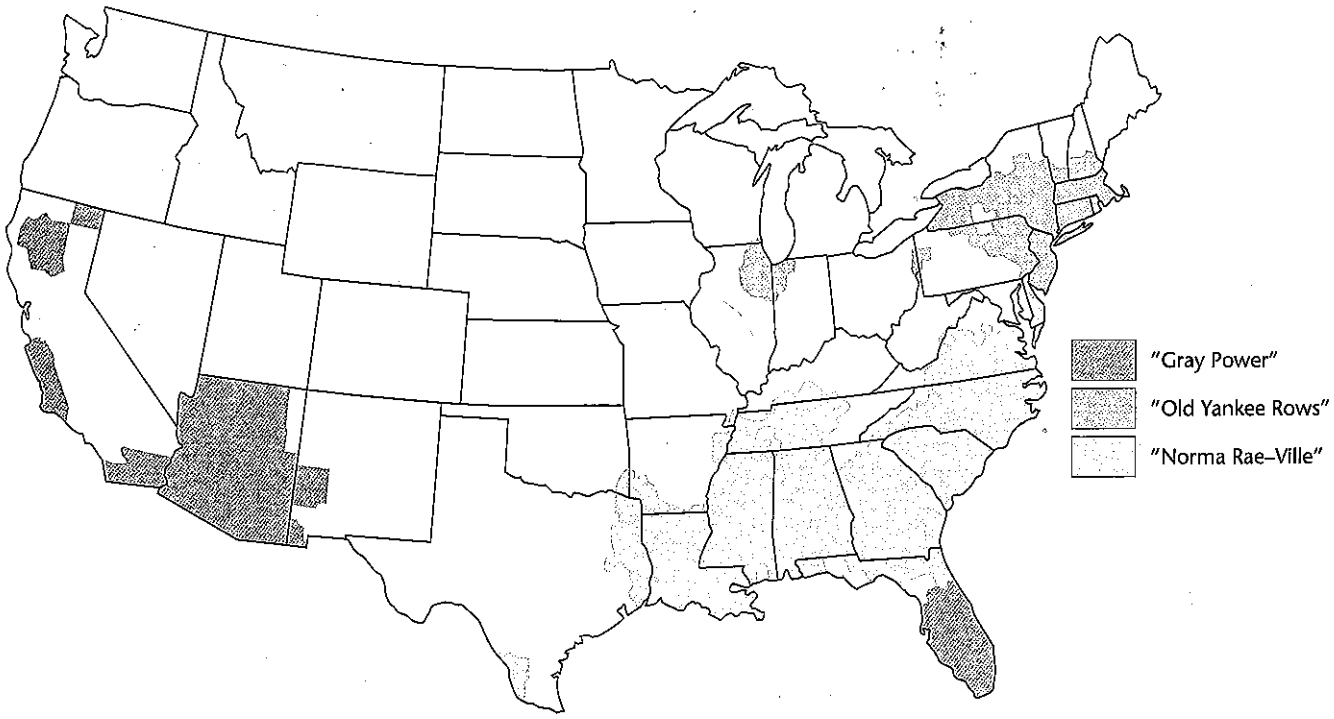


FIGURE 2.8 Three examples of the 40 lifestyle clusters in U.S. popular culture. Patterns of consumption within popular culture shift regionally, resulting in "lifestyle clusters." For a description of each lifestyle, see the text. ***Are these regions accurately described? What would you change?***

ethnic neighborhoods of the Northeast), and "Norma Rae–Ville" (lower- and middle-class southern mill towns, named for the Sally Field movie about the tribulations of a union organizer in a textile-manufacturing town) (**Figure 2.8**). Old Yankee Rowers, for example, typically have high school educations, enjoy bowling and ice hockey, and are three times as likely as the average American to live in row houses or duplexes. Residents of Norma Rae–Ville are mostly nonunion factory workers, have trouble earning a living, and consume twice as much canned stew as the national average. In short, a whole panoply of popular subcultures exist in America and the world at large, each possessing its own belief system, spokespeople, dress code, and lifestyle.

Reflecting on Geography

Do you live in a "placeless" place, in "nowhere U.S.A."? If not, how is a distinctive regional form of popular culture reflected in your region?

Popular Food and Drink

A persistent formal regionalization of popular culture is vividly revealed by what foods and beverages are consumed, which varies markedly from one part of a country to another and throughout different parts of the world. The highest per capita levels of U.S. beer consumption occur in the West, with the notable exception of Mormon Utah. Whiskey made from corn, manufactured both legally and illegally, has been a traditional southern alcoholic beverage, whereas wine is more common in California.

Foods consumed by members of the North American popular culture also vary from place to place. In the South, grits, barbecued pork and beef, fried chicken, and hamburgers are far more popular than elsewhere in the United States, whereas more pizza and submarine sandwiches are consumed in the North, the destination for many Italian immigrants.

The spread of global brands such as Coca-Cola and Kentucky Fried Chicken would seem to indicate increasing homogenization of food and beverage consumption. Yet many studies show that such brands have different meanings in different places around the world. Coca-Cola may represent modernization and progress in one place and foreign domination in another. Sometimes multinational corporations have to change their foods and beverages to suit local cultural preferences. For example, in Mumbai,

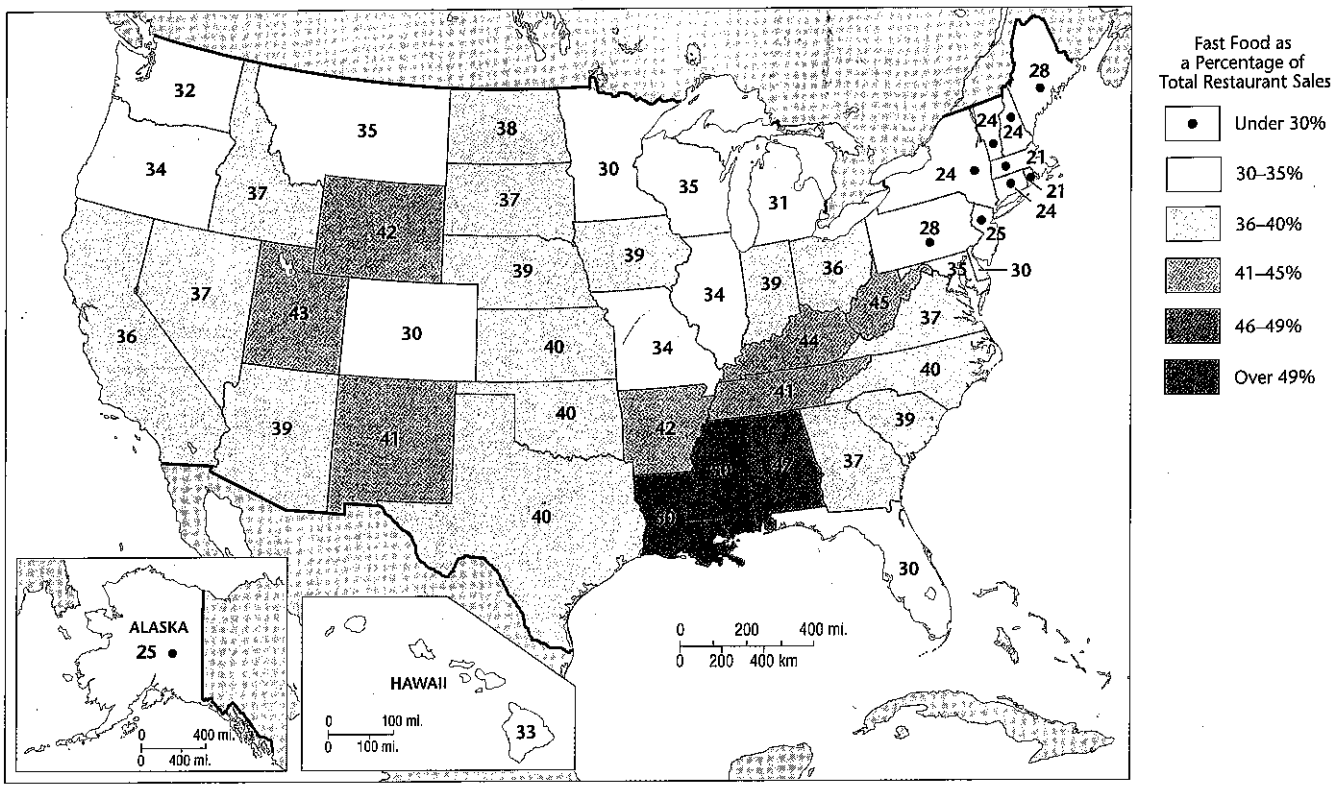


FIGURE 2.9 **Fast-food sales as a share of total restaurant sales, by state, 2007.** ***What does this illustration suggest about the claim that regional cultures in America are collapsing into a national culture?*** *(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 Economic Census.)*

India, McDonald's has had to add local-style sauces to its menus. Rather than a simple one-way process of "Americanizing" Indian food preferences, local consumers are "Indianizing" McDonald's.

Fast food might seem to epitomize popular culture, yet its importance varies greatly even within the United States (**Figure 2.9**). The stronghold of the fast-food industry is the American South; the Northeast has the fewest fast-food restaurants. Such differences undermine the geographic uniformity or placelessness supposedly created by popular culture. Music provides another example.

Popular Music

Popular culture has spawned many different styles of music, all of which reveal geographic patterns in levels of acceptance. Elvis Presley epitomized both popular music and the associated cult of personality. Even today, more than a generation after his death, he retains an important place in American popular culture.

Elvis also illustrates the vivid geography of that culture. In the sale of Presley memorabilia, the nation reveals a split personality. The main hotbeds of Elvis worship lie in the eastern states, whereas the King of Rock and Roll is largely forgotten out west. Although it raises more questions than it answers, **Figure 2.10** leaves no doubt that popular culture varies regionally.

Indigenous Culture Regions

Concentrations of indigenous peoples are generally in areas with few roads or modern communications systems, such as mountainous areas, vast arid and semiarid regions, or large expanses of forest or wetlands. These concentrations constitute indigenous culture regions. Worldwide, large concentrations of indigenous populations exist outside of the strong influence of national cultures and the effective control of governments located in faraway capital cities. National control by a central government is often weakened by minimal infrastructure, rough topography, or harsh environmental conditions. In many cases, indigenous peoples either fled or were forcibly removed by central governments to environmentally marginal regions, such as arid lands.

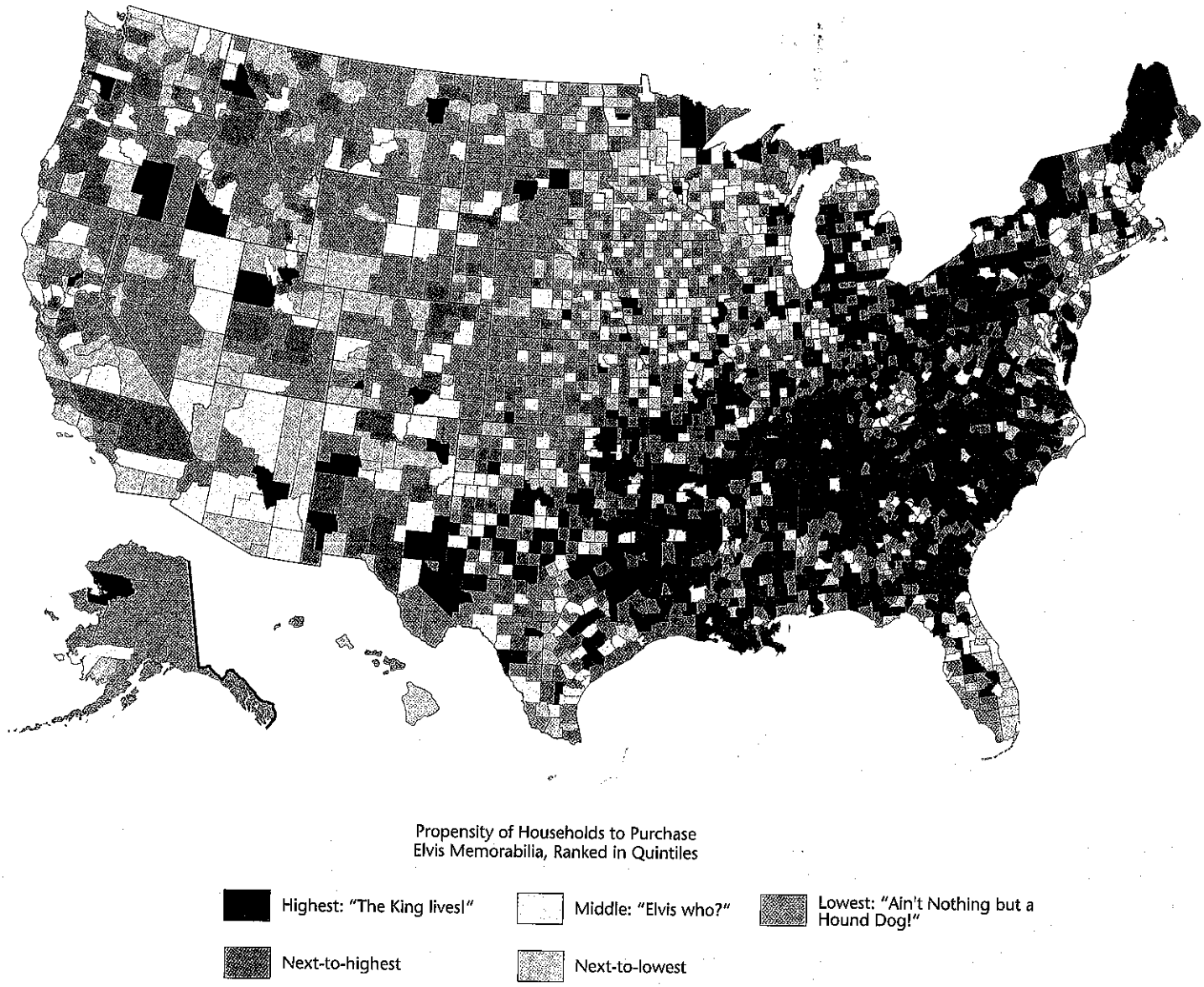


FIGURE 2.10 Purchases of Elvis Presley memorabilia, 1990s. The hotbeds of Elvis adoration lie mainly in the eastern United States, while most westerners can take him or leave him. ***What cultural factors might underlie this "fault line" in the geography of popular culture?*** *(Redrawn, based on data collected by Bob Lunn of DICI, Bellaire, Texas, and published by Edmonson and Jacobson, 1993.)*

In the United States and Canada, this geographic pattern of marginalization is particularly evident. In the United States, the central government has had a complex and often contradictory relationship with indigenous peoples, sometimes treating them as sovereign nations and at other times as second-class citizens. Much of the current pattern of indigenous population distribution reflects both the history of the east-to-west movement of European settlers and nineteenth-century government policies (**Figure 2.11**, page 40). For example, the Indian Removal Act of 1830 was intended to make way for European settlers by relocating eastern American Indian tribes west of the Mississippi River, many to Oklahoma. Western American Indian tribes were also eventually forced onto government-created reservations, generally on the most unproductive and arid lands. Some of the larger reservation complexes in

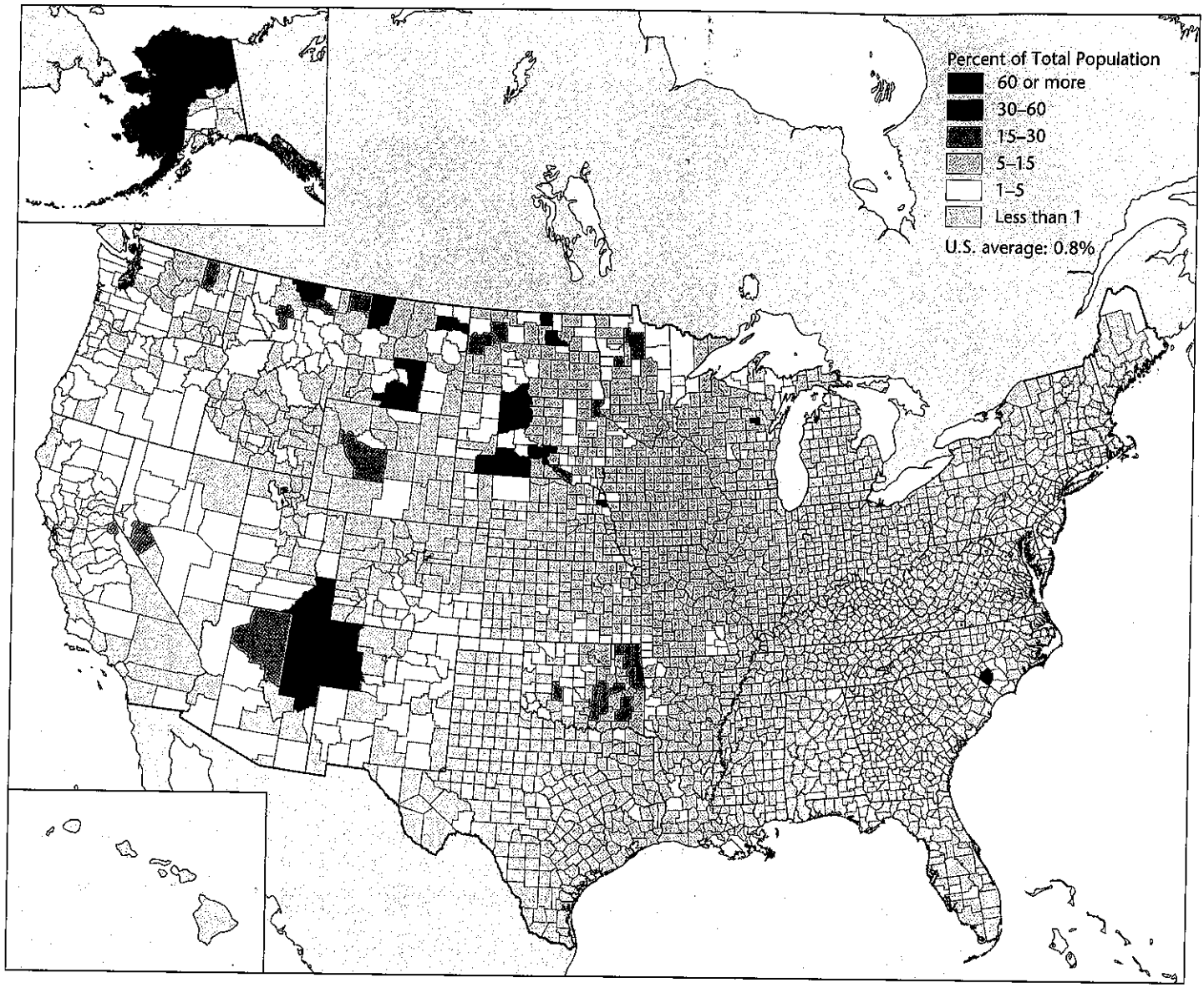


FIGURE 2.11 **Indigenous American Indian population distribution in the United States.**
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau.)

the arid West constitute an indigenous culture region (**Figure 2.12**).

