

Introduction to

Human Geography

A Disciplinary Approach



Steven
Graves

Edition

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Introduction to Human Geography:
A Disciplinary Approach

Geography the
Jedi Way

SUBTITLE STYLE

Title Style

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Preface

This text was conceived and executed with several key goals in mind. The first and most obvious goal of ours was to provide a text at little to no cost to a generation of students who face exceptional and ever rising cost constraints as they seek a college education. Students should be able to acquire this text in a variety of digital and print formats so that needs can be met on terms set by the student, not administrators or book publishers.

The second critical goal set forth by the authors of this text was to introduce students to a contemporary version of geography. Instead of prompting students to remember an encyclopedia of the United States or the World, our focus is squarely on helping students learn how to think about their world as accomplished geographers think about it. We want students to learn how “to do geography”, as they learn “about geography”. We hope students will finish the semester with some disciplinary skills in addition to the more common subject knowledge associated with traditional introductory geography texts.

A third goal identified by the authors was to make a geography text that is exciting while academically demanding. This means that the authors have endeavored to illustrate key concepts and skills with examples and data that are contemporary, engaging and relevant. We also believe that even freshmen must be introduced to some measure of the theory that makes modern cultural geography so captivating. It seems absurd to us that all “the good stuff” is essentially reserved for graduate students, while entry-level students are fed a steady diet of intellectual junk food.


Lastly, we hope to introduce students to a series of hands on exercises that students will find exciting and illuminating.


The U.S. focus of this text is purposeful. It is not to suggest that there is no merit in addressing international concerns. Overwhelming evidence points to a crippling, and one might suggest dangerous, ignorance of world geography, but nearly as much evidence exists showing that students are woefully ignorant of U.S. geography as well. American students frequently know little of the conditions in their own country, nor the processes that have created the America that they live in. It is with these very real concerns that we suggest that students have *at least* two introductory human geography courses. One should focus on domestic geography, the other on the non-Western world, perhaps using a regional approach. This book seeks to serve students in the former course.

GEOGRAPHY IS NOT WHAT YOU THINK IT IS.

Geography is not just a subject, but rather a discipline. Geography allows those trained to use it to ask questions, to see patterns in data, to solve problems and to communicate solutions.

ICON KEY

 Valuable information

 Test your knowledge

 Keyboard exercise

 Workbook review

The popular afternoon television show *Jeopardy* is probably the most common way Americans are exposed to geography. This is a huge problem because although it does more than any other medium to advance geographic knowledge among Americans, it advances it down a dead-end street. A typical geography question on *Jeopardy* might ask contestants to identify the capital of Nebraska, or a mountain range in Switzerland. Professional geographers rarely ask questions like that. By focusing on “geography as subject” *Jeopardy* continually reinforces old-fashioned notions about geography, and in the process leads many Americans to think that geographers do little more than memorize rivers, crops and capitals. This misconception is akin to suggesting that historians memorize an endless score of dates, or that English majors spend all their time preparing for spelling bees.

Countless school curriculums and K-12 textbooks have mimicked the unfortunate focus upon geography-as-trivia by TV game shows over the past several generations in the U.S. As a result, the much more helpful notion of “geography as a *discipline*” has been all but stomped out of the American imagination. College freshmen rarely consider geography as a major. Many folks, including high school guidance counselors, do not realize that one can major in geography at most large universities. Students, parents and even faculty outside of your Geography Department often don’t realize that geography provides students and scholars a robust set of analytical tools and lucrative career paths.

One of the primary goals of this text is to introduce readers to an updated and what we think is a more viable version of geography. We hope to help students to begin to see, think, solve problems and communicate as a geographer - while at the same time learning some “old school” geography so they can defeat friends and family at trivia or *Jeopardy*!

Geography – So Boring. How did it get this way?

There are probably several reasons accounting for the general misunderstanding most Americans have about geography. Certainly, geography has a long enough history. Scholars have been writing “geographies” since at least the time of Ancient Greece and Ancient China. For many centuries, “doing geography” was largely a



matter of writing rich descriptive narratives about a region or location. This sort of geography is necessary. Descriptive geographies are interesting for those of us who have a healthy intellectual curiosity about the people and places of the world. This sort of geography also proved immeasurably valuable to the cause of imperialism, colonization and the military adventures that regularly accompanied the age of exploration.

As the methodologies of science, and indeed social science evolved during the 19th century, the production of *mere* descriptions of regions and locations fell short of what geographers (and others) thought appropriate. One group of geographers, began trying to make a *causal* connection between the culture and/or economics of places and the local environmental conditions. Known as ***environmental determinism*** this brand of geography, sought to show how things like climate, topography and soil conditions were key determinants in the evolution of societies. Perhaps not surprisingly, many of these scholars found that they were personally a product of ideal environmental conditions. The most advanced societies (and presumably most talented individuals) were found in places where favorable environmental conditions existed. Places where it was too hot, cold, rainy, dry, etc. produced inferior people and inferior societies. The bigotry and racism implicit or explicit in such positions is clearer today. Despite their inability to *scientifically prove* their theories, a few geographers, like Ellen Churchill Semple and Ellsworth Huntington commanded an outsized audience in the early 20th century. Most serious academics of the time forcefully rejected environmental determinism, and by the time World War II began, the implications of pseudo-scientific scholarship had within the eugenics movement and even upon the development of fascism was clear. Geography was tainted for its involvement and many geographers reacted by going back to the safe “geography as rich description” approach.

