

The Cultural Landscape

# AN INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

THIRD EDITION



JAMES M. RUBENSTEIN



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The Cultural Landscape  
An Introduction to  
Human Geography

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# Preface

What is geography? Geography is the study of where things are located on the earth's surface and the reasons for the location. The word *geography*, invented by the ancient Greek scholar Eratosthenes, is based on two Greek words. *Geo* means "the earth," and *graphy* means "to write." Geographers ask two simple questions: where and why. Where are people and activities located on the earth's surface? Why are they located in particular places?

## Geography as a Social Science

Recent world events lend a sense of urgency to geographic inquiry. Geography's spatial perspective helps relate political unrest in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and other regions to the spatial distributions of cultural characteristics such as languages and religions, demographic patterns such as population growth and migration, and natural resources such as energy and minerals.

Does the world face an overpopulation crisis? Geographers study population problems by comparing the arrangements of human organizations and natural resources across the earth's surface. Given these spatial distributions, geographers conclude that some locations may have more people

than can be provided for, while other places may be underpopulated.

Similarly, geographers examine the energy crisis by relating the spatial distributions of energy sources and consumption. Geographers find that users of energy are located in places with different social, economic, and political institutions than the producers of energy. Geographers seek first to describe the distribution of activities, such as the production and consumption of energy, and then to explain the relationships between these distributions and other human and physical phenomena.

The main purpose of this book is to introduce students to the study of geography as a social science by emphasizing the relevance of geographic concepts to human problems. It is intended for use in college-level introductory human or cultural geography courses. The book is written for students who have not previously taken a college-level geography course and have had little, if any, geography in high school.

## Divisions within Geography

Because geography is a broad subject, some specialization is inevitable. At the same time, one of geog-

raphy's strengths is its diversity of approaches. Rather than being forced to adhere rigorously to established disciplinary laws, geographers can combine a variety of methods and approaches. This tradition stimulates innovative thinking, although students who are looking for a series of ironclad laws may be disappointed.

**Human versus physical geography.** Geography is both a physical and a social science. When geography concentrates on the distribution of physical features, such as climate, soil, and vegetation, it is a natural science. When it studies cultural characteristics, such as language, social customs, and industries, geography is a social science. This division is reflected in some colleges, where physical geography courses may carry natural science credit and human geography courses social science credit.

While this book is concerned with geography from a social science perspective, one of the distinctive characteristics of geography is its use of physical science concepts to help explain spatial patterns. The distinction between physical and human geography reflects differences in emphasis, not an absolute separation.

**Topical versus regional approach.** Geographers face a choice between a topical and a regional approach. The topical approach, which is used in this book, starts by identifying a set of important cultural issues to be studied, such as population distribution, migration patterns, and political disputes. Geographers using the topical approach examine the location of different aspects of the topic and the reasons for the distribution.

The alternative approach is regional. Regional geographers start by selecting a portion of the earth and studying the environment, people, and activities within the area. The regional geography approach is used in courses on Europe, Africa, Asia, or other areas of the earth. Although this book is organized by topics, geography students should be aware of the location of places in the world. A separate index section locates the book's maps. One indispensable aid in the study of regions is an atlas, which can also be used to find unfamiliar places that may pop up in the news.

**Descriptive versus systematic method.** Whether using a topical or a regional approach, geographers

can select either a descriptive or a systematic method. Again, the distinction is one of emphasis, not an absolute separation. The descriptive method emphasizes the collection of a variety of details about a particular location. This method has been used primarily by regional geographers to illustrate the uniqueness of a particular location on the earth's surface. The systematic method emphasizes the identification of several basic theories or techniques developed by geographers to explain the distribution of activities.

This book uses both the descriptive and systematic methods because total dependence on either approach is unsatisfactory. An entirely descriptive book would contain a large collection of individual examples not organized into a unified structure. A completely systematic approach suffers because some of the theories and techniques are so abstract that they lack meaning for the student. Geographers who depend only on the systematic approach may have difficulty explaining important contemporary issues.