The so-called Hill Tribes of South Asia are another good example. Mountain ranges, including the Chittagong Hills, the Assam Hills, and the Himalayas, surround the fertile valleys and deltas around which the ancient South Asian Hindu and Islamic civilizations were centered. Various indigenous peoples occupy these highland regions, which are remote from the lowland centers of authority and culturally distinct from them (**Figure 2.13**). A series of indigenous culture regions ringing the valleys of South Asia thus exists, occupied by what the British colonial authorities referred to as Hill Tribes. Most of these peoples practice some version of swidden agriculture, which involves multiyear cycles of forest clearing, planting, and fallowing (see Chapter 8). Most hold Christian or animist beliefs and speak languages distinct from those spoken in the lowlands. A similar pattern of highland indigenous culture regions can also be identified in the countries of Southeast Asia, such as Myanmar and Thailand, where indigenous peoples such as the Shan and Karen have populations in the millions.

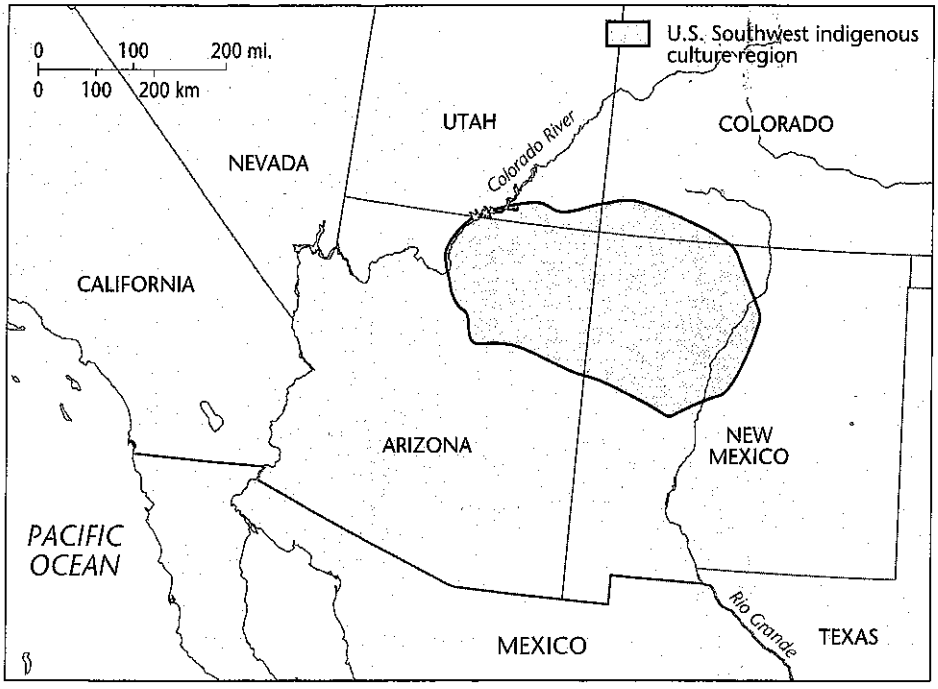


FIGURE 2.12 **An indigenous culture region in the United States.** *(U.S. Geological Survey.)*

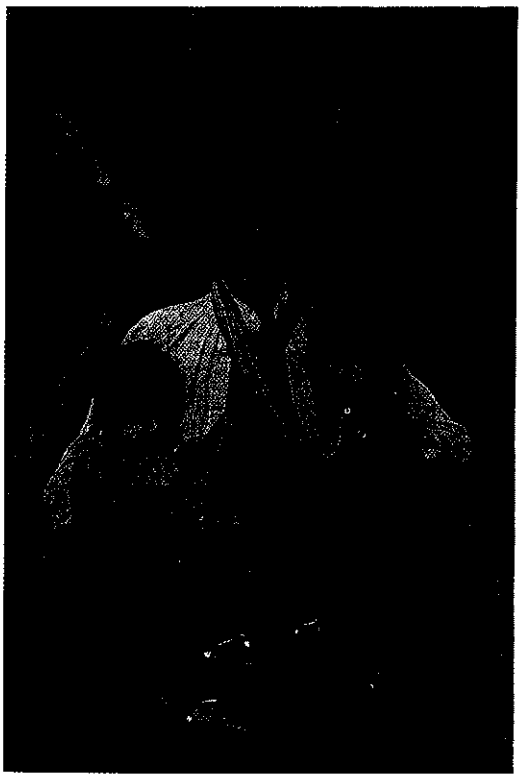


FIGURE 2.13 **A Murong tribesman with his children in the indigenous culture region of Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts.** *(Shehzad Noorani/Peter Arnold.)*

Indigenous culture regions also persist in Central and South America. There is a distinct Mayan culture region that encompasses parts of Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras (**Figure 2.14**, page 42). Concentrations of Mayan speakers are especially common in rugged highlands and tropical forests. In South America, another concentration of indigenous peoples exists in sections of the Andes Mountains. This area constituted the geographic core of the Inca civilization, which thrived between A.D. 1300 and 1533 and incorporated several major linguistic groups under its rule. Today, up to 55 percent of the national populations of Andean countries, such as Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador, are indigenous. On the slopes and in the high valleys of the Andes, Quechua and Aymara speakers constitute an overwhelming majority, signifying an indigenous culture region (**Figure 2.15**, page 42).

Vernacular Culture Regions

A **vernacular culture region** is the product of the spatial perception of the population at large—a composite of the mental maps of the people. Such regions vary greatly in size, from small districts covering only part of a city or

vernacular culture 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").

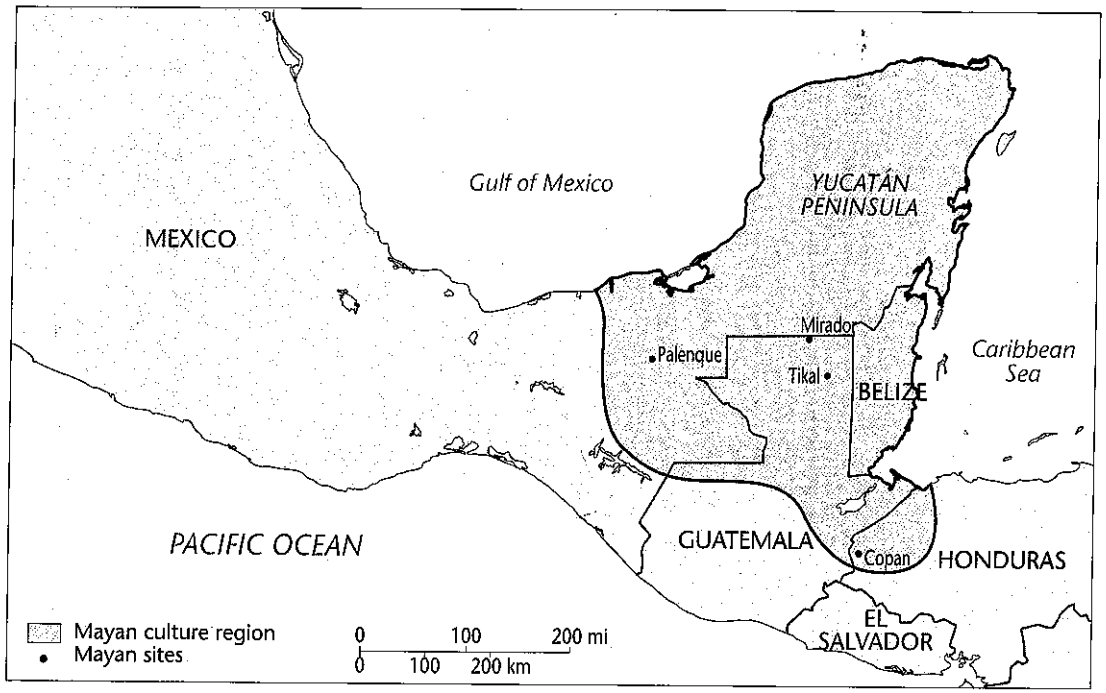


FIGURE 2.14 The Mayan culture region in Middle America. The ancient Mayan Empire collapsed centuries ago, but its Mayan-speaking descendents continue to occupy the region today. In many cases Mayan communities, after centuries of political and economic marginalization, are today actively struggling to have their land rights recognized by their respective governments.

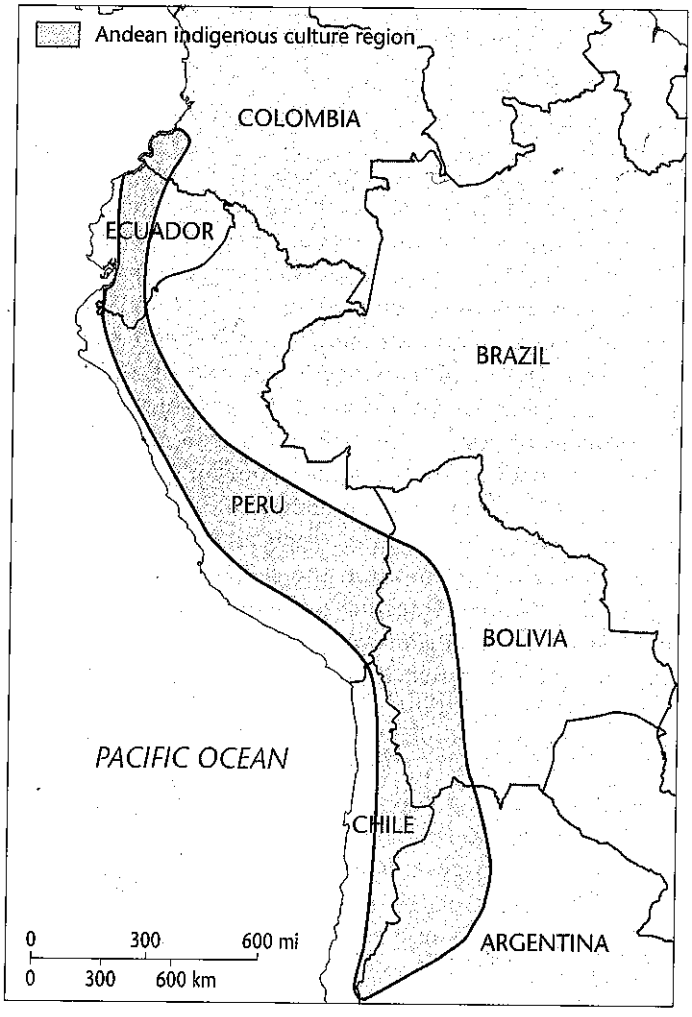


FIGURE 2.15 The indigenous culture region of the Andes, including Quechua- and Aymara-speaking peoples. This is the core of the ancient Inca Empire, where today many of the indigenous people speak their mother language rather than Spanish. *(Adapted from de Blij and Muller, 2004.)*

town to huge, multistate areas. Like most other geographical regions, they often overlap and usually have poorly defined borders.

Almost every part of the industrialized Western world offers examples of vernacular regions based in the popular culture. **Figure 2.16** shows some sizable vernacular regions in North America. Geographer Wilbur Zelinsky compiled these regions by determining the most common name for businesses appearing in the white pages of urban telephone directories. One curious feature of the map is the sizable, populous district—in New York, Ontario, eastern Ohio, and western Pennsylvania—where no regional affiliation is perceived. Using a different source of information, geographer Joseph Brownell sought to delimit the popular "Midwest" in 1960 (**Figure 2.17**). He sent out questionnaires to postal employees in the midsection of the United States, from the Appalachians to the Rockies, asking each whether, in his or her opinion, the community lay in the "Midwest." The results identified a vernacular region in

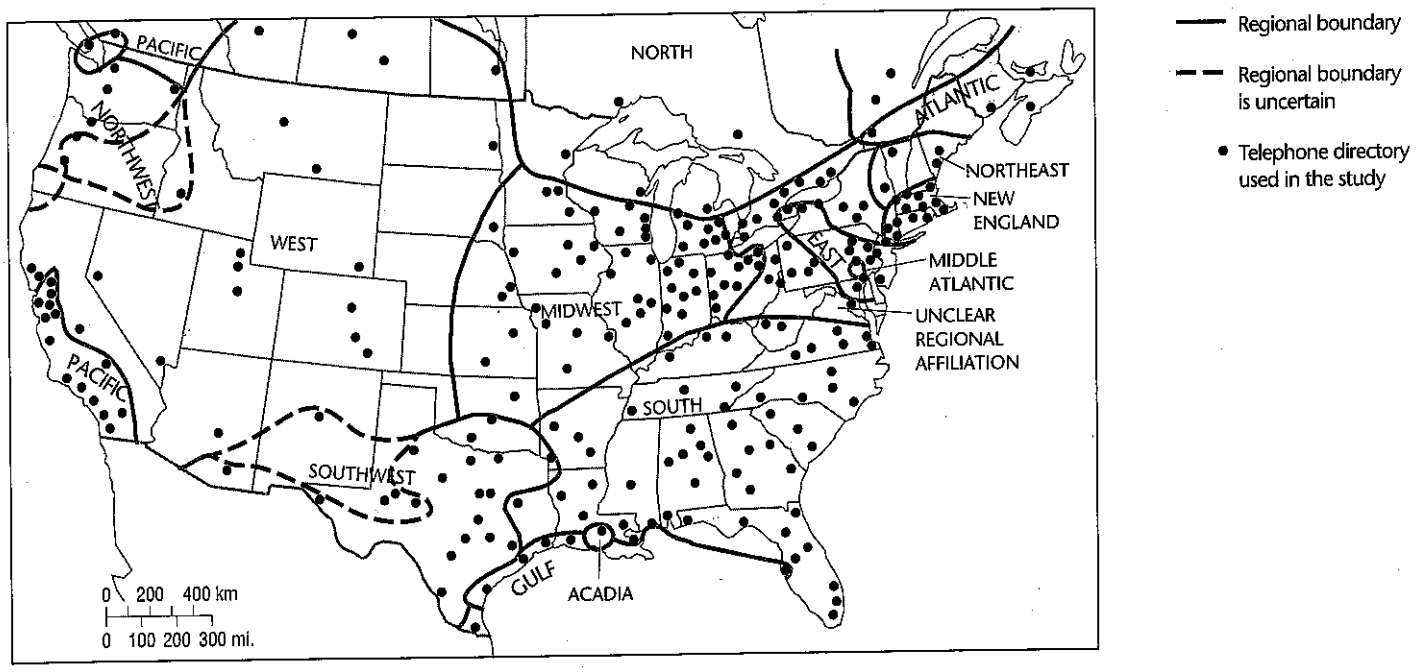


FIGURE 2.16 Some vernacular regions in North America. Cultural geographer Wilbur Zelinsky mapped these regions on the basis of business names in the white pages of metropolitan telephone directories. ***Why are names containing "West" more widespread than those containing "East"? What might account for the areas where no region name is perceived?*** *(Adapted from Zelinsky, 1980a: 14.)*

which the residents considered themselves midwesterners. A similar survey done 20 years later, using student respondents, revealed a core-periphery pattern for the Midwest (see Figure 2.17). As befits an element of popular culture, the vernacular region is often perpetuated by the mass media, especially radio and television.