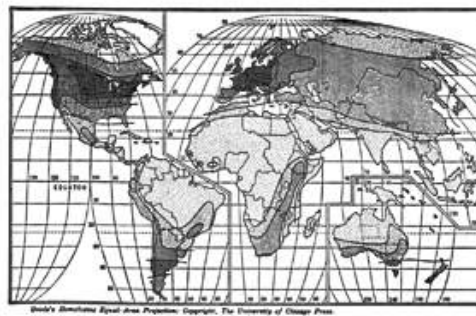


Figure 30. World Distribution of Climatic Efficiency. From *Principles of Human Geography*, Fifth Edition.

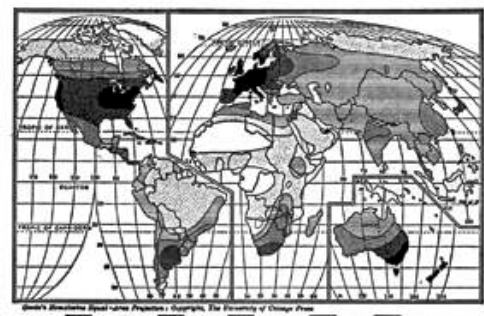


Figure 33. World Distribution of General Progress. From *Principles of Human Geography*, Fifth Edition.

In the aftermath of World War II, the retreat of geography back toward a non-scientific niche doomed the *popular perception* of geography, especially in America, to the intellectual backwaters and trivia contests.

This fact is a tragedy for a number of reasons. By the 1960s, geographers had begun adopting legitimate scientific methodologies via spatial statistics during a

period known now as the *quantitative revolution*, a revolution that continues today largely among the users of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Coupled with accompanying revolutions in our ability to collect, store, manipulate and analyze spatial data, geographers can tackle a wide array of pressing social, economic and political issues.

Beginning in the 1970s and accelerating into the 1990s, geographers were also playing a significant role in an exciting expansion of theoretical approaches to understanding how the world works. Economic, political and cultural theorists, emerged from among the ranks of geography departments in the UK and later the US, playing important roles in an overall flowering of critical theory, during a period known as *the cultural turn*. Many geographers today focus squarely on the mechanics that regulate the production and maintenance of knowledge itself, in some ways a final frontier of social science.

Today, geography is a very vibrant discipline offering to the uninitiated a surprising number of avenues to understand the world – and to get a quality, high-paying job in either the public or private sector. The next section offers a greatly reduced introduction to the ideas and strategies that make geography a very useful *discipline* for understanding and solving a myriad of society’s problems.

Geography as Discipline – Key Aspects of the Geodi Way

If you go to the library at your college or university and head to the section housing books about geography, you may be disappointed to find there’s almost nothing there. You might mistakenly believe that geographers don’t write books or that geography is exceptionally limited in its scope. Both assumptions would be wrong. Libraries have lots of books written by geographers, but because geographers study almost *any subject*, books written by geographers can be found scattered throughout the library. Geographers have written books and scholarly articles about an astounding array of *subjects* – far too many to consider here. A geographer can study almost anything *that takes place*. What are you interested in? You can probably study as a geographer. The following paragraphs provide a basic guide to geography as discipline. We call it, only half-jokingly, “the Jedi discipline”, because like the fictional characters in Star Wars, geographers have a way of doing things that are simultaneously unique and exceptionally powerful.

The “icon key” at left was produced by using the Heading 8 style for the words “icon key” and the List Bullet 5 style for the text below—which uses a Wingdings symbol for the bullet character. To change the bullet symbol, click **Bullets and Numbering** on the **Format** menu. Click **Modify**, and then click the **Bullet** button. Select a new symbol, and then click **OK** twice.

Geography is a Way to See the World – Jedi Googles



The ability to “read” the landscape is the first skill of the Geodi. It sounds simple enough, but advanced ability in this skill takes many years to develop. Still, one can begin acquiring the ability to see as a geographer by developing an awareness that



all landscapes, the human and physical environment all around you, can be read, somewhat like one reads text in a book. With some practice you will develop a measure of landscape literacy, the ability to understand a significant number of messages inscribed in the environment. All landscapes are telling a story, it is for us to learn to read it.

You already have a some skills in this area. You have been developing your abilities since you were a small child. You probably can tell when you are in a dangerous neighborhood. There isn’t a signpost at the borders of high crime districts warning, “Caution – Lock your Car Doors Now”, but still you know. How? You have learned to read the landscape. Rubbish on the street, graffiti, bars on windows and unkempt lawns are common markers of neighborhoods that suffer from crime; and over the years you’ve learned to interpret the symbolism of those markers. People who are “street smart” have developed this Geodi skill well.

The first steps you must take as you develop your landscape literacy skills is to begin looking more closely at stores, streets, houses, parking lots, road signs, empty lots, farm fields and anything else that passes your windshield. Don’t simply focus on the “pretty” scenes. Don’t focus on the important or impressive any more than you



focus on the common, the ordinary or the vernacular elements of your world.

Ask yourself repeatedly, “What is this landscape trying to communicate?” Look for patterns and try to guess what forces have created the patterns you see. Ask, “Why is this here (and not somewhere else)?”