## Features

This book is sensitive to the study needs of students. Each chapter is clearly structured to help students understand the material and effectively review from the book.

**Outline.** The book discusses the following main topics:

- ♦ **What basic concepts do geographers use?** Chapter 1 provides an introduction to basic geographic concepts, as well as a brief summary of the development of the science of geography. Geographers employ several concepts to describe the distribution of people and activities across the cultural landscape and to explain reasons underlying the observed distribution.
- ♦ **Where are people located in the world?** Chapters 2 and 3 examine the distribution and growth of the world's population, as well as the movement of people from one place to another. Why do some places on the earth's surface contain a large number of people or attract newcomers while other places are sparsely inhabited?
- ♦ **How are different cultural characteristics distributed?** Chapters 4 through 7 analyze the

distribution of different cultural traits and beliefs and the problems that result from those spatial patterns. Important cultural characteristics include political systems, language, religion, and daily customs, such as the choice of food, clothing, shelter, and leisure activities. Geographers look for similarities and differences in the cultural characteristics at different places, as well as reasons for their distribution.

- ♦ **How do people earn a living in different parts of the world?** Human survival is dependent on the acquisition of an adequate food supply. One of the most significant distinctions in the cultural landscape is whether people produce the food they need directly from the land or obtain it from wealth earned by performing other types of work. Chapters 8 through 10 look at these ways of earning a living. These chapters describe the economic activities people undertake in different regions and the factors that account for the distribution of agricultural and industrial activities.
- ♦ **How do people organize the earth's surface?** Few people undertake cultural and economic activities in complete isolation from others; instead, nearly everyone lives in some sort of settlement. Chapters 11 and 12 examine the distribution of settlements across the earth's surface, the reasons for their origin and growth, and problems faced by people living in urban settlements.
- ♦ **What problems result from using the earth's resources?** The final chapter is devoted to a study of three issues related to the use of the earth's resources: energy, pollution, and food supply. Geographers recognize that cultural problems result from the depletion, destruction, and inefficient use of the world's resources.

**Chapter organization.** To help the student use the material in this book, each chapter is organized with these study aids:

- ♦ **Case Study.** Each chapter opens with a case study that illustrates some of the key concepts presented in the text. The case studies are generally drawn from news events or from daily experiences familiar to residents of North America.
- ♦ **Key Issues.** Each chapter contains a set of three or four key issues around which the chapter material is organized. These questions reappear as major headings within the chapter.



Among the careers that geographers pursue is cartography, the science of making maps.

- ♦ **Key Terms.** The key terms in each chapter are indicated in bold type when they are first introduced. These terms are also defined at the end of each chapter.
- ♦ **Summary.** The key issues are repeated at the end of the chapter with a brief review of the important concepts covered in detail in the text.
- ♦ **Case Study Revisited.** Additional information related to the chapter's case study may be used to reinforce some of the main points.
- ♦ **Thinking Geographically.** A new feature in this edition, this section offers five questions based on concepts and material covered in the chapter. The questions help students apply geographic concepts to explore issues more intensively.
- ♦ **Further Readings.** At the end of each chapter, a list of books and articles is provided for students who wish to study the subject further.

**Appendix.** A special appendix on scale and map projections enhances the text discussion of the subject. We are grateful to Phillip Muehrcke, Professor of Geography at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and former president of the American Cartographic Association, for his clear explanation of the subject.

**Ancillaries.** Material has been prepared to help instructors use this text. The Instructor's Manual includes a review of each chapter's objectives, test questions related to the text, projects and exercises for students to do at home or in a laboratory environment, and blank base maps. A computerized test bank and transparencies of selected maps and illustrations are also available.

## Suggestions for Use

*The Cultural Landscape* can be used in an introductory human or cultural geography course that extends over one semester, one quarter, or two quarters. An instructor in a one-semester course could devote one week to each of the chapters, leaving time for examinations.