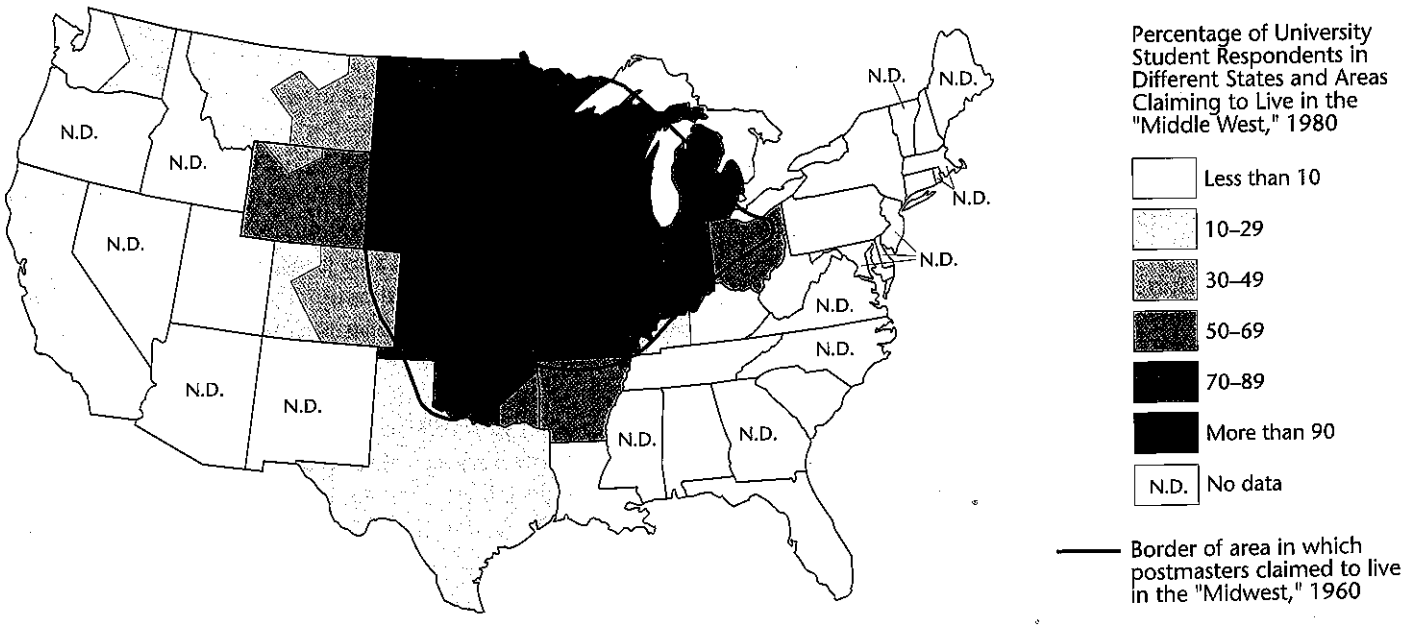
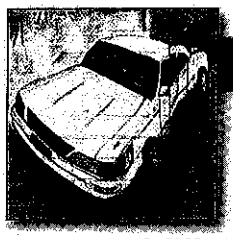


FIGURE 2.17 The vernacular Middle West or Midwest Two surveys, taken a generation apart and using two different groups of respondents, yielded similar results. *(Sources: Brownell, 1960: 83; Shortridge, 1989.)*



Mobility

Do elements of folk culture spread through geographical space differently from those of popular culture? Whereas folk culture spreads by the same models and processes of diffusion as popular culture, diffusion operates more slowly within a folk setting. The relative conservatism of such cultures produces a resistance to change. The Amish, for example, as one of the few surviving folk cultures, are distinctive today simply because they reject innovations that they believe to be inappropriate for their way of life and values.

Diffusion in Popular Culture

Before the advent of modern transportation and mass communications, innovations usually required thousands of years to complete their areal spread, and even as recently as the early nineteenth century the time span was still measured in decades. In regard to popular culture, modern transportation and communications networks now permit cultural diffusion to occur within weeks or even days. The propensity for change makes diffusion extremely important in popular culture. The availability of devices permitting rapid diffusion enhances the chance for change in popular culture.

Hierarchical diffusion often plays a greater role in popular culture than in folk culture or indigenous culture because popular society, unlike folk culture, is highly stratified by socioeconomic class. For example, the spread of McDonald's restaurants—beginning in 1955 in the United States and, later, internationally—occurred hierarchically for the most part, revealing a bias in favor of larger urban markets (**Figure 2.18**). Further facilitating the diffusion of popular culture is the fact that time-distance decay is weaker in such regions, largely because of the reach of mass media.

Sometimes, however, diffusion in popular culture works differently, as a study of Walmart revealed. Geographers Thomas Graff and Dub Ashton concluded that Walmart initially diffused from its Arkansas base in a largely contagious pattern, reaching first into other parts of Arkansas and neighboring states. Simultaneously, as often happens in the spatial spread of culture, another pattern of diffusion was at work, one Graff and Ashton called reverse hierarchical diffusion. Walmart initially located its stores in smaller towns and markets, only later spreading into cities—the precise reverse of the way hierarchical diffusion normally works. This combination of contagious and reverse hierarchical diffusion led Walmart to become the nation's largest retailer in only 30 years.

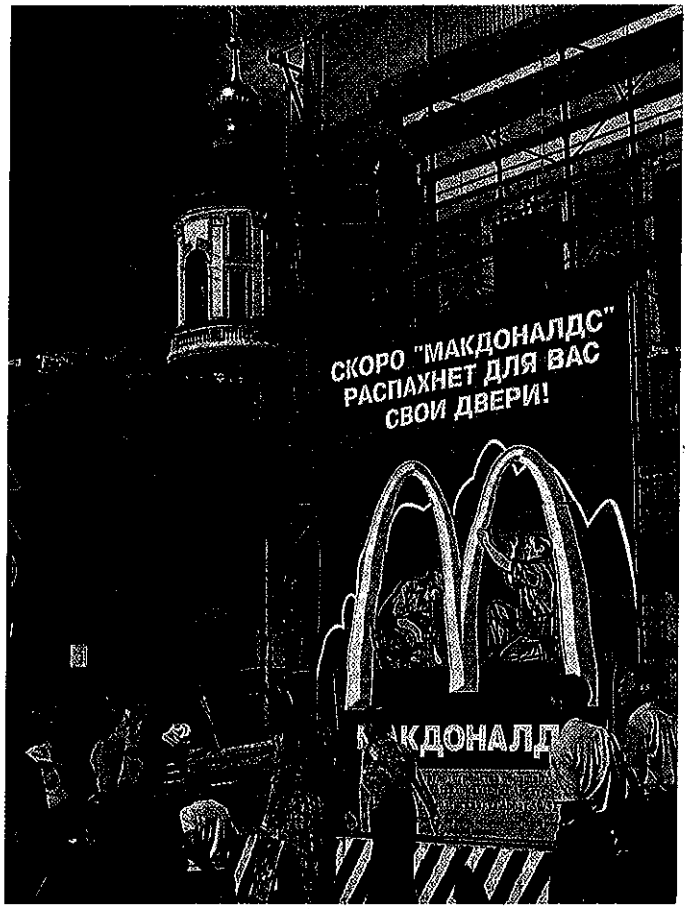


FIGURE 2.18 Another McDonald's opens in Moscow. McDonald's, which first spread to Moscow around 1987, has always preferred hierarchical diffusion. Of all McDonald's outlets worldwide today, about 45 percent are located in foreign countries, almost always in large cities. *(Courtesy of Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov.)*

Advertising

The most effective device for diffusion in popular culture, as Zelinsky suggests, confronts us almost every day of our lives. Commercial advertising of retail products and services bombards our eyes and ears, with great effect. Using the techniques of social science, especially psychology, advertisers have learned how to sell us products we do not need. The skill with which advertising firms prepare commercials often determines the success or failure of a product. In short, popular culture is equipped with the most potent devices and techniques of diffusion ever devised.

Commercial advertising is limited in its capacity to overcome all spatial and cultural barriers to homogenization. Cases from international advertising are illustrative. When England-based Cadbury decided to market its line of chocolates and confectionaries in China, the company was forced to change its advertising strategy. Unlike much of

Europe and North America, China had no culture of impulse buying and no tradition of self-service. Cadbury had to change the names of its products, eschew mass marketing, focus on a small group of high-end consumers, and even change product content.

Place of product origin is also extremely important in trying to advertise and market internationally. Sometimes place helps sell a product—think of New Zealand wool or Italian olive oil—and sometimes it is a hindrance to sales. There are many examples of products having negative associations among consumers because the country of origin has a tarnished international reputation. A good example is South Africa's advertising efforts during the era of apartheid, when consumer boycotts of the country's products were common. South African industries had to suppress references to country of origin in their advertising in order to market their product internationally.

Communications Barriers

Although the communications media create the potential for almost instant diffusion over very large areas, this can be greatly retarded if access to the media is denied or limited. *Billboard,* a magazine devoted largely to popular music, described one such barrier. A record company executive complained that radio stations and disk jockeys refused to play "punk rock" records, thereby denying the style an equal opportunity for exposure. He claimed that punk devotees were concentrated in New York City, Los Angeles, Boston, and London, where many young people had found the style reflective of their feelings and frustrations. Without access to radio stations, punk rock could diffuse from these centers only through live concerts and the record sales they generated. The publishers of *Billboard* noted that "punk rock is but one of a number of musical forms which initially had problems breaking through nationally out of regional footholds," for Pachanga, ska, pop/gospel, "women's music," reggae, and "gangsta rap" experienced similar difficulties. Similarly, Time Warner, a major distributor of gangsta rap music, endured scathing criticism from the U.S. Congress in 1995 because of potentially offensive or deleterious aspects of this genre. This eventually led the company to sell the subsidiary label that recorded this form of rap. To control the programming of radio and television, or media distribution generally, is to control much of the diffusionary apparatus in popular culture. The diffusion of innovations ultimately depends on the flow of information.

Government censorship, as opposed to mere criticism, also creates barriers to diffusion, though with varying degrees of effectiveness. In 1995, the Islamic fundamentalist regime in Iran, opposed to what it perceived as the corrupting influences of Western popular culture, outlawed television satellite dishes in an attempt to prevent citizens from watching programs broadcast in foreign countries. The Taliban government of Afghanistan went even further in the 1990s, banning all television sets. Control of the media can greatly control people's tastes in, preferences in, and ideas about popular culture. Even so, repressive regimes must cope with a proliferation of communication methods, including fax machines and the Internet. So pervasive has cultural diffusion become that the insular, isolated status of nations is probably no longer attainable for very long, even under totalitarian conditions.

Although newspapers are potent agents of diffusion in popular culture, they also act as selective barriers, often reinforcing the effect of political boundaries. For example, between 20 and 50 percent of all news published in Canadian newspapers is about foreign countries, whereas only about 12 percent of all news appearing in U.S. papers reports on foreign areas. This pattern suggests that newspaper readers living within U.S. borders are less exposed to world events than those within Canada's.

Reflecting on Geography

Because Canadian newspapers devote so much more coverage to international stories than U.S. newspapers, are Americans more provincial than Canadians as a result?

Diffusion of the Rodeo

Barriers of one kind or another usually weaken the diffusion of elements of popular culture before they become ubiquitous. The rodeo provides an example. Rooted in the ranching folk culture of the American West, it has never completely escaped that setting (**Figure 2.19**, page 46).

Like so many elements of popular culture, the modern rodeo had its origins in folk tradition. Taking their name from the Spanish *rodear,* "to round up," rodeos began simply as roundups of cattle in the Spanish livestock ranching system in northern Mexico and the American Southwest. Anglo-Americans adopted Mexican cowboy skills in the nineteenth century, and cowboys from adjacent ranches began to hold contests at roundup time. Eventually, some cowboy contests on the Great Plains became formalized, with prizes awarded.

The transition to commercial rodeo, with admission tickets and grandstands, came quickly as an outgrowth of the formal cowboy contests. One such affair, at North Platte, Nebraska, in 1882, led to the inclusion of some rodeo events in a Wild West show in Omaha in 1883. These shows, which moved by railroad from town to town in the manner of circuses, were probably the most potent agent

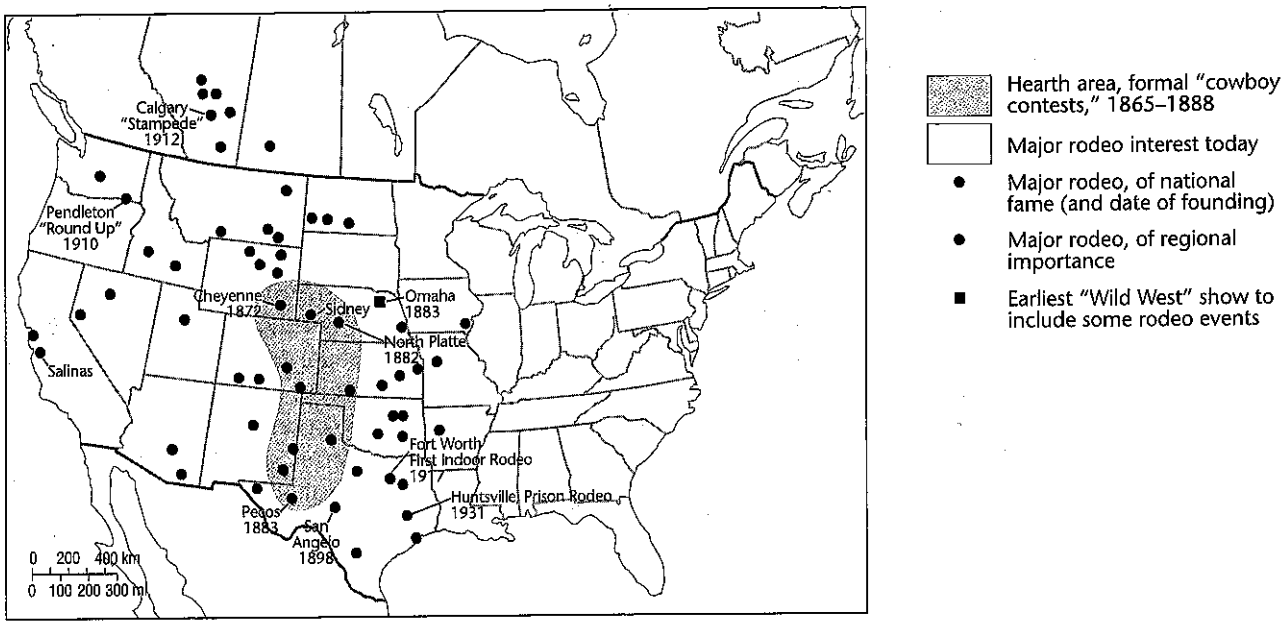


FIGURE 2.19 Origin and diffusion of the American commercial rodeo. Derived originally from folk culture, rodeos evolved through formal cowboy contests and Wild West shows to emerge, in the late 1880s and 1890s, in their present popular culture form. The border between the United States and Canada proved no barrier to the diffusion, although Canadian rodeo, like Canadian football, differs in some respects from the U.S. type. ***What barriers might the diffusion have encountered?*** *(Sources: Frederickson, 1984; Pillsbury, 1990b.)*

of early rodeo diffusion. Within a decade of the Omaha event, commercial rodeos were being held independently of Wild West shows in several towns, such as Prescott, Arizona. Spreading rapidly, commercial rodeos had appeared throughout much of the West and parts of Canada by the early 1900s. The famous Frontier Days rodeo was first held in 1897 in Cheyenne, Wyoming. By the time of World War I, the rodeo had also become an institution in the provinces of western Canada, where the Calgary Stampede began in 1912.

Today, rodeos are held in 36 states and 3 Canadian provinces. The state of Oklahoma's annual calendar of events lists no fewer than 98 scheduled rodeos. Rodeos have received the greatest acceptance in the popular culture found west of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers (see Figure 2.19). Absorbing and permeable barriers to the diffusion of commercial rodeo were encountered at the U.S. border with Mexico, south of which bullfighting occupies a dominant position, and in the Mormon culture region centered in Utah.

Blowguns: Diffusion or Independent Invention?

Often the path of the past diffusion of an item of material culture is not clearly known or understood, presenting geographers with a problem of interpretation. The blowgun is a good example. A hunting tool of many indigenous peoples, it is a long, hollow tube through which a projectile is blown by the force of one's breath. Geographer Stephen Jett mapped the distribution of blowguns, which he discovered were used in societies in both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, all the way from the island of Madagascar, off the east coast of Africa, to the Amazon rain forests of South America (**Figure 2.20**).