Each chapter in this book will feature multiple images of landscape. Most will offer a quick “reading” of the landscape pictured. A large image database, available via the internet is available at the American Landscape Project, and many hundreds of the images contained therein feature robust captions in an effort to help you learn to read the landscape confidently.

Geography is a Way to Ask Questions – Geodi Mind Tricks



Epistemology is a term that refers to how we know what we know. Our epistemology is our way of knowing. Most of the time, we don’t think about it too much. “I just know it!”, is the what you might respond if someone challenged you on your epistemology. However, to scientists, social scientists and other serious thinkers, understanding one’s own epistemological biases is a very important concern. Geographers have a favored epistemology – a spatial one. When geographers seek to better understand the world around them, they have a strong tendency to frame questions in terms of place and space. In other words, when geographers want to know “why?” they first ask the question “where?”

Geographers frequently argue that our special, spatial “way of thinking”, or “habit of mind” is sorely underdeveloped in the United States. Most geography instruction in K-12 American schools favors place-name geography and memorization over developing spatial thinking as a foundation upon which one can build knowledge through inquiry based learning.

Ignoring questions of space and place can have consequences. For instance, your author once overheard a conversation on a large college campus about why the majority African-American students always took the elevator in a campus building, rather than climbing stairs. This was an obvious trend, and the people witnessing it were quick to assign race/ethnicity as the primary causal factor motivating students to use the elevator. Had these folks been geographers, they probably would have thought about the spatial aspects of the situation first, and would have realized that race/ethnicity was probably not as important (or important at all). Instead, a geographer would have asked, “where did these students grow up?” Had they asked that question, it may have occurred to them that many of the black students on that campus were from New York City, and they were probably conditioned by their urban upbringing to use elevators rather than stairs to get to the third floor.

By privileging matters of place and space in their quest for knowledge, geographers may bias their conclusions – arguing that location is a significant causal variable in causing whatever phenomena is under



investigation. Favoring one epistemology over others is nearly unavoidable. Historians, sociologists, political scientists, economists and other scholars have their own epistemological biases. As long as these competing means to comprehend reality can be given a fair audience, then a more robust, multi-perspectival understanding of our life world can be achieved. There is danger in discounting epistemologies and perspectives unfamiliar to you – and that's another reason to love geography. Knowing about other places, makes you not only more knowledgeable, but more permits you to develop greater sympathy *for* others for those in situations different from your own, and empathy *with* those with whom you can find common ground.

Geography is a Way to Solve Problems – Light Sabers



Geographers have a very powerful toolbox largely built upon the spatial epistemology of our discipline. The tools in the geographer's toolbox are generally referred to as our methodologies. There are many, many dozens of methodologies at the disposal of the geography student. Geographers share many methodologies with other disciplines in the sciences, social sciences and even in the humanities. Methodologies are essentially a set of rules that govern both the collection of data and the analysis of the data. Generally, geographers tweak the methodology a little in order to fit in with the spatial epistemology used in the discipline. For example, if a geographer were to go to the student union to survey students about a new campus policy, many of the questions included in the survey would be the same as a survey administered by a student in political science, history or sociology. However, a geography student would insist that the survey have a spatial element included among the demographics. Instead of simply asking about a survey respondent's age, gender, ethnicity, the geographer would likely be most interested in address, or ZIP code, or at least "hometown". Like many other disciplines, geographers use statistics; often in a manner that is indistinguishable from other

disciplines. Once again though, geography has a separate set of spatially-aware stats that are uniquely suited to answering spatial questions. Whereas others might start a statistical inquiry by calculating mean, median and standard deviation. Geographers might begin a similar inquiry by calculating spatial mean, spatial median and standard distance. There are a vast number of spatial statistics, some of them exceptionally complex and some far less so. The laboratory manual accompanying this course introduces students to a few basic statistical methodologies used in geography.

The primary tool in the geographer's toolkit in recent decades has been Geographic Information Systems or GIS. GIS is the "light saber" of the modern geographer. GIS software allows geographers to analyze data that cannot be analyzed with any other software, allowing geographers to solve problems that would prove intractable to those without skills in GIS. This software is used by other disciplinary practitioners, but it a core methodological tool in geography.

Geography is a Way to Communicate – Jedi Language



Because you are reading this, you have some command of the rules that govern the English language. You no doubt can write in this language as well, indicating that you are literate. You can communicate with words. You probably are reasonably adept at communicating with numbers as well – so you may be numerate as well. Without these two key skillsets, you probably would not be in college. Another skill you should seek to develop is your ability to communicate with non-textual visual imagery – graphics. If you can "read" graphics and create "readable" graphics, then you could be considered *graphicate*. If you can read and create legible, communicative maps, then you can be considered *cartographicate*.

Cartography is the specialized language of geography. The ability to communicate a large amount of information or an idea using maps is an excellent skill to develop. In the last decade, thanks to Google Maps/Earth, GPS and a massive increase in the value placed on spatial data by the government, military and private enterprise, cartography has blossomed a valuable type of literacy.

