

Cultural Geography

PEOPLE, PLACES AND ENVIRONMENT



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People, Places and Environment

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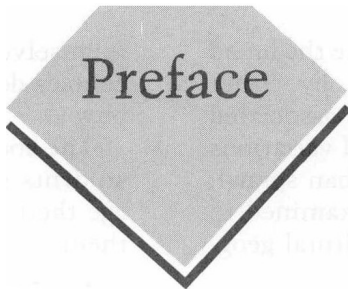
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Preface

Cultural geography is deeply rooted in the human experience. From earliest times people have been curious about the combination of people, place, and environment that makes each place unique. Geography is the science of place, the discipline dedicated to understanding the combination of human and natural features and relationships that characterize places. Everyone recognizes that each location on the earth is both similar and different from others. Physical features such as climate or landforms are central to the distinctive character of some places, as a ski resort in the American Rockies or the beaches of the French Riviera. In other places cultural features like language, architecture, land use, or field patterns may be the distinguishing characteristics, as in the features that make a Chinese village distinct from rural Mexico. Whether physical or cultural factors seem to dominate the character of a specific location, each place represents the interaction of people and environment over time.

Geography studies the physical and cultural factors that form the character of the world in which we live. The broad subject matter of geography has prompted specialization within the discipline, broadly dividing it into cultural or human geography as opposed to physical geography. Although both study the earth as the home of human beings, they differ in the degree to which they focus on people and their geographical impact versus the natural environment. When geography concentrates on the earth's physical features, it may appear to overlook the cultural or human factors, just as books focusing on human or cultural geography may pay less attention to the physical geography. The focus on cultural or physical geography in a particular book should not obscure the fact that the separation between

the two branches of geography is only one of emphasis, not an absolute division.

This book emphasizes cultural or human geography. It is intended as the basic text for a college-level introductory course in Cultural or Human Geography one quarter or semester in length. The book uses the interaction between the physical and cultural factors affecting the earth as its central theme, allowing students to begin to understand how cultural variations combine with physical characteristics to create the world's complex mosaic of people and place. To provide a systematic framework within which to examine the world's cultural geography, we utilize the broad themes of culture, culture origins and diffusions, cultural ecology, cultural landscapes, and cultural regions. The five themes are used to integrate the material presented in each chapter, which illustrates their interrelationship in explaining the characteristics of the world's cultural geography.

The text utilizes a topical approach in which important cultural factors such as population, political systems, or religion are first identified and then analyzed to illustrate their environmental impact and regional pattern. Part 1 introduces the subject of geography and explains how cultural geography fits into the broader discipline. Included in this section are the basic concepts of geography, the development of the discipline from earliest times to the present, and a discussion of the things that geographers do. The latter is presented in the context of the broad range of careers chosen by individuals with a background in geography.

Part 2 examines the human modification of the world, beginning with the earliest people. Changes to the cultural landscape associated with technological advances and population growth

and migration are discussed to illustrate the broad division between regions dominated by either rural or urban landscapes. Problems associated with rapid population growth, regional variations in level of economic development, urban sprawl, and environmental degradation are examined to illustrate the ongoing processes of cultural geography.

Part 3 examines culture origins and diffusions, human-land relationships, and regional patterns created by the distribution of the specific cultural features of ethnicity and race, language, religion, and political systems. Since these variables are important in explaining both the patterns of cultural geography and the issues and problems facing the world, they provide concrete, exciting examples of how cultural geography helps us understand the world. The distribution of specific cultural factors, their impact on the land and people of each region, and their contribution to the uniqueness of each place are examined to demonstrate the major cultural regions of the world.

Part 4 consists of Chapter 13, which summarizes the major issues facing the world and examines their relationship to cultural geography. This chapter analyzes the challenges created by the continuing environmental modification associated with cultural ecology, the changes in population distribution and related cultural regions, and the problems of culturally related conflict. It presents students with an overview of the issues and challenges that face a global society in the last decade of the twentieth century and first decades of the twenty-first to demonstrate that today's complex cultural geography is itself changing and evolving into tomorrow's world.

This book differs from other introductory cultural geography books in several major ways. For one thing, it stresses that adequate understanding of the cultural geography of the present depends on understanding key advances made in the past. The emphasis on the visual landscape that represents the end product of the interaction between people and their environment at a place is another difference. A final major difference results from our decision to integrate cultural variables such as economic activity into chapters on landscape rather than focusing on the types of economies

themselves since they are normally discussed in courses devoted specifically to economic geography.

The book offers several learning devices to help students master the course content and encourage their continued interest in the world around them:

1. The major themes and concepts discussed in each chapter are indicated at the beginning of the chapter.
2. A glossary at the end of the book gives students concise definitions for each term or concept introduced in the book.
3. Brief case studies included in each chapter illustrate the impact of cultural geography on individual lives.
4. Boxes introduce major models in geography in appropriate chapters and demonstrate their use in interpreting the world.
5. Review questions at the end of each chapter help students evaluate their comprehension of the material and organize their study.
6. Suggested readings at the end of each chapter include both seminal works suitable to an undergraduate course and specialized books and articles that allow students to examine topics of interest in greater depth.

A comprehensive instructor's manual with test bank to accompany *Cultural Geography: People, Places and Environment* has been developed to correspond with each chapter in the text. The extensive test bank provides substantive review of major themes and concepts discussed in each chapter, and is also available on WESTEST, a computerized testing system.

Acknowledgments

The intellectual debt associated with the development of a textbook that encompasses the entire world is complex and impossible to acknowledge fully. The colleagues, students, and teachers who have contributed ideas and insight into our own understanding of cultural geography are too numerous to catalog. It is important, however, to mention the influence on our own thinking of the

writings of Vidal de la Blache, George Perkins Marsh, and Carl O. Sauer. In combination with the works of numerous living geographers, their insights have helped us define our own view of the world.

Of central importance in writing this text are the hundreds of students we have taught in the past two decades. We are grateful for their enthusiasm for learning and for the patience they exhibited as we tried to share with them our enthusiasm for studying the world and its peoples. Education is of necessity a two-way street, and the comments, suggestions, and criticism of students in class and informal discussions have provided us with a wealth of ideas.

We have also drawn heavily on the published and unpublished work of numerous colleagues. Where we could ascribe a specific idea to one person we have indicated our reliance upon his or her insights. If we have misinterpreted, oversimplified, or erroneously stated anyone's theses, we apologize. Numerous geographers have reviewed portions of the manuscript as we prepared this book, and all of their suggestions were helpful. Many colleagues will recognize specific places where their ideas have been incorporated into the text. The following individuals need to be recognized for their critical review of all of the text:

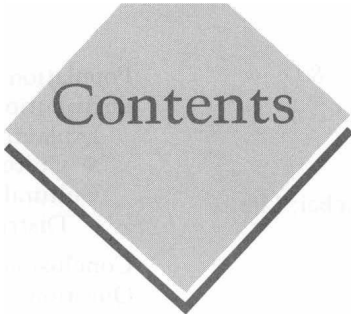
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Jeff Bird, director of the cartography laboratory at Brigham Young University, designed and produced most of the maps in the book. His skilled hand will be seen in the numerous maps that are used to show the spatial aspects of the issues discussed in the text. Laura Wadley offered timely insights concerning organization and syntax. Ruth Sessions, Shauna Tong, Denise Clark, and Gaylene Powell provided cheerful, dedicated, and invaluable assistance in typing and retyping the manuscript, and Gaylene was also instrumental in creating many of the graphs in the book. We value their assistance and their friendship.

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Richard H. Jackson
Lloyd E. Hudman



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