Indonesian peoples, probably on the island of Borneo, appear to have first invented the blowgun. It became their principal hunting weapon and diffused through much of the equatorial island belt of the Eastern Hemisphere. How, then, do we account for its presence among Native American groups in the Western Hemisphere? Was it independently invented by Native Americans? Was it brought to the Americas by relocation diffusion in pre-Columbian times? Or did it spread to the New World only after the European discovery of America? We do not know the answers to these questions, but the problem presented is one common to cultural geography, especially when studying the traditions of nonliterate cultures, which precludes the use of written records that might reveal such diffusion. Certain rules of thumb can be employed in any given situation to help resolve the issue. For example, if one or more nonfunctional features of blowguns, such as a decorative motif or

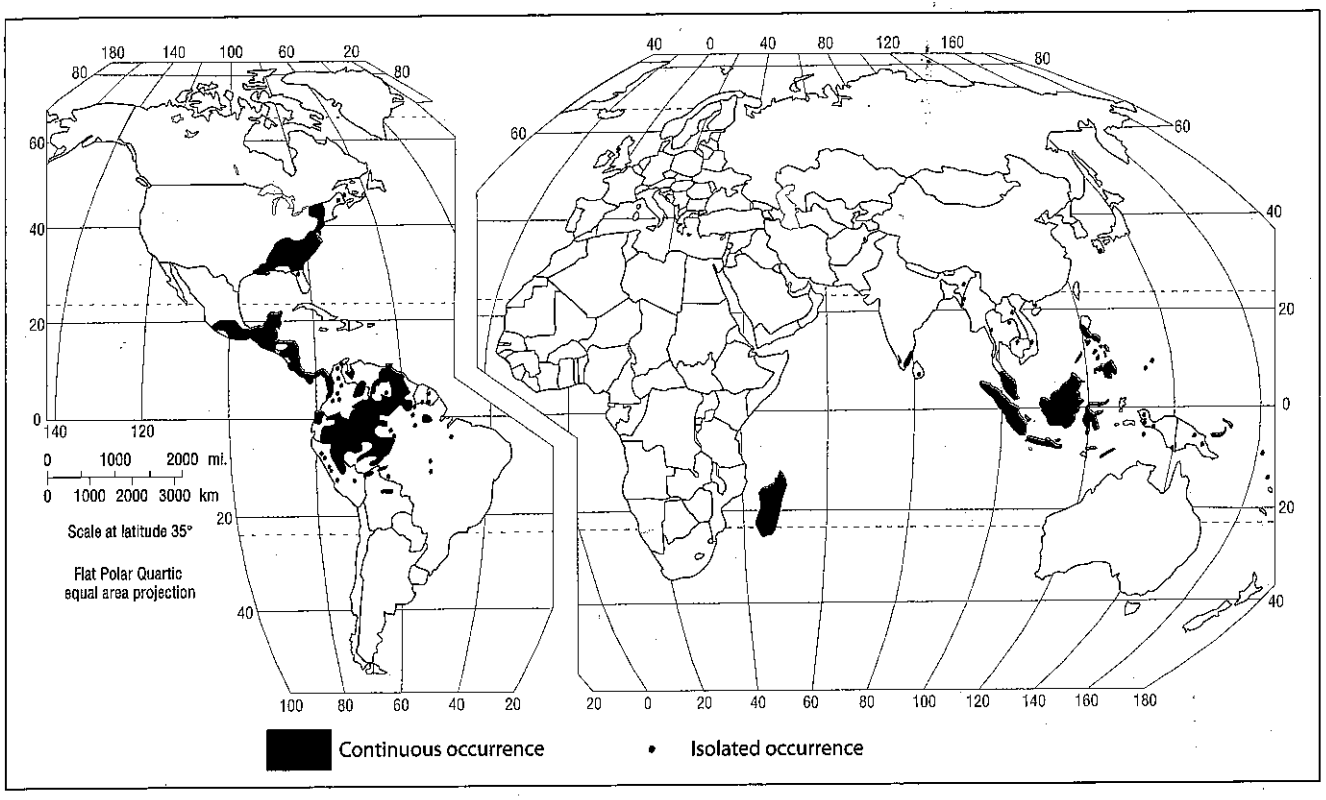


FIGURE 2.20 Former distribution of the blowgun among Native Americans, South Asians, Africans, and Pacific Islanders. The blowgun occurred among folk cultures in two widely separated areas of the world. ***Was this the result of independent invention or cultural diffusion? What kinds of data might one seek to answer this question?*** Compare and contrast the occurrence in the Indian and Pacific ocean lands to the distribution of the Austronesian languages (see Chapter 4). *(Source: Jett, 1991: 92–93.)*

specific terminology, occurred in both South America and Indonesia, then the logical conclusion would be that cultural diffusion explained the distribution of blowguns.

Globalization

Does globalization homogenize cultural difference? This is the crux of the issue for geographers and other social scientists. As we look for evidence in real world examples, we find that the answer is less than straightforward.

From Difference to Convergence

Globalization is most directly and visibly at work in popular culture. Increased leisure time, instant communications, greater affluence for many people, heightened mobility, and weakened attachment to family and place—all attributes of popular culture—have the potential, through interaction, to cause massive spatial restructuring. Most social scientists long assumed that the result of such globalizing forces and trends, especially mobility and the electronic media, would be the homogenization of culture, wherein the differences among places are reduced or eliminated. This assumption is called the **convergence hypothesis;** that is, cultures are converging, or becoming more alike. In the geographical sense, this would yield placelessness, a concept discussed earlier in the chapter.

convergence hypothesis A hypothesis holding that cultural differences among places are being reduced by improved transportation and communications systems, leading to a homogenization of popular culture.

Impressive geographical evidence can be marshaled to support the convergence hypothesis. Wilbur Zelinsky, for example, compared the given names of people in various parts of the United States for the years 1790 and 1968 and found that a more pronounced regionalization existed in the eighteenth century than in the mid-twentieth century. The personal names that the present generation of parents bestows on children vary less from place to place than did those of our ancestors two centuries ago.

Difference Revitalized

Globalization, we should remember, is an ongoing process or, more accurately, set of processes. It is incomplete and its outcome far from predetermined. Geographer Peter Jackson is a strong proponent of the position that cultural differences are not simply obliterated under the wave of globalization. For Jackson, globalization is best understood as a "site of struggle." He means that cultural practices rooted in place shape the effects of globalization through resistance, transformation, and hybridization. In other words, globalization is not an all-powerful force. People in different places respond in different ways, rejecting outright some of what globalization brings while transforming and absorbing other aspects into local culture. Rather than one homogeneous globalized culture, Jackson sees multiple **local consumption cultures.**

local consumption cultures Distinct consumption practices and preferences in food, clothing, music, and so forth formed in specific places and historical moments.

Local consumption culture refers to the consumption practices and preferences—in food, clothing, music, and so on—formed in specific places and historical moments. These local consumption cultures often shape globalization and its effects. In some ways, globalization revitalizes local difference. That is, people reject or incorporate into their cultural practices the ideas and artifacts of globalization and in the process reassert place-based identities. The cases of international advertising discussed in the previous section will help illustrate this idea.

Jackson suggests that the introduction of Cadbury's chocolate into China is more than simply another sign of globalization. He argues that the case "demonstrates the resilience of local consumption cultures to which transnational corporations must adapt." In cases where companies' products are negatively associated with their place of origin, such as exports from apartheid South Africa, the global ambitions of multinational companies can be thwarted. "Local" circumstances thus can make a difference to the outcomes of globalization.

consumer nationalism A situation in which local consumers favor nationally produced goods over imported goods as part of a nationalist political agenda.

Local resistance to globalization often takes the form of **consumer nationalism.** This occurs when local consumers avoid imported products and favor locally produced alternatives. India and China, in particular, have a long history of resisting outside domination through boycotts of imported goods. Jackson discusses a recent case in China in which Chinese entrepreneurs invented a local alternative to Kentucky Fried Chicken called Ronhua Fried Chicken Company. The company uses what it claims are traditional Chinese herbs in its recipe, delivering a product more suitable to Chinese cultural tastes.

Place Images

The same media that serve and reflect the rise of personal preference—movies, television, photography, music, advertising, art, and others—often produce place images, a subject studied by geographers Brian Godfrey and Leo Zonn, among others. Place, portrayer, and medium interact to produce the image, which, in turn, colors our perception of and beliefs about places and regions we have never visited. The focus on place images highlights the role of the collective imagination in the formation and dissolution of culture regions. It also explores the degree to which the image of a region fits the reality on the ground. That is, in imagining a region or place, oftentimes certain regional characteristics are stressed whereas others are ignored (see Subject to Debate).

The images may be inaccurate or misleading, but they nevertheless create a world in our minds that has an array of unique places and place meanings. Our decisions about tourism and migration can be influenced by these images. For example, through the media, Hawaii has become in the American mind a sort of earthly paradise peopled by scantily clad, eternally happy, invariably good-looking natives who live in a setting of unparalleled natural beauty and idyllic climate. People have always formed images of faraway places. Through the interworkings of popular culture, these images proliferate and become more vivid, if not more accurate.

Local Indigenous Cultures Go Global

The world's indigenous peoples often interact with globalization in interesting ways. On the one hand, new global communications systems, institutions of global governance, and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are providing indigenous peoples with extraordinary networking possibilities. Local indigenous peoples around the world are now linked in global networks that allow them to share strategies, rally international support for local causes, and create a united front to defend cultural survival. On the other hand, globalization brings the world to formerly isolated cultures. Global mass communications introduce new values, and multinational corporations' search for new markets and new sources of gas, oil, genetic, forest, and other resources can threaten local economies and environments.

Both aspects of indigenous peoples' interactions with globalization were evident at the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Cancún, Mexico in 2003. Indigenous peoples' organizations from around the world gathered for the conference, hosted by the Mayan community in nearby Quintana Roo. Though not

Subject to Debate

Mobile Identities: Questions of Culture and Citizenship

One of the most dynamic features of cultural difference in the world today is mobility. So-called diaspora communities have sprung up around the globe. Some of these communities have arisen quite recently and are historically unprecedented, such as the movement of Southeast Asians into U.S. cities in the late twentieth century. Some are artifacts of European colonialism, such as the large populations of South Asians in England or West and North Africans in France. Others are deeply historical and express a centuries-old interregional linkage, such as the contemporary movement of North Africans into southern Spain.

The movement and settlement of large populations of migrants have raised questions of belonging and exclusion. How do transplanted populations become English, French, or Spanish, not only in terms of citizenship but also in terms of belonging to that culture? Some observers have argued that diaspora populations find ways to blend symbols from their cultures of origin with those of their host cultures. Thus, people find a sense of belonging through a process of cultural hybridization. Other observers point to long-standing situations of cultural exclusion. In 2005 in France, for example, riots broke out in more than a dozen cities in suburban enclaves of West African and North African populations. The reasons for the riots are complex. However, many observers pointed out that underprivileged youth of African decent feel excluded from mainstream French culture, even though many are second- and third-generation French citizens.

The debate over how to address questions of citizenship and cultural belonging is played out in many venues. In terms of policy, the French, for example, emphasize cultural integration; for example, the French government approved a law in 2010 banning full-face veils (*burqas*) in public, whereas Britain and the United States promote multiculturalism. But many questions remain about the effectiveness of state policies toward diaspora cultures.

Continuing the Debate

Based on the discussion presented above, consider these questions:

- Do the geographic enclaves of Asian and African diaspora populations in the former colonial capitals of Europe reflect an effort by migrants to retain a distinct cultural identity? Or do they reflect persisting racial and ethnic prejudices and efforts to segregate "foreigners"? Or is it a combination of factors?
- How long does it take an Asian immigrant community to become "English" or a West African immigrant community to become "French"? One generation? Two? Never?
- Does the presence of Asians and Africans make the landscape of England and France appear less "English" or less "French"? Why or why not?

Riots and protests, such as this memorial march for two dead teenagers in Clichy sous Bois, spread across several cities in France in 2005. Protesters' complaints centered on the discriminatory treatment of French citizens of African descent. *(© Jean-Michel Turpin/Corbis.)*

FIGURE 2.21 A group of indigenous Filipinos participate in the opening of the Forum for Indigenous People at the Casa de la Cultura in Cancun, Quintana Roo, Mexico, during the World Trade Organization ministerial meetings. Indigenous peoples' groups from around the world organized the forum as a counterpoint to the WTO talks. *(Jack Kurtz/The Image Works.)*

officially part of the conference, they came together there to strategize ways to forward their collective cause of cultural survival and self-determination, gain worldwide publicity, and protest the WTO's vision of globalization (**Figure 2.21**). One outcome of this meeting was the International Cancún Declaration of Indigenous Peoples (ICDIP), a document that is highly critical of current trends in globalization.

According to the ICDIP, the situation of indigenous peoples globally "has turned from bad to worse" since the establishment of the WTO. Indigenous rights organizations claim that "our territories and resources, our indigenous knowledge, cultures and identities are grossly violated" by international trade and investment rules. The document urges governments worldwide to make no further agreements under the WTO and to reconsider previous agreements. The control of plant genetic resources is a particularly important concern. Many indigenous peoples argue that generations of their labor and cumulative knowledge have gone into producing the genetic resources that transnational corporations are trying to privatize for their own profit. The ICDIP asks that future international agreements ensure "that we, Indigenous Peoples, retain our rights to have control over our seeds, medicinal plants and indigenous knowledge."

Globalization is clearly a critical issue for indigenous cultures. Some argue that globalization, because it facilitates the creation of global networks that provide strength in numbers, may ultimately improve indigenous peoples' efforts to control their own destinies. The future of indigenous cultural survival ultimately will depend on how globalization is structured and for whose benefit.

Nature-Culture

How is nature related to cultural difference? Do different cultures and subcultures differ in their interactions with the physical environment? Are some cultures closer to nature than others? People who depend on the land for their livelihoods—farmers, hunters, and ranchers, for example—tend to have a different view of nature from those who work in commerce and manufacturing in the city. Indeed, one of the main distinctions between folk culture and popular culture is their differing relationships with nature.

Indigenous Ecology

Many observers believe that indigenous peoples possess a very close relationship with and a great deal of knowledge about their physical environment. In many cases, indigenous cultures have developed sustainable land-use practices over

generations of experimentation in a particular environmental setting. As a consequence, academics, journalists, and even corporate advertisers often portray indigenous peoples as defenders of endangered environments, such as tropical rain forests. It was not always this way. Especially during the height of European **colonialism,** indigenous populations (then considered colonial subjects) were often accused of destroying the environment. The then-common belief that indigenous land-use practices were destructive helped Europeans justify colonialism by claiming they were saving colonial subjects from themselves. In hindsight, it is easy to see that this belief was related to now-discredited European ideas about the racial inferiority of colonized peoples.

colonialism
The forceful appropriation of a territory by a distant state, often involving the displacement of indigenous populations to make way for colonial settlers.

Debate continues today, with some observing that, although indigenous cultures may once have lived sustainably, globalization is making their knowledge and practices less useful. That is, globalization introduces new markets, new types of crops, and new technologies that displace existing land-use practices. Others note that it is impossible to generalize about sustainability in indigenous cultures because the way indigenous peoples use their environments varies from place to place and the indigenous societies are internally heterogeneous. A key discussion centers on the role of indigenous peoples in conserving global biodiversity. In part, this reflects the reality that indigenous peoples often occupy territories that Western scientists view as critical to global biodiversity conservation (**Figure 2.22**). For example, 85 percent of national parks and other protected areas in Central America and 80 percent in South America have resident indigenous populations. There is also a close geographic correspondence between indigenous territories and tropical rain forests not only in Latin America but also in Africa and Southeast Asia. Tropical rain forests, although they cover only 6 percent of the Earth's surface, are estimated to contain 60 percent of the world's biodiversity. With the rise of genetic engineering, conservationists and corporations alike view tropical forests as in situ gene banks. As multinational biotechnology companies look to the tropics for genetic resources for use in developing new medicines or crop seeds, indigenous peoples are increasingly vocal about their proprietary rights over the biodiversity of their homelands.

Faced with these issues, cultural geographers generally emphasize the continued importance of indigenous knowledge for environmental management and of indigenous land-use practices for sustainable development. Initially, geographers focused on the adaptive strategies of indigenous

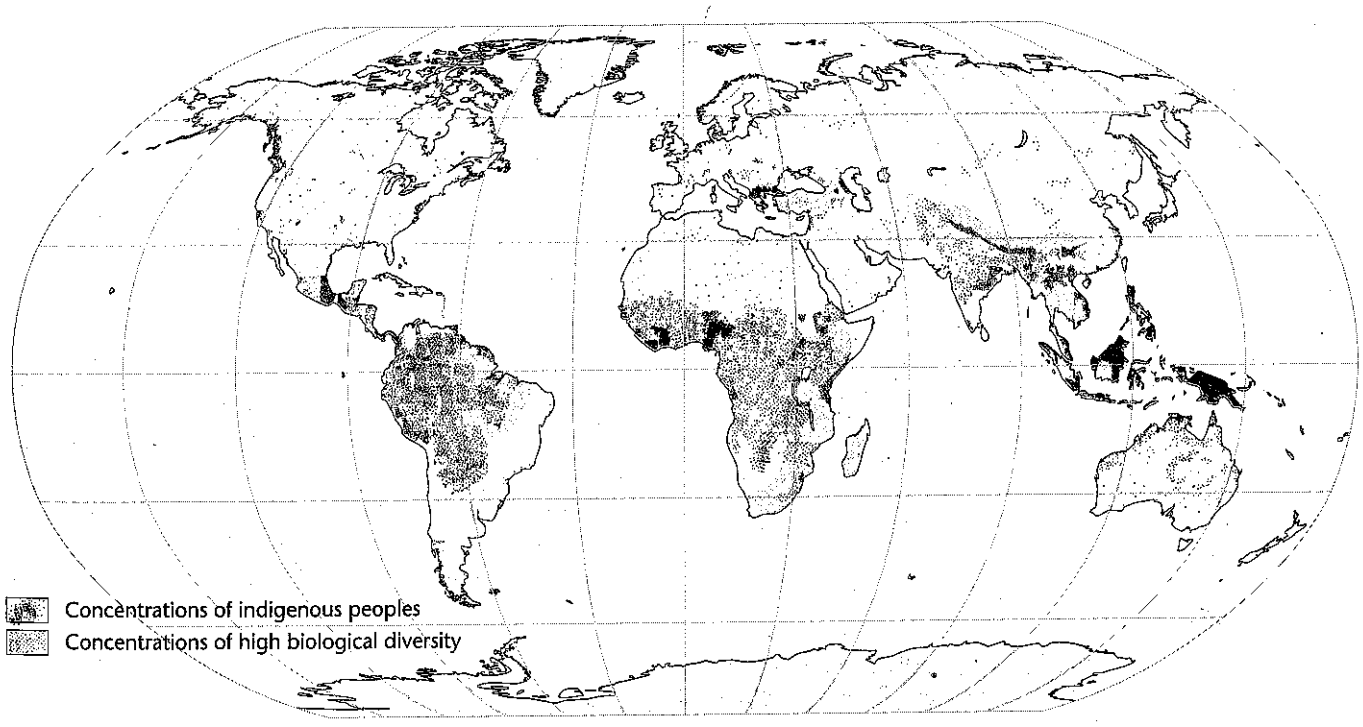


FIGURE 2.22 The global congruence of cultural and biological diversity. Conservationists are aware that many of the world's most biologically diverse regions are occupied by indigenous cultures. Many suggest, therefore, that cultural preservation and biological preservation should go hand in hand. *(Adapted from IDRC, 2004.)*

cultures in relation to ecological conditions. For example, some studied the social norms and land-use practices that helped some cultures adapt to periodic drought. Later, they came to realize that externally generated political and economic forces were just as important in shaping nature-culture relationships. A look at the work of a few key cultural geographers will illustrate the implications of this idea.

Local Knowledge

indigenous technical knowledge (ITK)
Highly localized knowledge about environmental conditions and sustainable land-use practices.