It makes sense that maps have reentered the public's consciousness in recent years. Besides the explosion in spatial data available with which cartographers can create fun or informative maps, changes in the pace of our lives as well the tendency for us to be overwhelmed by data in the digital age have made well-constructed maps a welcome coping mechanism. Not only are they cool, but they allow our brains to process very rapidly a far greater amount of data than we could if we encountered the same data as a textual narrative or in a massive spreadsheet. Maps allow us to see patterns and process that we would be hard-pressed to discern otherwise.

Although some folks find maps easy to read almost innately, it can be very challenging to author a map. Good cartography is both an art and a science, but it can be learned and there is a few great jobs out there for professional cartographers.

All geographers, even those whose specialty is not cartography, should endeavor to become reasonably adept at making maps. Luckily, most of us can now create a map of respectable quality using GIS software. Most GIS programs have helpful default settings that are useful starting points for apprentice cartographers.

Critical Concepts

Now that you understand that geographers have a special way of 1) seeing, 2) thinking, 3) solving problems and 4) communicating – it is time to move on to learning some of the core concepts that will appear throughout this text.

How this book is arranged xxx

Each chapter covers a thematic topic, like politics, economics, religion or language. Each of these topics is treated as a geographer is likely to approach them.

What is it?

Each chapter will begin with a brief overview of the topic or subject. There is a conscious attempt to keep the “what” section as small as possible to avoid a devolution into an encyclopedic “geography of everything” type text. Many links, mostly to Wikipedia serve as opportunities for students to explore *content* with which they lack familiarity.

Where is it?

The second part of each chapter will answer the question, “Where?” in the language of geography: cartography. Each of the topics is presented as much as possible via maps. Students are introduced to maps displaying the critical data that characterizes the economic, political, linguistic, etc. conditions that frame their everyday lives. This is a purposeful gesture to increase cartographic literacy among students using this text. Students will be expected to be able to critically analyze the maps, so that they may also learn to create maps of their own, an increasingly critical skill in the graphics-driven media environment of this age.

What does it look like?

Next, you’ll be introduced to sample landscapes, so that you may begin to see how the topic of interest manifests itself in the built environment. This is how we generally encounter each of the topics of concern: we move through the landscape experiencing them. However, most folks don’t actively engage the landscapes as a text, or a stage. In other words, most are generally unaware that the landscape is rich with meaning that can be deciphered and read like a text. The landscape is a type of data that is typically overlooked, left unquestioned by us all as we move through it. We hope that you’ll become a far more active reader of the landscape, able to use the visual cues around you to ask questions about why things are the way they are.

Why is it here or there?

The third section of each chapter will be designed to help students gain some critical insight into why the maps of their world appear as they do. Answering “why?” is the key component of the modernist project: it is what social science seeks to accomplish. The chapter will examine patterns of migration, interaction with other facets of culture and the environment to reveal both the complexity of our collective culture.

How does it fit in?

Some chapters feature on-line laboratory exercises to help students learn how to see, think and solve problems using the disciplinary tools of geography. The epistemology and methodologies of the geographer are the core element around which the chapters are arranged.

*Core Concepts**Location*

Geographers have a number of basic concepts that function effectively as tools in the main problem solving strategies used by geographers. First among these are the concepts associated with idea of location. Each physical object has an **absolute location**. There are a variety of strategies for expressing or communicating absolute location. If you order a pizza, you will provide the delivery person your address, including an apartment number – and maybe even some additional details. The property address system as we know it here in the United States was created by the government to help the postal service deliver letters and packages many years ago. It’s a pretty logical system, and most of us have learned the logic behind it well enough to figure out where we’re going even without a GPS. If you were to travel to other countries, you may be surprised to find that some, like Japan, have very [different address systems](#) than we have in America.



Figure 0-1: Graticule globe
Wikipedia

Another common system for expressing absolute location is by using a grid **geographic coordinate system**, that we generally express as “latitude and longitude”. Grid coordinate systems were devised thousands of years ago to aid in navigation and map making. There are many dozens of coordinate systems, but the most common system we use today was invented by Eratosthenes, vastly improved by Ptolemy and formalized into something we’d recognize today by Englishman Sir George Airy in 1851. Many folks own smart phones that have **global positioning system** (GPS) software pre-installed. These phones, and other GPS devices (handheld, in-car, in cameras) use the basic logic of the grid system to help you navigate. GPS devices express latitude and longitude coordinates using a specific style formalized in 1984 called “World Geodetic System”. Hence, this system is called **WGS1984**.

Most folks don’t need to know the details of how GPS works, but you should be able to recognize the basics of latitude and longitude, and be able use it to navigate the streets, hiking trails or other places you frequent. You surely use WGS1984

more often than you think. For example, if you call to have a pizza delivered, the driver may punch in your address on his GPS device, and his software translates your address into latitude and longitude coordinates. This combination of numbers appear on a map on the screen of the phone/GPS unit as a **point location**. The software then uses a computerized algorithm to find the shortest route between the delivery person's latitude/longitude coordinates (another point location) and the coordinates associated with your address.

Region

Another common device to express location is idea of a region. Each absolute location, like your address or latitude/longitude coordinates, is situated within multiple larger locations - regions. Your address is on a street/road – which is a region expressed as a **line** on a map. Your address is also (at least in the US) within a ZIP code region, a city, a county, a state, a country, etc. Each of these regions is mapped as a **polygon** on a map.