In a one-quarter course, the instructor might need to omit some of the book's material. A course with more of a cultural orientation could include Chapters 1 through 8, plus Chapter 13. If the course has more of an economic orientation, then the appropriate chapters would be 1 through 3 and 7 through 12 or, if time permits, 13.

A two-quarter course could be organized around the culturally oriented Chapters 1 through 7 during the first quarter and the more economically oriented Chapters 8 through 13 during the second quarter. Topics of particular interest to the instructor or students could be discussed for more than one week. The Instructor's Manual includes topics for further discussion in each chapter.

## Changes

Readers familiar with the second edition will see some change in content. The explanation of human geography's two fundamental analytic traditions—human-environment and regional studies—has been restructured in Chapter 1 to emphasize such concepts as integration, diffusion, and interaction, as well as physical processes that directly relate to human geography issues. Chapter 1 also provides an

expanded section on the historical development of geographic thought.

The economic geography sections have received additional information concerning the role of transnational corporations, the international division of labor, and gender-related development issues. New introductory case studies have been added concerning the role of women in economic development in Bangladesh and relocating industrial work from the United States to Mexico.

Recent changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union receive added attention in this edition. Sections have been added concerning the impact of political changes, including the breakup of the Warsaw Pact, German unification, and the political restructuring from unitary to federal systems. Demographic, cultural, and economic differences among regions within the Soviet Union and such Eastern European states as Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia are discussed. Also addressed are problems related to industrial restructuring and pollution.

Problems in the Middle East and southwestern Asia are addressed in light of the 1991 Gulf war and unrest in the Caucasus. With the end of the Cold War, conflicts such as those in the Middle East that involve the lack of correspondence between the boundaries of states and of nationalities acquire added importance as organizing elements in global political geography.

The number of maps and photographs has increased by more than twenty-five percent. U.S. maps depict such subjects as AIDS, population change during the 1980s, Japanese-owned automobile plants, acid rain, and golf courses. New world maps include dependency on nuclear power, female attendance at school, female literacy rates, and purchasing power. Maps have been added for several cities, including Paris, Glasgow, Rio de Janeiro, ancient Ur, and Dayton, Ohio. Boundary changes in central Europe, income differences within the Soviet Union, and areas eligible for European Community assistance are among the new maps of Europe and the Soviet Union.

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Finally, I thank my entire family for all of their support, and I would like to dedicate this book to my wife, Bernadette Unger.



The world map at right reveals one of the most significant elements of the cultural landscape—the political boundaries that separate its five billion inhabitants. The numerous states range in size from the USSR, which occupies one-sixth of the world's land area, to microstates such as Singapore, Malta, or Grenada. The names of these states evoke images of different environments, peoples, cultures, and levels of well-being. However, the political boundaries are only one of the many patterns that geographers observe across the earth's surface. Geographers study the distribution of a wide variety of cultural and environmental features—social customs, agricultural patterns, the use of resources—many of which transcend political boundaries. As scientists, geographers also try to explain why we can observe these patterns on the landscape. The facing map and chapters that follow are intended to begin the student on a journey toward understanding our exciting and complex world.





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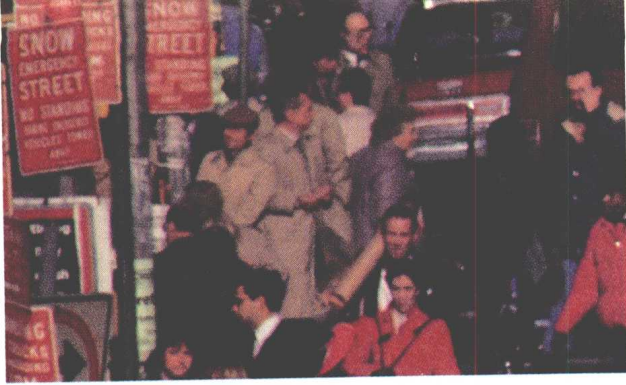
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