Much of the interest in indigenous perceptions and practices falls under the rubric of **indigenous technical knowledge (ITK).** This is a concept that anthropologists and geographers developed to describe the detailed local knowledge about the environment and land use that is part of many indigenous cultures. Geographer Paul Richards, for example, suggested that ITK is, in many cases, superior to Western scientific knowledge and, therefore, should be considered in environmental management and agricultural planning. For example, in his study of West African cultures, *Indigenous Agricultural Revolution,* Richards documented the subtle and extensive knowledge about local soils, climate, and plant life. This local-scale knowledge provides the foundation for people to experiment with new crops and agricultural techniques while also allowing them to adjust successfully to changing social and environmental conditions.

Global Economy

ITK is place based. It is produced in particular places and environments through a process of trial and error that often spans generations. Thus, these local systems of knowledge are highly adapted to local conditions. Increasingly, however, the power of ITK is weakened through exposure to the economic forces of globalization. Sometimes the global economy applies such pressure to local **subsistence economies** that they become ecologically unsustainable. Subsistence economies are those that are oriented primarily toward production for local consumption, rather than the production of commodities for sale on the market. When an indigenous society organized for subsistence production begins producing for an external market, social, ecological, and economic difficulties often ensue.

subsistence economies
Economies in which people seek to consume only what they produce and to produce only for local consumption rather than for exchange or export.

Geographer Bernard Nietschmann's classic study of the indigenous Miskito communities living along the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua showed how external markets can undermine local subsistence economies. Miskito communities had developed a subsistence economy founded on land-based gardening and the harvesting of marine resources, including green turtles. Marine resources were harvested in seasons in which agriculture was less demanding. The value of green turtles increased dramatically when companies moved in to process and export turtle products (meat, shells, leather). They paid cash and extended credit so that the Miskito could harvest turtles year-round instead of seasonally. Subsistence production in other areas suffered as labor was directed to harvesting turtles. Turtles became scarce, so more labor time was required to hunt them in a desperate effort to pay debts and buy food. Ultimately, the turtle population was decimated and the subsistence production system collapsed.

This study might sound like yet another tragic story of "disappearing peoples" or a "vanished way of life," but it didn't end there. Nietschmann continued his research with Miskito communities into the 1990s (he died in 2000), discovering, among other things, that the Miskito people did not disappear but continued to defend their cultural autonomy in the face of great external pressures from globalization. They responded to the collapse of their resource base in 1991 by creating, in cooperation with the Nicaraguan government, a protected area as part of a local environmental management plan. They were supported in this endeavor by academics, international conservation NGOs, and the Nicaraguan government. Known as the Cayos Miskitos and Franja Costera Marine Biological Reserve, it encompasses 5019 square miles (13,000 square kilometers) of coastal area and offshore keys with 38 Miskito communities. Through this program, the Miskito were able to regulate and control their own exploitation of marine resources while reducing pressures from outsiders. This is an ongoing experiment. Miskito communities continue to struggle with outsiders for control over their land and resources in the reserve. There are hopeful signs, however, that the government is cooperating in this struggle and that both the natural resource base and the Miskito people will benefit from this project.

The Miskito case demonstrates the resiliency of indigenous cultures, the limits of ITK, and the potency of global economic forces. It reflects recent studies of the cultural and political ecology of indigenous peoples, such as those conducted by geographer Anthony Bebbington. Bebbington conducted research among the indigenous Quichua populations in the Ecuadorian Andes to assess how they interact with modernizing institutions and practices. He found that, although the Quichua people often possess extensive knowledge about local farming and resource management, ITK alone is not sufficient to allow them to prosper in a global economy. For example, there is little indigenous knowledge about the way international mar-

kets work and thus little understanding of how to price and market their own produce. As a consequence, they have sought the support and knowledge of government agencies, the Catholic Church, and NGOs. He further found that indigenous Quichua communities use outside ideas and technologies to promote their own cultural survival, attempting, in essence, to negotiate their interactions with globalization on their own terms.

Reflecting on Geography

Contrary to their current popular image, indigenous cultures do cause environmental damage. Can you think of an example?

Folk Ecology

As with indigenous cultures, ideas persist about the particular abilities of folk cultures to sustainably manage the environment. Although the attention to conservation varies from culture to culture, folk cultures' close ties to the land and local environment enhance the environmental perception of folk groups. This becomes particularly evident when they migrate. Typically, they seek new lands similar to the one left behind. A good example can be seen in the migrations of Upland Southerners from the mountains of Appalachia between 1830 and 1930. As the Appalachians became increasingly populous, many Upland Southerners began looking elsewhere for similar areas to settle. Initially, they found an environmental twin of the Appalachians in the Ozark-Ouachita Mountains of Missouri and Arkansas. Somewhat later, others sought out the hollows, coves, and gaps of the central Texas Hill Country. The final migration of Appalachian hill people brought some 15,000 members of this folk culture to the Cascade and Coast mountain ranges of Washington State between 1880 and 1930 (**Figure 2.23**).

Gendered Nature

We stressed in Chapter 1 and earlier in this chapter that cultures are heterogeneous and that gender is one of the principal areas of difference within places and regions. Geographers and other social scientists have documented significant differences between men's and women's relationships with the environment. This observation holds for popular, folk, and indigenous cultures. Ecofeminism is one way of thinking about how gender influences our interactions with nature. This concept, however, might seem to suggest that there is something inherent or essential about men and women that makes them think about and behave toward the environment in particular and different ways. Although cultural geographers would argue against such

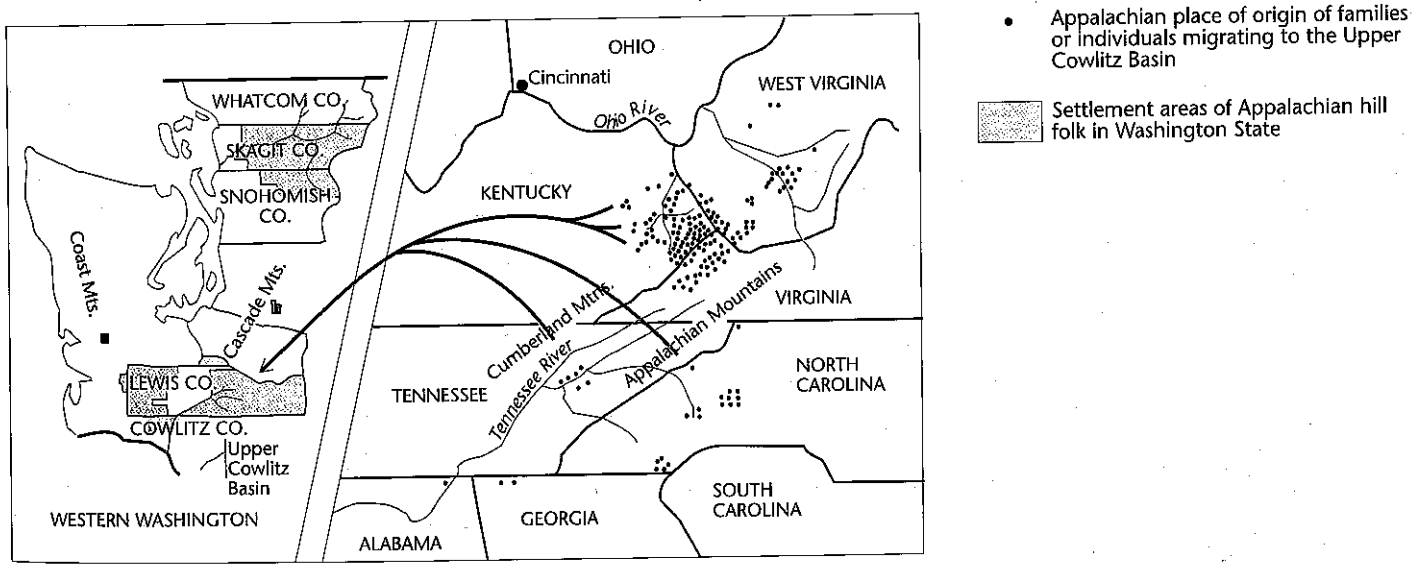


FIGURE 2.23 The relocation diffusion of Upland Southern hill folk from Appalachia to western Washington. Each dot represents the former home of an individual or family that migrated to the Upper Cowlitz River basin in the Cascade Mountains of Washington State between 1884 and 1937. Some 3000 descendants of these migrants lived in the Cowlitz area by 1940. ***What does the high degree of clustering of the sources of the migrants and subsequent clustering in Washington suggest about the processes of folk migrations? How should we interpret their choices of familiar terrain and vegetation for a new home? Why might members of a folk society who migrate choose a new land similar to the old one?*** *(After Clevinger, 1938: 120; Clevinger, 1942: 4.)*

essentialism, few would disagree that gender is an important variable in nature-culture relations.

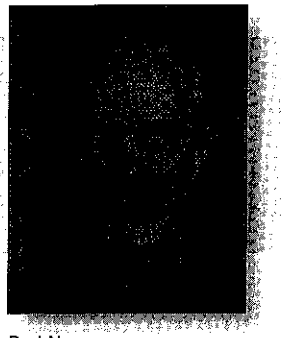
agroforestry
A cultivation system that features the interplanting of trees with field crops.

Diane Rocheleau's work on women's roles in the management of **agroforestry** systems is illustrative. Agroforestry systems are farming systems that combine the growing of trees with the cultivation of agricultural crops. Agroforestry is practiced by folk and indigenous cultures across the tropical world and has been shown to be a highly productive and ecologically sustainable practice. It is common in these production systems for men and women to have very distinct roles. Generally, for example, women are involved in seeding, weeding, and harvesting, whereas men take responsibility for clearing and cultivation. Gender differences also often exist in the types of crops men and women control and in the marketing of produce.

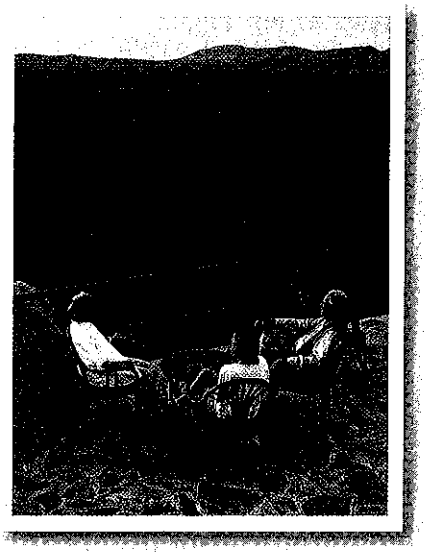
After conducting studies for many years—first in East Africa and later in the Dominican Republic—Rocheleau was

Rod's Notebook

Encountering Nature



Rod Neumann



The situation at Tarangire Safari Lodge in Tarangire National Park, Tanzania, where tourists are able to view wildlife from the comfort of a patio bar, is common in many African parks. *(Christina Micek.)*

In popular culture, fewer and fewer of us have direct contact with what we might call wild nature. We don't make our livings by hunting, clearing fields, or pasturing livestock in the mountains. Rather, mass media, particularly television and film documentaries, shape our understanding of nature and wild places. Wild nature has been transformed into a spectacle in popular culture, something for our amusement and entertainment.

I was conducting research in the historical records of Tanzania's Serengeti National Park when these observations were driven home to me in a very powerful way. Serengeti, like the Amazon, is one of those iconic wild places in popular culture. Who hasn't seen a Serengeti cheetah blazing across the television screen in pursuit of a panicked wildebeest?

I spent my days looking through archived files at the park's research headquarters and my evenings at the Seronera Wildlife Lodge, a luxury hotel in the heart of the African "wilds." I would watch vanloads of American and European (but no African) tourists return to the lodge from their daily wildlife safaris. We would all perch on the balcony with beers or cocktails, watching the elephants, gazelles, and baboons gather at the artificial watering hole just meters away. Drawn to water in the arid landscape, these beasts daily provided us with an entertaining spectacle of wild African nature without our having to leave the bar!

After dark, people would move inside and gather around a television in the lounge and watch—wait for it!—television documentaries about wildlife in Serengeti. I was witnessing an almost surreal feedback loop in which urbanized tourists, drawn to East Africa by the television documentaries they'd viewed in their living rooms in the United States, now sat in front of a television set in the middle of Serengeti watching the wildlife they'd seen that day or hoped to see tomorrow. It seemed as if the television in the lounge was needed to reinforce the reality of the actual experience of viewing African wildlife firsthand. Such is the power of mass media in shaping human encounters with wild nature in popular culture.

Posted by Rod Neumann

able to derive general themes regarding the way human-environment relations are gendered not only in agroforestry systems but also in many rural and urban environments. Together with two colleagues, she identified three themes: gendered knowledge, gendered environmental rights, and gendered environmental politics. First, because women and men often have different tasks and move in different spaces, they possess different and even distinct sets of knowledge about the environment. Second, men and women have different rights, especially with regard to the ownership and control of land and resources. Third, for reasons having to do with their responsibilities in their families and communities, women are often the main leaders and activists in political movements concerned with environmental issues. Taken together, these themes suggest that environmental planning or resource management schemes that do not address issues of gendered ecology are likely to have unintended consequences, some of them negative for both women and environmental quality.

Nature in Popular Culture

Popular culture is less directly tied to the physical environment than are folk and indigenous cultures, which is not to say that it does not have an enormous impact on the environment. Urban dwellers generally do not draw their livelihoods from the land. They have no direct experience with farming, mining, or logging activities, though they could not live without the commodities produced from those activities. Gone is the intimate association between people and land known by our folk ancestors. Gone, too, is our direct vulnerability to many environmental forces, although this security is more apparent than real. Because popular culture is so tied to mass consumption, it can have enormous environmental impacts, such as the production of air and water pollution and massive amounts of solid waste. Also, because popular culture fosters limited contact with and knowledge of the physical world, usually through recreational activities, our environmental perceptions can become quite distorted. (See Rod's Notebook.)

Popular culture makes heavy demands on ecosystems. This is true even in the seemingly benign realm of recreation. Recreational activities have increased greatly in the world's economically affluent regions. Many of these activities require machines, such as snowmobiles, off-road vehicles, and jet skis, that are powered by internal combustion engines and have numerous adverse ecological impacts ranging from air pollution to soil erosion. In national parks and protected areas worldwide, affluent tourists in search of nature have overtaxed protected environments and wildlife and produced levels of congestion approaching those of urban areas (**Figure 2.24**).

Such a massive presence of people in our recreational areas inevitably results in damage to the physical environment. A study by geographer Jeanne Kay and her students in Utah revealed substantial environmental damage done by off-road recreational vehicles, including "soil loss and long-term soil deterioration." One of the paradoxes of the modern age and popular culture seems to be that the more we cluster in cities and suburbs, the greater our impact on open areas; we carry our popular culture with us when we vacation in such regions.

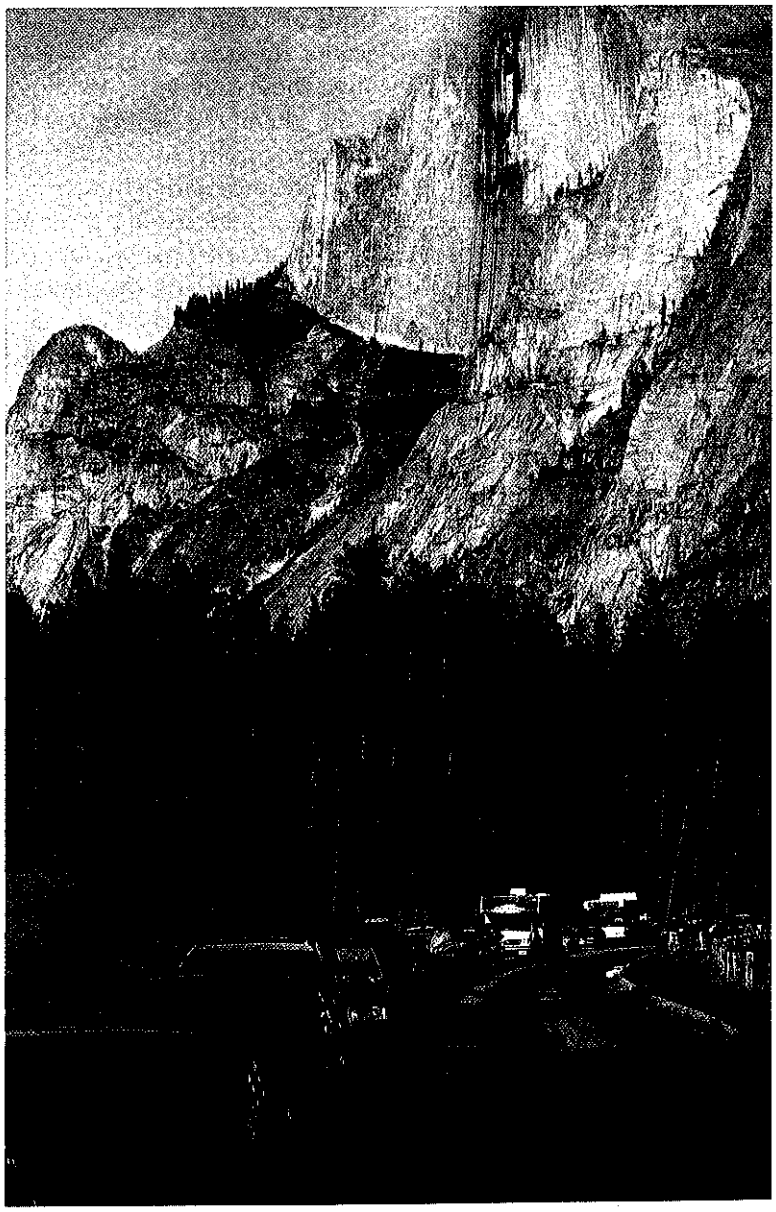


FIGURE 2.24 Traffic jam in Yosemite National Park at the height of the summer tourist season. *(Tom Meyers Photography.)*

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Do folk, indigenous, and popular cultures look different? Do different cultures have distinctive cultural landscapes? The theme of cultural landscape reveals the important differences within and between cultures.