Regions are not all created equal. States, counties and cities all have very specific boundaries. Regions that have very defined boundaries are called **functional regions**. When you cross the boundary into or out of a functional region, then some sort of rule changes. Laws are different. Even the boundary used by pizza franchises, like Dominos or Pizza Hut have rules. If you do not live inside a defined polygon on a map, generally centered on the pizza franchise, then you may not get a pizza delivered to you from that location.

Formal regions have less well-defined boundaries or fuzzy boundaries, so the term “formal” is a bit misleading. Nevertheless, these regions can be identified by some trait commonly exhibited within the region. Most often, formal regions have a hearth or core area – where the trait is most evident, and then a peripheral area where the trait is less evident. An example would be the Mormon region in the United States. The core area would be around Salt Lake City, where a large majority of people belong to the [LDS Church](#). Away from Salt Lake City, the percentage of people who identify with the LDS church decreases until at some distance, one would find that it would not be logical to call the region “Mormon” any longer (<http://www.asarb.org/>)



Figure 0-2: Dixie - from Wikipedia

Even less well defined than the formal region is the kind of region that exists in the imagination of people – the **vernacular region**. Such regions are important because people believe them to exist – and they do in many ways, but precisely where the boundaries, or even the core of such regions are vary depending on the individual's imagination. A good example of a vernacular region is “Dixie”, a name frequently applied to the American South. Just which states, towns and counties are in Dixie is hard to say. Where “the South” begins and ends is impossible to say – but clearly, Dixie exists in the minds of millions of Americans.

Diffusion

The core-periphery pattern that characterizes formal and vernacular regions is the result of the *friction of distance*, perhaps the most fundamental principle shaping the spatial behavior of people, ideas and institutions. In the simplest terms, there exists what might be best thought of as a force, somewhat like gravity, that impedes the spread or *diffusion* of ideas, behaviors, people and...whatever. The friction of distance creates patterns on the landscape characterized by *distance decay*. These patterns are so pervasive and predictable that it lead geographer Waldo Tobler to call the process “[The first law of geography](#)”. Tobler argues that “Everything is related to everything else, but near things are more related than distant things” Tobler W., (1970) "A computer movie simulating urban growth in the Detroit region". *Economic Geography*, 46(2): 234-240. Put more simply, things that are near each other are more often similar than things that are far apart. According to Tobler, the idea was self-evident and he didn't realize that he had captured the essences of something so fundamental when he wrote it down in 1970. Though very simplistic, it is a useful notion to keep handy as you learn to think like a geographer. Tobler's first law appears in many guises throughout this text – and operates regularly in your daily life.

The process of diffusion is a prime example of how the first law of geography works. Think of an idea, invention or behavior of any sort – and consider its origins. Somebody or some people must have invented or thought it up or acted in an innovative way. The location where “the invention” or innovation occurred first is known as the *hearth* – which is a synonym for “home”. Hip hop culture, for example was invented in the South Bronx region of New York City in the mid-1970s. Therefore the Bronx is the *cultural hearth* of hip hop.



Figure 0-3: Cultural hearth of hip hop
Wikipedia.

It took some years for people outside the Bronx to discover hip hop, but once that happened hip hop music spread or diffused around the globe. The diffusion of hip hop demonstrates several key spatial patterns recognized by those who study the diffusion of culture. First, hip hop music took nearly a decade for it to emerge from the Bronx. There were many *barriers to diffusion* preventing many people, even just a few miles away in Manhattan, from knowing anything about this newly created genre of music. Those barriers were largely social, economic and cultural, but they kept the music of Black and Latino youths from reaching the ears of music fans (and music executives) in the rest of New York – and the rest of the world.

In the late 1970s, a group of rappers from New Jersey copying the rapping style they had learned in visiting friends in the Bronx made a record with a band called “Rapper’s Delight” ([Youtube](#)). After a few months, this record sold millions of copies while introducing the world to a commercialized (New Jersey) variation of

hip hop, called “rap music” (see Graves, 201xx). The original version of hip hop music, rather than using a band of musicians, used a DJ who manipulated turntables and records to create musical accompaniment to the rapper or MC. The variation on the original formula created in the Bronx, but modified in New Jersey is a great example of *stimulus diffusion*.

Numerous modifications on the original style of hip hop have been created in most of the places where the innovation has been accepted. For example, many of the early lyrics from hip hop pioneer Afrika Bambaatta were anti-gang; but when hip hop diffused to Los Angeles in the 1980s, local rappers produced hip hop albums appear to glorified gang membership and gang violence. It’s all hip hop, but as ideas spread they adapt and change to fit local conditions or local preferences.

Hip hop also exhibited a couple of other well known as diffusion tendencies. During the 1980s, hip hop diffused slowly, spreading mostly to other boroughs within New York as well as Northern New Jersey. This pattern is known as *contagion diffusion* (sometimes *expansion diffusion*) because the pattern is reminiscent of the way a contagious disease spreads from person to person. Early rap acts outside of the Bronx were from Queens, Harlem, Brooklyn and Long Island. It wasn’t until a duo known as DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince (Jeffrey Townes and Will Smith) emerged from nearby West Philadelphia around 1988, that a non-New York act made it onto the record charts.

The very next year, a bunch of hip hop acts had hit records – almost all of them from Los Angeles – America’s second largest city. This phase of hip hop expansion followed a pattern known as *hierarchical diffusion*. Like many inventions or innovations, hip hop began in a very large city – at the top of the *urban hierarchy* in the United States. Eventually, other large cities, like Atlanta and Houston produced hip hop acts, often with a distinct regional style. After about 20 years, even small towns or rural areas had accepted hip hop and were producing home-grown hip hop artists. Hip hop has diffused internationally as well – appearing in large cities of foreign countries, and then diffusing to less populated areas far removed from its origins in the South Bronx.

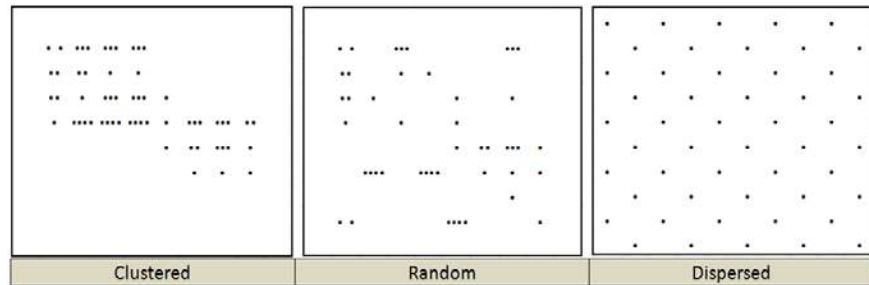
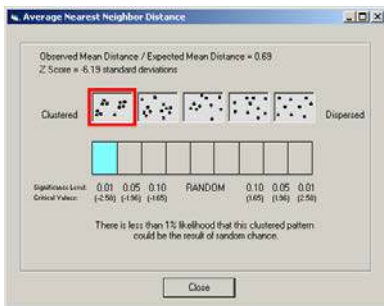
There were a number of impediments or *barriers* to the diffusion of hip hop from the Bronx. In addition to the simple ignorance (people didn’t know about hip hop), there were significant biases against hip hop because of its association with one of America’s most infamous ghettos. The spatial *segregation* of specific ethnicities in the Bronx (African-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Haitians, Jamaicans, etc.) is a effective barrier to diffusion, and as you’ll read in later chapters functions effectively as a barrier to the movement of people and ideas on a number of fronts. It is worth noting that Motown Records, the most successful of all black-owned recording companies eschewed hip hop for many years, which in turn helped doom its survival. It was eventually acquired by hip hop specialty company DefJam records.

Though hip hop is essentially an international phenomena today, there are a few locations that have witnessed the construction of effective *impermeable barriers* to the diffusion of hip hop. The places that hip hop cannot be heard, would largely be in those places where very serious religious or political costs are attached to those listening or producing western music. Record stores have been bombed in Pakistan by supporters of the Taliban. More often than not though, the music “gets through” and becomes a source of resistance to authority. Other barriers to diffusion that might exist for something like hip hop music would be the lack of radios, incompatibility of the culture or some measure of bigotry or bias that would undermine the acceptance of hip hop.

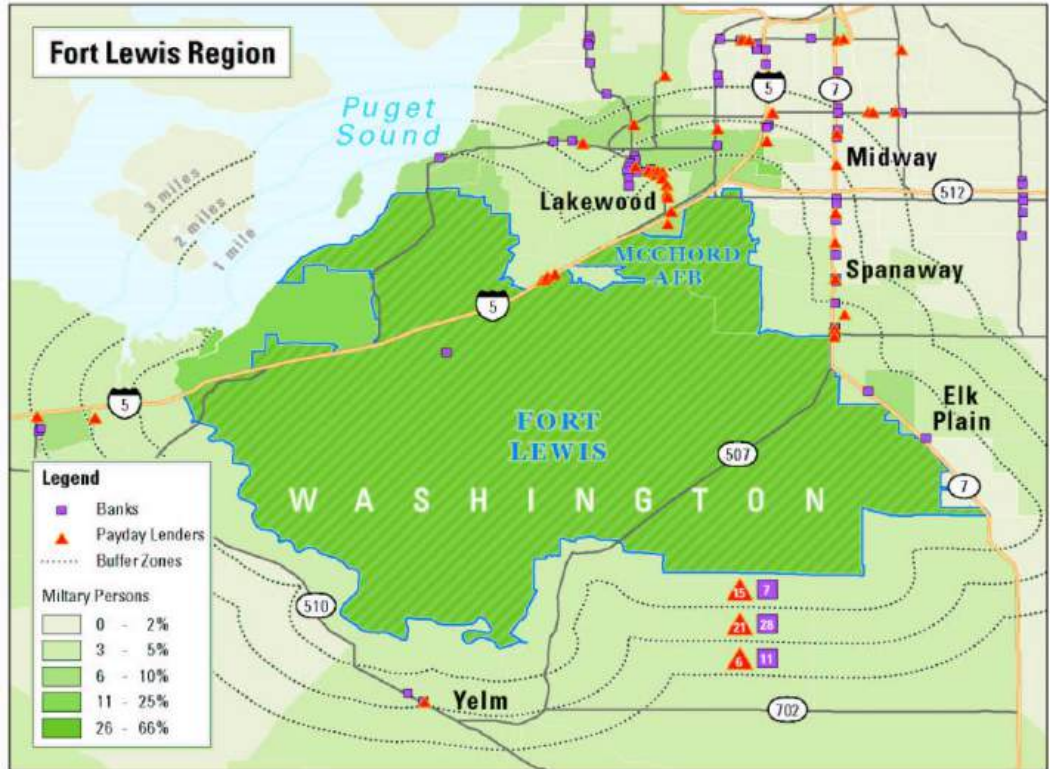
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tehranbureau/2010/04/rap-in-the-capital-hip-hop-tehran-style.html>