Folk Architecture

folk architecture Structures built by members of a folk society or culture in a traditional manner and style, without the assistance of professional architects or blueprints, using locally available raw materials.

Every folk culture produces a highly distinctive landscape. One of the most visible aspects of these landscapes is **folk architecture.** These traditional buildings illustrate the theme of cultural landscape in folk geography.

Folk architecture springs not from the drafting tables of professional architects but from the collective memory of groups of traditional people (**Figure 2.25**). These buildings—whether dwellings, barns, churches, mills, or inns—are based not on blueprints but on mental images that change little from one generation to the next. Folk architecture is marked not by refined artistic genius or spectacular, revolutionary design but rather by traditional, conservative, and functional structures. Material composition, floor plan, and layout are important ingredients of folk architecture, but numerous other characteristics help classify farmsteads and dwellings. The form or shape of the roof, the placement of the chimney, and even such details as the number and location of doors and windows can be important classifying criteria. E. Estyn Evans, a noted expert on Irish folk geography, considered roof form and chimney placement, among other traits, in devising an informal classification of Irish houses.

The house, or dwelling, is the most basic structure that people erect, regardless of culture. For most people in nearly all folk cultures, a house is the single most important thing they ever build. Folk cultures as a rule are rural and agricultural. For these reasons, it seems appropriate to focus on the folk house.

Folk Housing in North America

In the United States and Canada, folk architecture today is a relict form preserved in the cultural landscape. For the most part, popular culture, with its mass-produced, commercially built houses, has so overwhelmed folk traditions that few folk houses are built today, yet many survive in the refuge regions of American and Canadian folk culture (see Figures 2.1, page 32, and 2.25).

Yankee folk houses are of wooden frame construction, and shingle siding often covers the exterior walls. They are built with a variety of floor plans, including the New England "large" house, a huge two-and-a-half-story house built around a central chimney and two rooms deep. As the Yankee folk migrated westward, they developed the upright-and-wing dwelling. These particular Yankee houses are often massive, in part because the cold winters of the region forced most work to be done indoors. By contrast, Upland Southern folk houses are smaller and built of notched logs.

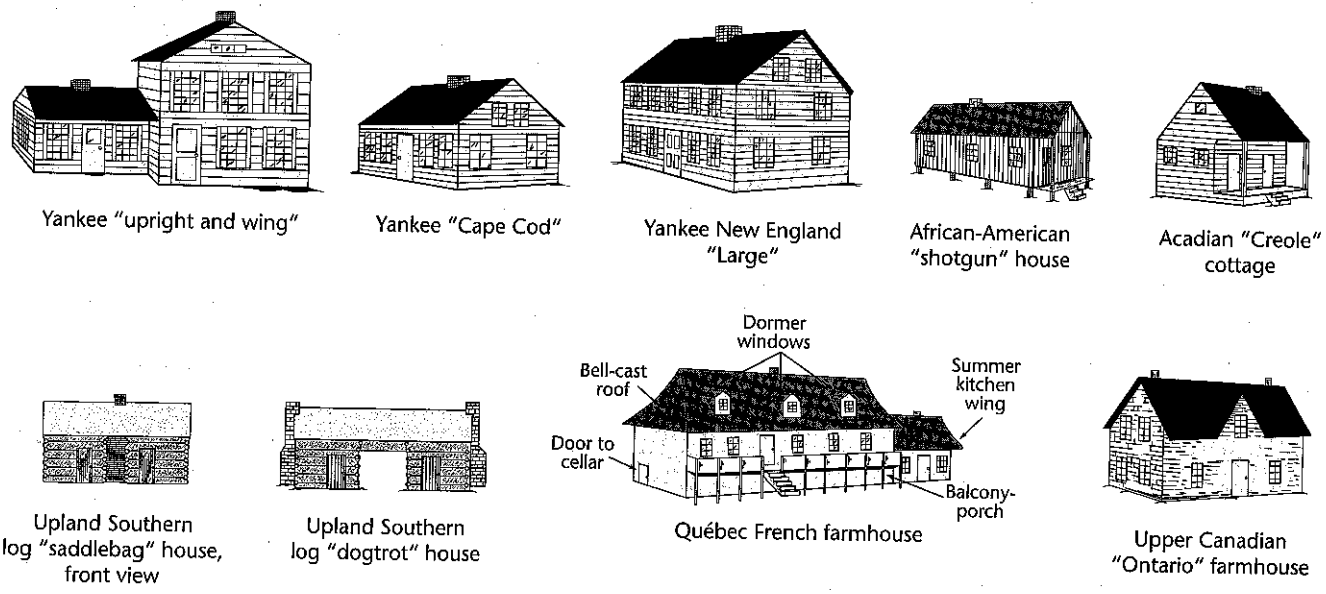


FIGURE 2.25 Selected folk houses. Six of the 15 folk culture regions of North America are represented (see Figure 2.1). *(After Glassie, 1968; Kniffen, 1965.)*

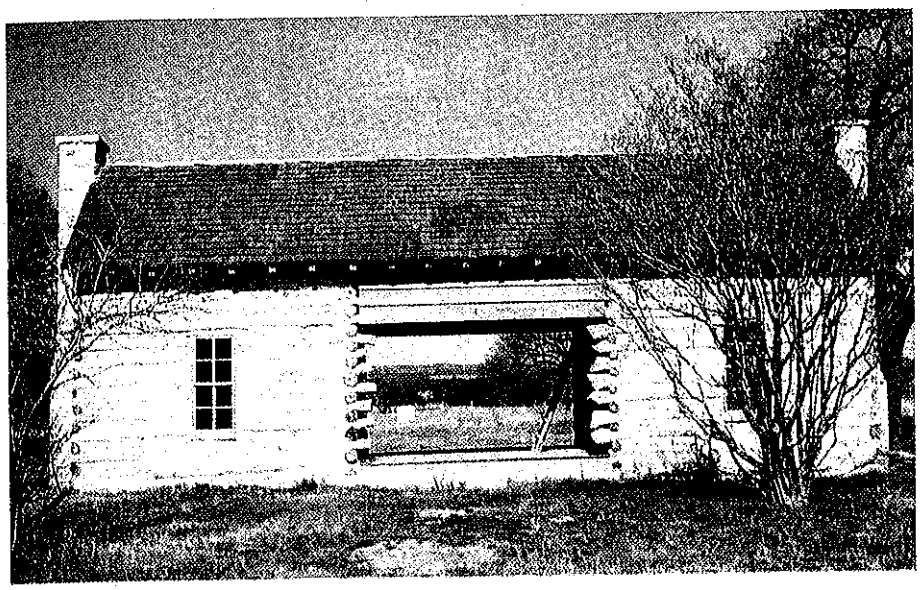


FIGURE 2.26 A dogtrot house, typical of the Upland Southern folk region. The distinguishing feature is the open-air passageway, or dogtrot, between the two main rooms. This house is located in central Texas. *(Courtesy of Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov.)*

Many houses in this folk tradition consist of two log rooms, with either a double fireplace between, forming the saddlebag house, or an open, roofed breezeway separating the two rooms, a plan known as the dogtrot house (**Figure 2.26**). An example of an African-American folk dwelling is the shotgun house, a narrow structure only one room in width but two, three, or even four rooms in depth. Acadiana, a French-derived folk region in Louisiana, is characterized by the half-timbered Creole cottage, which has a central chimney and built-in porch. Scores of other folk house types survive in the American landscape, although most such dwellings now stand abandoned and derelict.

Reflecting on Geography

The relicts of folk cultural landscapes can be found in most parts of North America. Should we strive to preserve those relicts, such as folk houses? Why or why not?

Canada also offers a variety of traditional folk houses (see Figure 2.25). In French-speaking Québec, one of the common types consists of a main story atop a cellar, with attic rooms beneath a curved, bell-shaped (or bell-cast) roof. A balcony-porch with railing extends across the front, sheltered by the overhanging eaves. Attached to one side of this type of French-Canadian folk house is a summer kitchen that is sealed off during the long, cold winter. Often the folk houses of Québec are built of stone. To the west, in the Upper Canadian folk region, one type of folk house occurs so frequently that it is known as the Ontario farmhouse. One-and-a-half stories in height, the Ontario farmhouse is usually built of brick and has a distinctive gabled front dormer window.

The interpretation of folk architecture is by no means a simple process (**Figure 2.27**, page 58). Folk geographers often work for years trying to "read" such structures, seeking clues to diffusion and traditional adaptive strategies. The old problem of independent invention versus diffusion is raised repeatedly in the folk landscape, as **Figure 2.28**, page 58, illustrates. Precisely because interpretation is often difficult, however, geographers find these old structures challenging and well worth studying. Folk cultures rarely leave behind much in the way of written records, making their landscape artifacts all the more important in seeking explanations.

Folk Housing in Sub-Saharan Africa

Throughout East Africa and southern Africa, rural family homesteads take a common form. Most consist of a compound of buildings called a *kraal*, a term related to the English word *corral* and used across the region. The compound typically includes a main house (or houses in polygamous cultures), a detached building in the rear for cooking, and smaller buildings or enclosures for livestock.

All construction is done with local materials. Small, flexible sticks are woven in between poles that have been driven into the ground to serve as the frame. Then a mixture of clay and animal dung is plastered against the woven sticks, layer by layer, until it is entirely covered. Dried tall grasses are tied together in bundles to form the roof. In a recent innovation, rural people who can afford the expense have replaced the grass with corrugated iron sheets. In some societies the dwellings are round, in others square or rectangular. You can often tell when you have entered a different culture region by the change in house types.

One of the most distinctive house types is found in the Ndebele culture region of southern Africa, which stretches from South Africa north into southern Zimbabwe. In the rural parts of the Ndebele region, people are farmers and

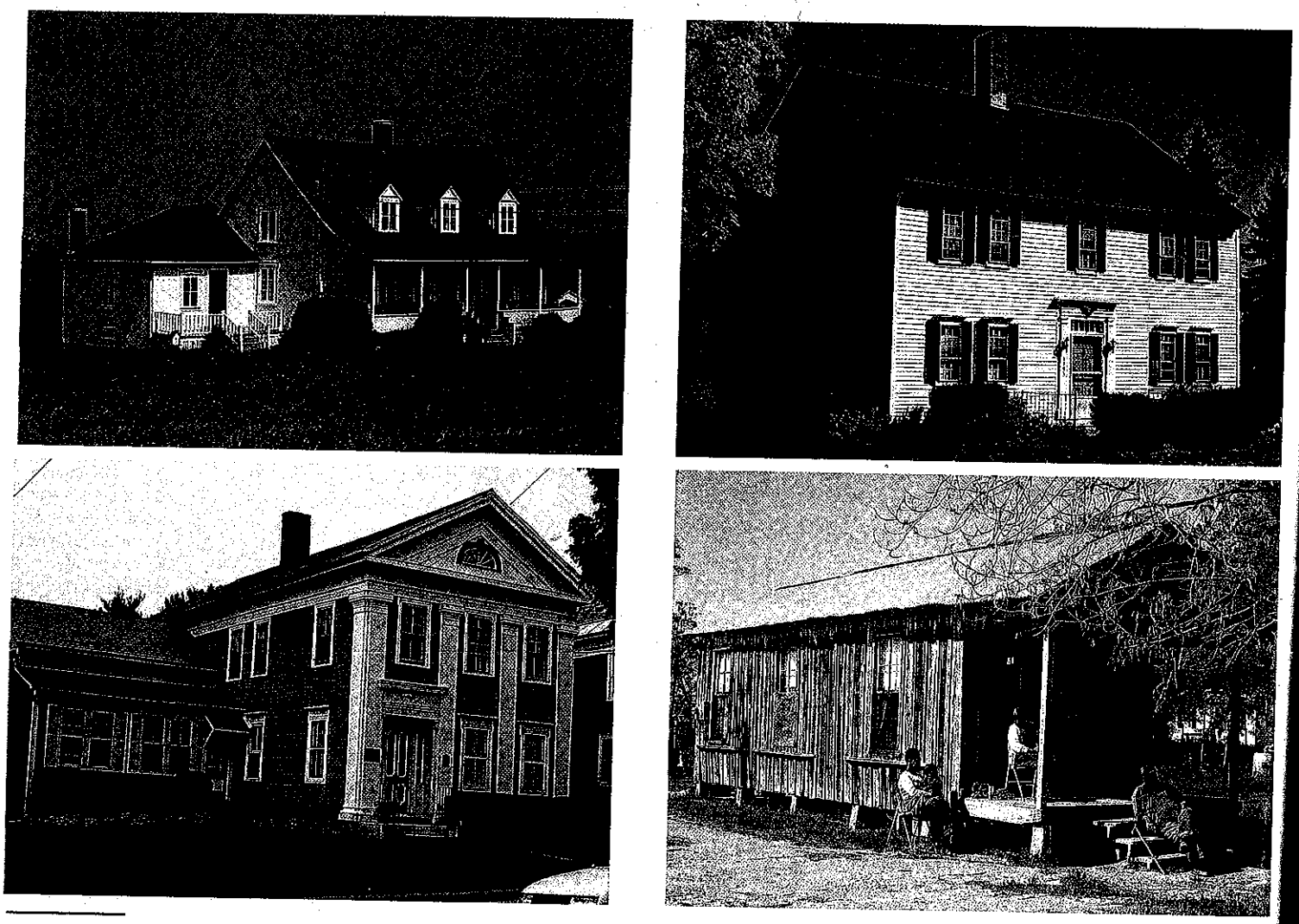


FIGURE 2.27 Four folk houses in North America. ***Using the sketches in Figure 2.25, page 56, and the related section of the text, determine the regional affiliation and type of each.*** The answers are provided on page 69. *(Courtesy of Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov.)*

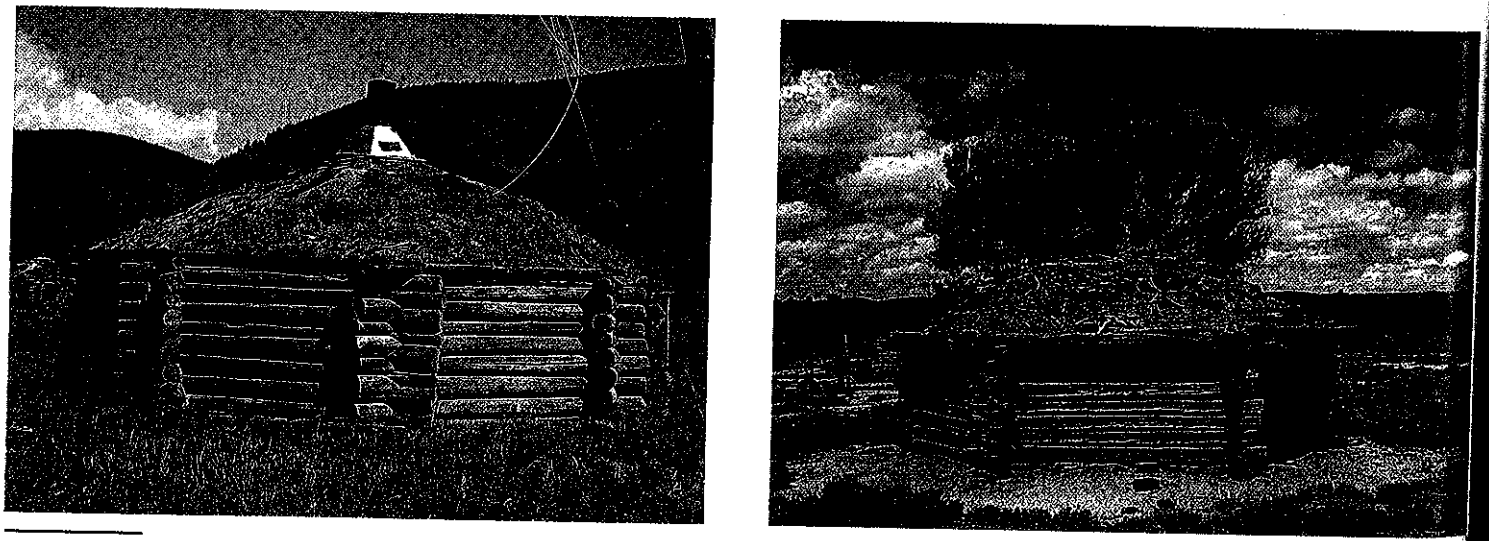


FIGURE 2.28 Two polygonal folk houses. (*Left*) A Buriat Mongol yurt in southern Siberia, near Lake Baikal. (*Right*) A Navajo hogan in New Mexico. The two dwellings, almost identical and each built of notched logs, lie on opposite sides of the world, among unrelated folk groups who never had contact with each other. Such houses do not occur anywhere in between. ***Is cultural diffusion or independent invention responsible? How might a folk geographer go about finding the answer?*** *(Left, Courtesy of Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov; Right, Courtesy of Stephen C. Jett.)*

FIGURE 2.29 Ndebele village in South Africa. While the origins and meaning of Ndebele house painting is debated, there is no question that it creates a visually distinct cultural landscape. *(Ariadne Van Zandbergen/ Alamy.)*

livestock keepers and live in traditional kraals. What makes these houses distinctive is the Ndebele custom of painting brightly colored designs on the exterior house walls and sometimes on the walls and gates surrounding the kraal (**Figure 2.29**). The precise origins of this custom are unclear, but it seems to date to the mid-nineteenth century. Some suggest that it was an assertion of cultural identity in response to their displacement and domination at the hands of white settlers. Others point to a religious or sacred role.

What is clear is that the custom has always been the purview of women, a skill and practice passed down from mother to daughter. Many of the symbols and patterns are associated with particular families or clans. Initially, women used natural pigments from clay, charcoal, and local plants, which restricted their palette to earth tones of brown, red, and black. Today many women use commercial paints—expensive, but longer lasting—to apply a range of bright colors, limited only by the imagination. Another new development is in the types of designs and symbols used. People are incorporating modern machines such as automobiles, televisions, and airplanes into their designs. In many cases, traditional paints and symbols are blended with the modern to produce a synthetic design of old and new. Ndebele house painting is developing and evolving in new directions, all the while continuing to signal a persistent cultural identity to all who pass through the region.

Landscapes of Popular Culture

Popular culture permeates the landscape of countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, including everything from mass-produced suburban houses to golf courses and neon-lit strips. So overwhelming is the presence of popular culture in most American settlement landscapes that an observer must often search diligently to find visual fragments of the older folk cultures. The popular landscape is in continual flux, for change is a hallmark of popular culture.

Few aspects of the popular landscape are more visually striking than the ubiquitous commercial malls and strips on urban arterial streets, which geographer Robert Sack calls *landscapes of consumption* (see Figure 2.6, page 36). In an Illinois college town, two other cultural geographers, John Jakle and Richard Mattson, made a study of the evolution of one such strip. During a 60-year span, the street under study changed from a single-family residential area to a commercial district (**Figure 2.30**, page 60). The researchers suggested a five-stage model of strip evolution, beginning with the single-family residential period, moving through stages of increasing commercialization, which drives owner-residents out, and culminating in stage 5, where the residential function of the street disappears and a totally commercial landscape prevails. Business properties expand so that off-street parking can be provided. Public outcries over the ugliness of such strips are common. Even landscapes such as these are subject to interpretation, however, for the people who create them perceive them differently. For example, geographer Yi-Fu Tuan suggests that a commercial strip of stores, fast-food restaurants, filling stations, and used-car lots may appear as visual blight to an outsider, but the owners or operators of the businesses are very proud of them and of their role in the community. Hard work and high hopes color their perceptions of the popular landscape.

Perhaps no landscape of consumption is more reflective of popular culture than the indoor shopping mall,

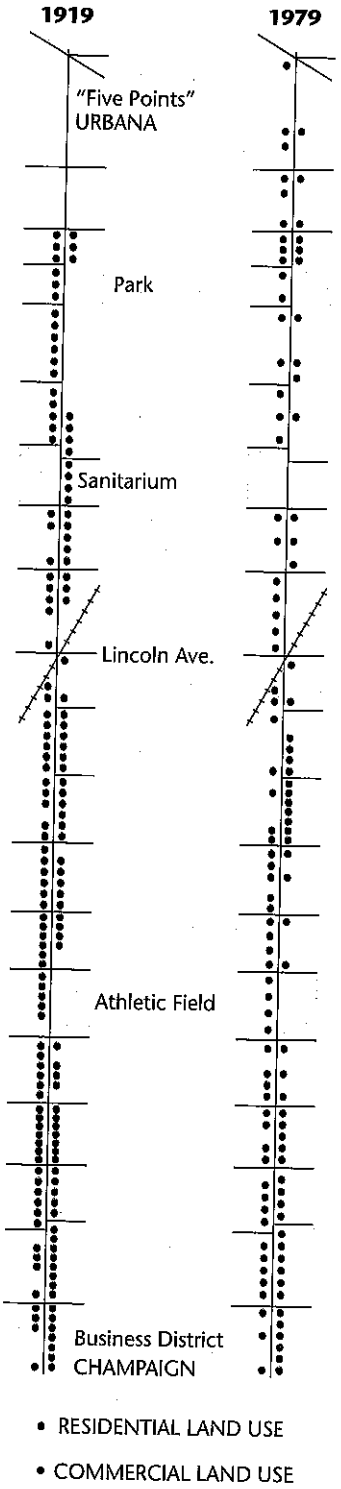


FIGURE 2.30 The evolution of a commercial strip in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, 1919–1979. Popular culture reshaped a landscape. ***Is the older or newer landscape "better"? Why?*** *(Adapted from Jakle and Mattson, 1981: 14, 20.)*

numerous examples of which now dot both urban and suburban landscapes. Of these, the largest is West Edmonton Mall in the Canadian province of Alberta (**Figure 2.31**). Enclosing some 5.3 million square feet (493,000 square meters) and opened in 1986, West Edmonton Mall employs 23,500 people in more than 800 stores and services, accounts for nearly one-fourth of the total retail space in greater Edmonton, earned 42 percent of the dollars spent in local shopping centers, and experienced 2800 crimes in its first nine months of operation. Beyond its sheer size, West Edmonton Mall also boasts a water park, a sea aquarium, an ice-skating rink, a miniature golf course, a roller coaster, 21 movie theaters, and a 360-room hotel. Its "streets" feature motifs from such distant places as New Orleans, represented by a Bourbon Street complete with fiberglass ladies of the evening. Jeffrey Hopkins, a geographer who studied this mall, refers to this as a "landscape of myth and elsewhereness," a "simulated landscape" that reveals the "growing intrusion of spectacle, fantasy, and escapism into the urban landscape."

Leisure Landscapes

leisure landscapes Landscapes that are planned and designed primarily for entertainment purposes, such as ski and beach resorts.

amenity landscapes Landscapes that are prized for their natural and cultural aesthetic qualities by the tourism and real estate industries and their customers.

Another common feature of popular culture is what geographer Karl Raitz labeled **leisure landscapes.** Leisure landscapes are designed to entertain people on weekends and vacations; often they are included as part of a larger tourist experience. Golf courses and theme parks such as Disney World are good examples of such landscapes. **Amenity landscapes** are a related landscape form. These are regions with attractive natural features such as forests, scenic mountains, or lakes and rivers that have become desirable locations for retirement or vacation homes. One such landscape is in the Minnesota North Woods lake country, where, in a sampling of home ownership, geographer Richard Hecock found that fully 40 percent of all dwellings were not permanent residences but instead weekend cottages or vacation homes. These are often purposefully made rustic or even humble in appearance.

The past, reflected in relict buildings, has also been incorporated into the leisure landscape. Most often, collections of old structures are relocated to form "historylands," often enclosed by imposing chain-link fences and open only during certain seasons or hours. If the desired bit of visual history has perished, Americans and Canadians do not hesitate to rebuild it from scratch, undisturbed by the lack of authenticity—as, for example, at Jamestown, Virginia, or Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. Normally, the history parks are put in out-of-the-way places and sanitized to the extent that people no longer live in them. Role-playing actors sometimes prowl these parks,

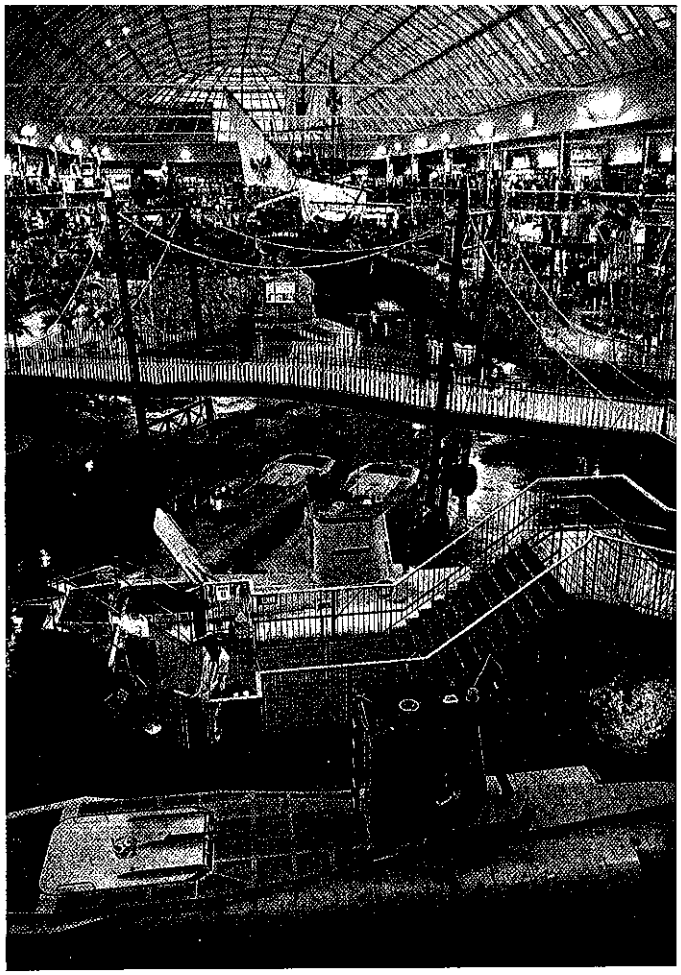


FIGURE 2.31 The enormous West Edmonton Mall represents the growing infusion of spectacle and fantasy into the urban landscape. In addition to retail outlets, the mall includes a sea aquarium, an ice-skating rink, a miniature golf course, and the Submarine Ride shown here. *(© James Marshall/Corbis.)*

Daniel Gade, a cultural geographer, coined the term *elitist space* to describe such landscapes, using the French Riviera as an example (**Figure 2.32**). In that district of southern France, famous for its stunning natural beauty and idyllic climate, the French elite applied "refined taste to create an aesthetically pleasing cultural landscape" characterized by the preservation of old buildings and town cores, a sense of proportion, and respect for scale. Building codes and height restrictions, for instance, are rigorously enforced. Land values, in response, have risen, making the Riviera ever more elitist, far removed from the folk culture and poverty that prevailed there before 1850. Farmers and fishers have almost disappeared from the region, though one need drive but a short distance, to Toulon, to find a working seaport. It seems, then, that the different social classes generated within popular culture become geographically segregated, each producing a distinctive cultural landscape (**Figure 2.33**, page 62).

America, too, offers elitist landscapes. An excellent example is the gentleman farm, an agricultural unit operated for pleasure rather than profit (**Figure 2.34**, page 62). Typically, affluent city people own gentleman farms as an avocation, and such farms help to create or maintain a high social standing for those who own them. Some rural landscapes in America now contain many such gentleman farms; perhaps most notable among these places are the inner Bluegrass Basin of north-central Kentucky, the Virginia Piedmont west of Washington, D.C., eastern Long Island in New York, and parts of southeastern Pennsylvania.

pretending to live in some past era, adding "elsewhenness" to "elsewhereness."

Elitist Landscapes

A characteristic of popular culture is the development of social classes. A small elite group—consisting of persons of wealth, education, and expensive tastes—occupies the top economic position in popular cultures. The important geographical fact about such people is that because of their wealth, desire to be around similar people, and affluent lifestyles, they can and do create distinctive cultural landscapes, often over fairly large areas.

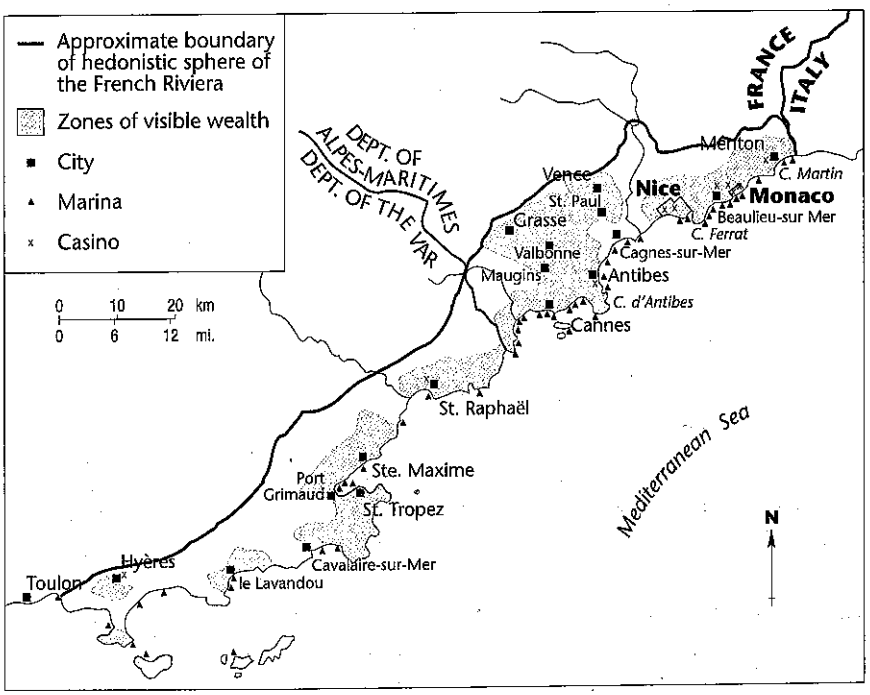


FIGURE 2.32 The distribution of an elitist or hedonistic cultural landscape on the French Riviera. ***What forces in the popular culture generate such landscapes?*** *(Adapted from Gade, 1982: 22.)*

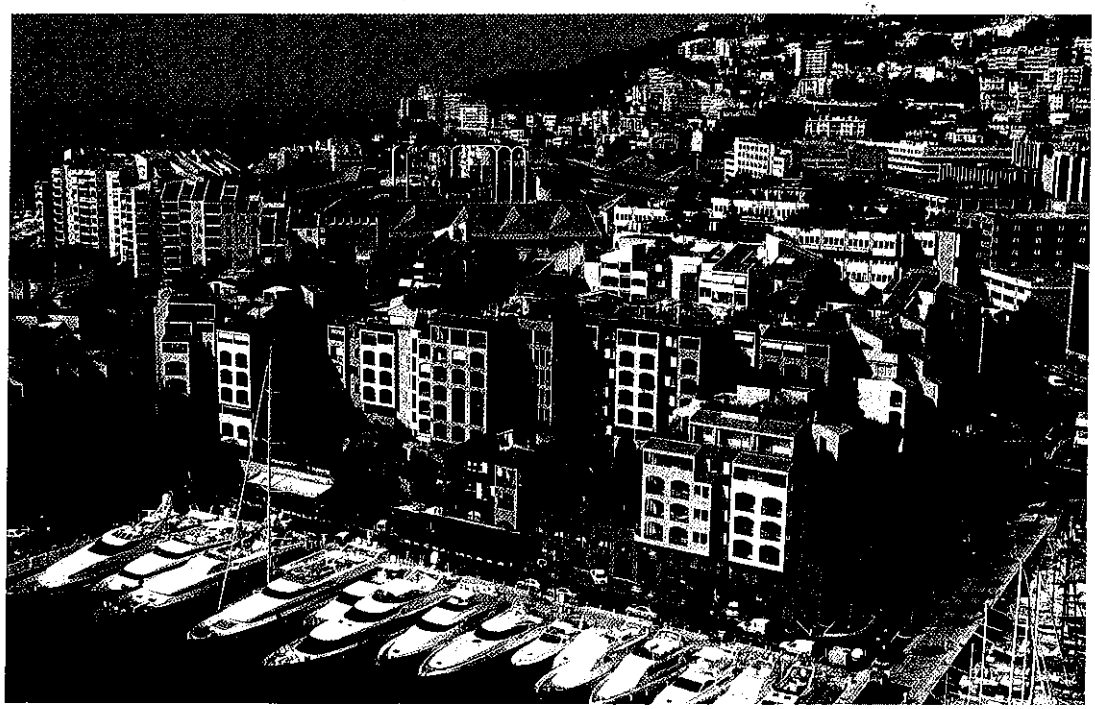


FIGURE 2.33 The cultural landscape of the affluent in Port of Fontvieille, Monaco. The huge yachts and Mediterranean residences are out of reach for all but the world's wealthiest. *(Sergio Pitamitz/Age Fotostock.)*

Gentleman farmers engage in such activities as breeding fine cattle, raising racing horses, or hunting foxes.

Geographer Karl Raitz conducted a study of gentleman farms in the Kentucky Bluegrass Basin, where their concentration is so great that they constitute the dominant feature of the cultural landscape. The result revealed an idyllic scene, a rural landscape created more for appearance than for function. Raitz provided a list of visual indicators of Kentucky gentleman farms: wooden fences, either painted white or creosoted black; an elaborate entrance gate; a fine hand-painted sign giving the name of the farm and owner; a network of surfaced, well-maintained driveways and pasture roads; and a large, elegant house, visible in the distance from the public highway through a lawnlike parkland dotted with clumps of trees and perhaps a pond or two. So attractive are these estates to the eye that tourists travel the rural lands to view them, convinced they are seeing the "real" rural America, or at least rural America as it ought to be.

Reflecting on Geography

Can you think of other types of popular culture landscapes in addition to consumption, leisure, and elitist landscapes?