Process and Pattern

Geographers are exceptionally interested in patterns or regularities on the landscape. All scientists look for regularities (and irregularities) and try to figure out the causal forces behind them. Our goal is to understand *why* the things are the way they are, so that we may better understand them. Often we hope to be able to *make predictions* about how things will change. Geographers are no different, but we have a tendency to look for regularities/irregularities and the processes that cause/undermine regularities on the landscape. Sometimes we simply observe and try to make sense of it. More often, geographers use maps to plot whatever we are observing (or trying to observe).



Data that shows a *clustered* pattern is almost always interesting to geographers. Clustering is common because most phenomena are affected by the friction of distance, as outlined by the first law of geography. Clustering can be observed by



plotting data on a map with points, as is evident in figure xx below. In the map, payday lenders, represented by red triangles, cluster in large numbers near the entrance to the joint military base McCord/Lewis in Washington. This map strongly suggests that the payday lending industry considered military personnel an attractive *target demographic*, though the industry denied that this was the case in congressional testimony. This map helped convince legislators in Washington D.C. and Seattle that the payday lending industry should be more forcefully regulated.

Oftentimes “eyeballing” the pattern of points on a map is not sufficient to detect a pattern. When that is the case, then geographers turn to any number of spatial statistics to determine if the pattern of points on a map are clustered. By using GIS software, geographers may employ a technique known as nearest neighbor analysis to determine if points on a map are “clustered”, “random” or “dispersed”. Image xx to the left is the “readout” graphic from a statistical test of payday lenders in one region of Los Angeles. As you can see, the clustering of this type of business cannot be attributed to random chance, therefore we can be more certain there is a some logic driving the plainly evident pattern. Businesses, diseases, crimes and a number of other phenomena can be measured to check for the level of spatial clustering – helping decision makers make better choices.



Lots of things cluster together and we'll examine several instances of it throughout the text and you may get a chance to measure some patterns yourself for clustering if your instructor is using the exercise manual accompanying this text.

Clustering can also be observed on a *choropleth map*, when the data values associated with proximate polygon are more similar than the data values associated with polygons far away from each other. Put more simply, regions that are similar cluster. A special term, *spatial autocorrelation* is often applied to such patterns. Like the point clustering patterns above, spatial statistic are available to geographers seeking to measure

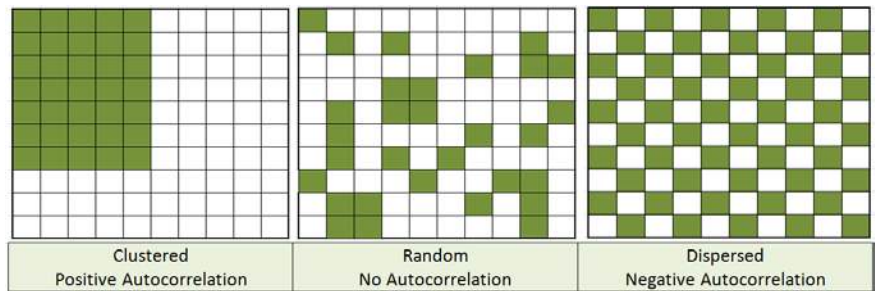
the degree of clustering, dispersion or randomness in a choropleth map.

The well-known election map of 2000 (see figure xx) shows a clear pattern of clustering that does not need statistical analysis to notice. However, you may want to compare the degree of clustering seen in this map against another election map – or a map of something unrelated like cancer rates. That way you could determine which was more clustered, or if you were comparing patterns over a period of years – a trend that would allow you to make predictions.

Co-location

Clustering is a type of co-location, and generally we think of as occurring when a thing or behavior (e.g. voting for George Bush, payday lenders, night clubs) cluster or agglomerate. Co-location also describes the spatial pattern when different things appear in close proximity to each other (e.g. payday lenders and soldiers). When that

happens, one can say there is a *spatial relationship* between the two things.



Occasionally, this indicates a *causal relationship* – and seeking causal relationship is one of the significant goals of the scientist.

You may notice when you are driving around that there seems to be large number of obese people living in neighborhoods that contain a large number of fast-food restaurants; and residents of neighborhoods with few local fast-food joints are less likely to be obese.

You could test this observation by first collecting data from the local health department. You would map the obesity rate by neighborhood (census tract or ZIP code perhaps). Next you would plot all the fast-food restaurants in the study area so

that you could count the number of fast food outlets per neighborhood. Then you would run some statistical tests on the data. Perhaps you would start by measuring the amount of *correlation* between fast food restaurants and obesity rates. If you found that as the density fast food restaurants rises, so does obesity rates, then you may have grounds to argue there is a spatial relationship. Unfortunately, correlation can be misleading, so you may want to test the relationship using *regression analysis*, a more complex statistical technique that helps researchers determine the strength and direction of causality between a number of independent variables (fast food, ethnicity, income, access to parks, etc.) and a dependent variable (obesity).