FIGURE 2.34 Gentleman farm in the Kentucky Bluegrass region near Lexington. Here is "real" rural America as it should be (but never was). *(Courtesy of Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov.)*

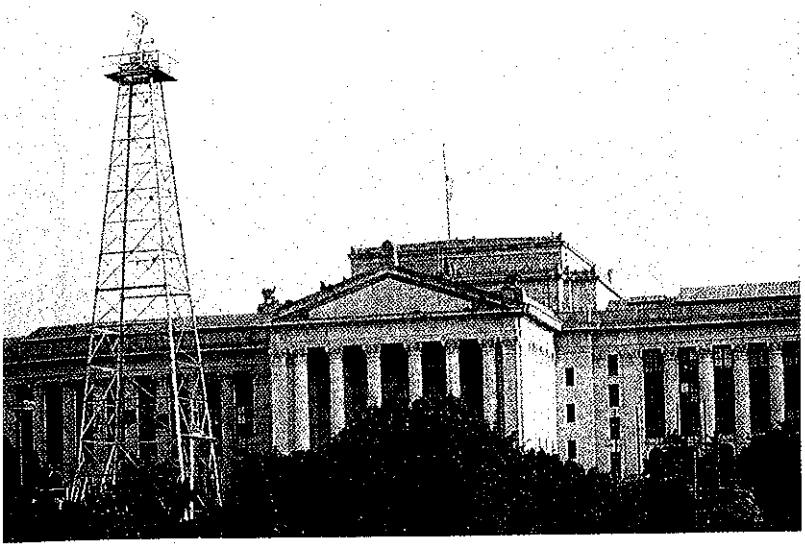


FIGURE 2.35 Oil derrick on the Oklahoma state capitol grounds. The landscape of American popular culture is characterized by such functionality. The public and private sectors of the economy are increasingly linked in the popular culture. ***Is criticism of such a landscape elitist and snobbish?*** *(See also Robertson, 1996. Photo courtesy of Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov.)*

towering redwoods of California, and the Rocky Mountains.

Americans, argues Lowenthal, tend to regard their cultural landscape as unfinished. As a result, they are "predisposed to accept present structures that are makeshift, flimsy, and transient," resembling "throwaway stage sets." Similarly, the hardships of pioneer life perhaps preconditioned Americans to value function more highly than beauty and form. The state capitol grounds in Oklahoma City are adorned with little more than oil derricks, standing above busy pumps drawing oil and the wealth that comes with it from the Sooner soil—an extreme but revealing view of the American landscape (**Figure 2.35**).

In summary, American popular culture seems to have produced a built landscape that stresses bigness, utilitarianism, and transience. Sometimes these are opposing trends, as in the case of many of the massive structures previously cited, which are clearly built to last. Sometimes the trends mesh, as in the recent explosion of "big box" retail chains (**Figure 2.36**). These giant retail buildings are no more than oversized metal sheds that one can easily imagine being razed overnight to be replaced by the next big thing.

The American Popular Landscape

In an article entitled "The American Scene," geographer David Lowenthal attempted to analyze the cumulative visible impact of popular culture on the American countryside. Lowenthal identified the main characteristics of popular landscape in the United States, including the "cult of bigness"; the tolerance of present ugliness to achieve a supposedly glorious future; an emphasis on individual features at the expense of aggregates, producing a "casual chaos"; and the preeminence of function over form.

The American fondness for massive structures is reflected in edifices such as the Empire State Building, the Pentagon, the San Francisco–Oakland Bay Bridge, and Salt Lake City's Mormon Temple. Americans have dotted their cultural landscape with the world's largest of this or that, perhaps in an effort to match the grand scale of the physical environment, which includes such landmarks as the Grand Canyon, the

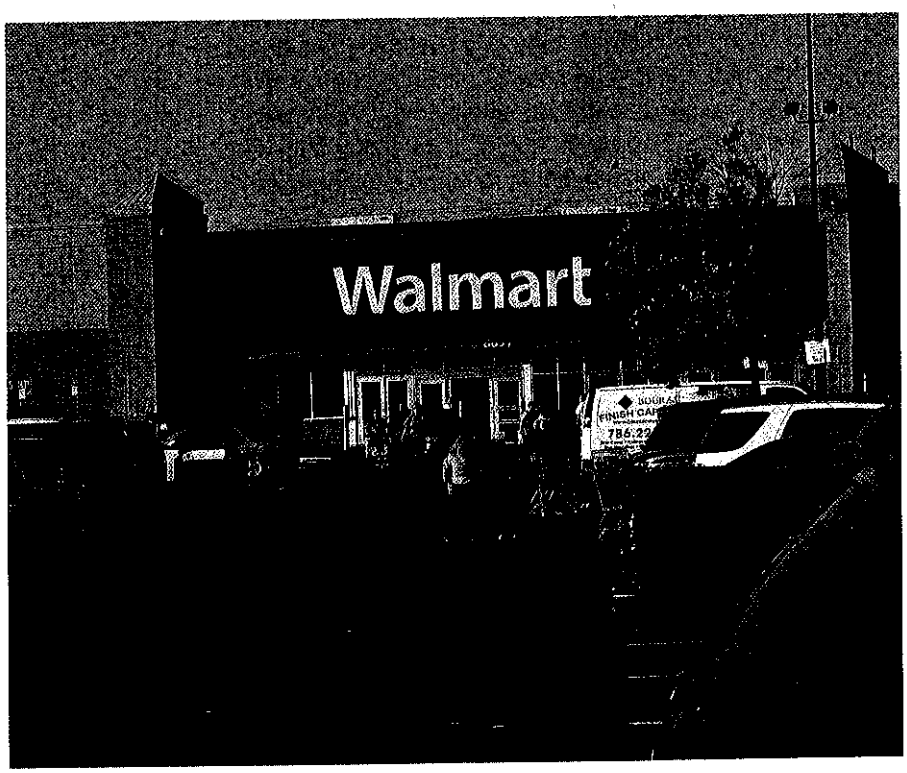


FIGURE 2.36 Walmart is one example among many of the "big box" stores now ubiquitous in suburban landscapes. Such buildings incorporate the ideals of bigness, transience, and utilitarianism common in the architecture of popular culture. *(Courtesy of Roderick Neumann.)*

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have just scratched the surface of the complex nature of the geography of multiculturalism. Using the cases of folk, popular, and indigenous cultures, we learned that there are many ways of perceiving and being in the landscape. We have also seen how each of these cultural categories is in turn internally heterogeneous, with significant differences occurring among gender, class, and ethnic groups. Religion, often a defining element of cultural difference, is also vitally important. Chapter 7 is devoted to this major cultural trait.

DOING GEOGRAPHY

Self-Representation of Indigenous Culture

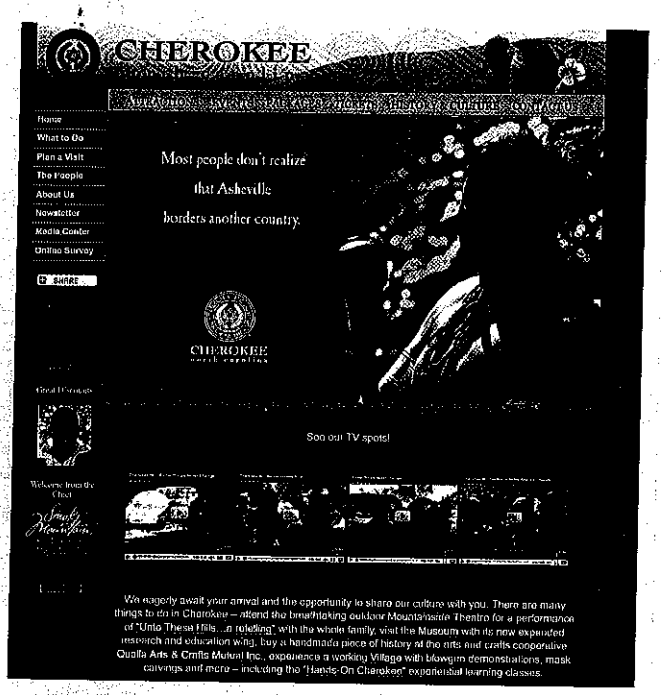
Indigenous cultures are reasserting themselves after 500 years of marginalization. For centuries, the roar of dominant national cultures drowned out indigenous peoples' voices. Members of dominant national cultures—academics, missionaries, government officials, and journalists—have been largely responsible for writing about the histories and cultures of indigenous peoples. This is changing as some indigenous groups have prospered economically and as the indigenous rights movement gains increasing support worldwide. Today, more and more indigenous peoples are taking charge of representing themselves and their cultures to the outside world by building museums, producing films, hosting conferences, and creating web sites.

This exercise requires you to carefully study one of these platforms for cultural expression: *self-produced* indigenous peoples' web sites. To do so, follow the steps below.

Steps to Understanding Indigenous Culture

Step 1: Do some background research on the names and locations of major indigenous cultures. You can use the web sites listed at the end of this chapter to help you get started. It is important to verify that the web sites you are studying are self-produced. Confirm that the site is produced by a tribal or indigenous organization, not by an external NGO, national government, corporation, or university.

Step 2: Think about how you are going to analyze the content of the web site in order to draw conclusions about the self-representation of indigenous cultures. Here are a few suggestions and possibilities: focus on questions of geography such as territorial claims, rights over natural resources, culturally significant relations with nature, and homeland self-rule.



Many Native American tribes, such as the Cherokee Nation, create web sites to control their public image, promote business interests, and highlight political agendas. *(Cherokee-nc.com.)*

Based on your research and analysis, systematically analyze how indigenous populations represent their cultural identities. Consider these questions:

- How do indigenous groups speak about their relationship to the land and the environment?
- What do they say about territorial claims and homelands? What roles do maps play on the web sites?
- What are their ideas on biodiversity conservation and bioprospecting (the search for genetic resources and other biological resources)?

In addition, look for discussions of conflict, cooperation, or disagreement with national governments or multinational corporations:

- Is there a project or policy (e.g., disposal of radioactive material) that is disputed?
- What position is taken on the web site? How is the position framed in relation to indigenous rights and culture?
- What major issues and challenges does the site highlight and how do these relate to globalization?

Finally, think about possibilities for comparison:

- Are there regional (on either the U.S. national or global scale) differences in terms of the quantity and content of web sites?

- Do you find common themes across or within regions?
- Are there indigenous cultures that produce contrasting or competing representations?
- Do some indigenous cultures have more than one self-generated web site and do those sites present different ideas?

Key Terms

Cultures on the Internet

You can learn more about the main categories of culture discussed in the chapter on the Internet at the following web sites:

American Memory, Library of Congress
http://memory.loc.gov
A project of the Library of Congress that presents a history of American popular culture, complete with documentation and maps.

Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage
http://www.folklife.si.edu/center/about_us.html
A research and educational unit of the Smithsonian Institution promoting the understanding and continuity of diverse, contemporary grassroots cultures in the United States and around the world. The center produces exhibitions, films and videos, and educational materials.

Cultural Survival
http://www.cs.org/
The interactive web site of Cultural Survival, an organization that promotes the human rights and goals of indigenous peoples. Many timely indigenous cultural issues and important links can be found here.

First Nations Seeker
http://www.firstnationsseeker.ca
This site is a directory of North American Indian portal web sites. Tribes of Canada and the United States are ordered linguistically.

First Peoples Worldwide
http://www.firstpeoplesworldwide.org/
This group promotes an indigenous-controlled international organization that advocates for indigenous self-governance and culturally appropriate economic development.

Manchester Institute for Popular Culture, Manchester, U.K.
http://www.mmu.ac.uk/h-ss/mipc/
This site is dedicated to the academic study of popular culture, based at the Manchester Metropolitan University.

Native Lands
http://www.nativelands.org/
Native Lands deals with biological and cultural diversity in Latin America. It is very involved in mapping projects to help secure indigenous territorial claims and protect tropical forests.

Popular Culture Association
http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~pcaaca/
A multidisciplinary organization dedicated to the academic discussion of popular culture, where activities of the association are discussed.

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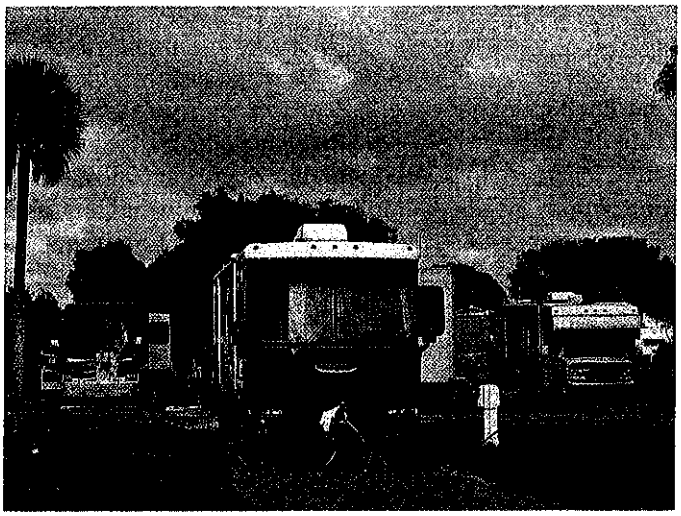
SEEING GEOGRAPHY Camping in the "Great Outdoors"

What can this scene tell us about nature-culture relations in North American popular culture?



Enjoying nature in a national park campground.

How we think about and interact with nature reveals a great deal about how we understand our place in the world. For example, within contemporary popular culture we often think of our relationship with nature as something outside the routine of daily life. We seek out nature on weekends, during vacations, or in retirement. Nature is equated with pretty scenery, which in popular culture typically means forests, mountains, and wide-open spaces. This scene from Everglades National Park in Florida reveals a great deal about one of the main ways within popular culture that we express this understanding of nature: camping in the "Great Outdoors."

Of course, there are many ways to camp. This particular form, recreational vehicle (RV) or motor home camping, is extremely energy intensive. Unseen in this photo is the supporting industrial manufacturing complex organized to produce a fleet of vehicles, trailers, and equipment, all of which are intended to be situated on an asphalt slab and connected to an electrical power grid. A lot of natural resources have to be consumed to experience nature in this way. Such an experience is shaped less by direct physical interaction with nature than by interaction with mass-produced commodities. Nature serves mainly as background scenery.

Thinking of nature as background scenery suggests a stage set for actors to interact on. Look carefully at the photo and you will see that this campground is a stage for both extremely private and highly public interactions. On one hand, every set of "campers" has its own private home completely sealed from the outside (e.g., note the satellite dish and rooftop air conditioners). Each RV is self-sufficient, requiring interactions neither with nature nor with human neighbors. On the other hand, the RVs are extremely closely spaced. Interactions among campers are almost forced, for merely stepping out of the RV puts one in public view. Conversations with strangers—even sharing drinks and meals—become a cultural norm in such a setting. Indeed, meeting new people is one of the reasons campers give when explaining why they enjoy camping. Could it be that getting in touch with nature really means getting in touch with one another in ways that would be difficult in the daily routines of popular culture?

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Ten Recommended Books on Geographies of Cultural Difference

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

Burgess, Jacquelin A., and John R. Gold (eds.). 1985. *Geography, the Media, and Popular Culture.* New York: St. Martin's Press. The geography of popular culture is linked in diverse ways to the communications media, and this collection of essays explores facets of that relationship.

Carney, George O. (ed.). 1998. *Baseball, Barns and Bluegrass: A Geography of American Folklife.* Boulder, Colo.: Rowman & Littlefield. A wonderful collection of readings that, contrary to the title, span the gap between folk and popular culture.

Ensminger, Robert F. 1992. *The Pennsylvania Barn: Its Origin, Evolution, and Distribution in North America.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. A common American folk barn, part of the rural cultural landscape, provides geographer Ensminger with visual clues to its origin and diffusion; a fascinating detective story showing how geographers "read" cultural landscapes and what they learn in the process.

Glassie, Henry. 1968. *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Glassie, a student of folk geographer Fred Kniffen, considers the geographical distribution of a wide array of folk culture items in this classic overview.

Jackson, Peter, and Jan Penrose (eds.). 1993. *Constructions of Race, Place, and Nation.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. An edited collection that examines the way in which the ideas of racial and national identity vary from place to place; rich in empirical research.

Jordan, Terry G., Jon T. Kilpinen, and Charles F. Gritzner. 1997. *The Mountain West: Interpreting the Folk Landscape.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. Reading the folk landscapes of the American West, three geographers reach conclusions about the regional culture and how it evolved.

Price, Patricia. 2004. *Dry Place: Landscapes of Belonging and Exclusion.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Price explores the narratives that have sought to establish claims to the dry lands along the U.S.–Mexico border, demonstrating how stories can become vehicles for reshaping places and cultural identities.

Skelton, Tracey, and Gill Valentine (eds.). 1998. *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures.* London: Routledge. The engaging essays in *Cool Places* explore the dichotomy of youthful lives by addressing the issues of representation and resistance in youth culture today. Using first-person vignettes to illustrate the wide-ranging experiences of youth, the authors consider how the media have imagined young people as a particular community with shared interests and how young people resist these stereotypes, instead creating their own independent representations of their lives.

Weiss, Michael J. 1994. *Latitudes and Attitudes: An Atlas of American Tastes, Trends, Politics, and Passions.* New York: Little, Brown. Using marketing data organized by postal zip codes, Weiss reveals the geographical diversity of American popular culture.

Zelinsky, Wilbur. 1992. *The Cultural Geography of the United States,* 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall. This revised edition of a sprightly, classic book, originally published in 1973, reveals the cultural sectionalism in modern America in the era of popular culture, with attention also to folk roots.

Journals in Geographies of Cultural Difference

Indigenous Affairs. A quarterly journal published by the International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs thematically focused on issues of indigenous cultures. Volume 1 was published in 1976.

Journal of Popular Culture. Published by the Popular Culture Association since 1967, this journal focuses on the role of popular

culture in the making of contemporary society. See in particular Volume 11, No. 4, 1978, a special issue on cultural geography and popular culture.

Material Culture: Journal of the Pioneer America Society. Published twice annually, this leading periodical specializes in the subject of the American rural material culture of the past. Volume 1 was published in 1969, and prior to 1984 the journal was called *Pioneer America.*

Answers

Figure 2.6 The scenes were taken in the following "placeless" places: McDonald's in Tokyo, Wendy's in Idaho, and Pampas Grill in Finland.

Figure 2.27 (a) French-Canadian farmhouse, Port Joli, Québec; (b) New England "large" house, New Hampshire; (c) Yankee upright-and-wing house, Massachusetts; (d) shotgun house, Alleyton, Texas.