No doubt you have seen patterns and wondered, “why is that here?” The chapters that follow are designed to help you answer those questions. Some of the techniques may seem challenging to you, but college students should be able to observe patterns, ask questions and do introductory analysis on data sets as a geographer would do in the course of trying to solve a problem.

Chapter End Matter

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CHAPTER 2 CULTURE NOW AND THEN

That elusive set of rules that govern the way we act is a product of where we are from and where we live. This chapter explores the idea of culture and how place and space shape the way we think and what we do in myriad fashion

Does Culture Exist?

It's generally a foregone conclusion that *culture* exists. Most introductions to the concept of culture in college textbooks don't bother to problematize the concept. Instead, they simply posit that culture is something akin to a collection of socially created rules that govern people's thoughts and behaviors. Culture, they often argue, is a "learned way of life". While it is easy to acknowledge that people do follow innumerable, mostly unwritten, rules as they make decisions about virtually everything they do, it is also important to point out that it is dangerous to *reify* culture. In other words, it is important to understand that culture should not be treated as something that is real or material. Instead, culture should be treated as an abstract concept. Culture doesn't exist, only the *idea of culture* actually exists. The reason this distinction is important to make is to help students avoid falling into the trap that causes us to treat culture as something separate and above people, like some unknown, mysterious force that controls the wills of individuals. We, and the societies we live in, are much more complex. The *idea of culture* is helpful sometimes when we need to explain behaviors that appear at the group level, but it's very dangerous to let down one's guard and assume that individual ideas and actions are *controlled* by culture. By keeping in mind that culture is an idea, it prompts us to be alert to how the rules of society are formed, reformed, tossed out, replaced, and contested. It provides a better balance between society's rules, known as *structures*, and *agency*, which is the power of the individuals and institutions to navigate those rules.

Folk Culture

Almost nobody living in the United States today adheres to a *folk culture*. Generally, folk cultures are those groups who have few or no modern conveniences, live according to age-old customs and are economically primitive (cashless economy, little occupational specialization, etc.). Probably only the Amish and

maybe some native Alaskan groups approximate a folk life existence today, but even that is doubtful. Much of American folk life disappeared in the mid-19th century when the telegraph and the railroad began invading spaces once isolated from the culture and economics of the rest of the world. The geography of places, specifically a degree of isolation from the network of non-local places is the key element preserving folk cultures.



Folk culture therefore is local culture for local people. Once non-local practices significantly alter what was once unique to the region and/or local people alter their practices to suit non-local conditions or markets, then those practices cannot be accurately labeled “folk”, but instead should be recognized as *popular culture*. Often the distinction between the two is messy.

Folk culture represents a long-standing fascination among geographers. Part of the attraction is a certain sentimentality or nostalgia for past landscapes. Many books have been written about mundane things like house types, barns, and banjo playing styles. Some academics call this kind of study worthless, but that criticism is probably unwarranted. It is worth noting that academics are entitled to study phenomena they and the public find interesting. Not all study must be applied – if it were, entire humanities departments might not exist on campuses across the globe. More importantly, an understanding of folk practices in other times and places helps us understand the evolution of modern or *popular culture* that characterizes the lives of nearly all of us today. Many of the daily behaviors we exhibit are traceable to the folkways of our ancestors. Investigations into folk ways and folk landscapes also help us better understand the evolution of complex interactions between people and their physical environment. Today, many of these interactions are masked by advanced technologies that shield people from their physical environment. Understanding how people adapted to the constraints and challenges presented by the climate, soils and topography proves both illuminating and practical as we face significant environmental challenges.

Folk Regions

In the United States, there are essentially four major, and several additional minor cultural regions that can be identified by mapping out various folk practices. Though the folk cultures that created these regions are largely extinct, the long-term impacts of those folk cultures are still very much in evidence in the everyday lives of Americans living within each region today. Religion, politics, music preferences,

foodways are but a few of the legacies of the folk cultures that once dominated various regions of the US.

INSERT FOLK REGIONS MAP

Folk Housing

The type of houses Americans built before the introduction of mass produced housing is an excellent medium through which students can begin to investigate folk culture practices using the Jedi techniques discussed in the introductory chapter. Folk housing offers students learning to read the landscape an accessible and fun way to interpret the effects of the natural environment, economics, ethnicity and even religion on the production of something as ordinary – but vitally important – as the house. The following sections introduce the four major regional folk cultures and the most common housing types associated with those regions.



Figure 2-1: New England Large House, Manchester by the Sea, MA. Note the large central chimney and room addition at the rear.

Yankee

The northernmost folk culture dominated by New Englanders, and headquartered probably in Boston was the Yankee subculture. The term “Yankee” is used frequently to reference to any American, particularly by persons not from the US. Americans also occasionally refer to themselves as “Yanks” or “Yankees”, but in this context, the term is applied only to people from the northeastern reaches of the United States. Yankees can be found in New England, but also are dominant in northern Ohio, northern Indiana, northern Illinois and parts of Michigan and Wisconsin. The culture fades in strength the further west one goes, and disappears almost completely in Minnesota.



Figure 2-2: Temple Front House with attached barns, Keene, NH. This house features a series of attached barns. Consider the dangers and benefits of this design strategy. Note the sap buckets hanging from the tree in the foreground.

Yankee subculture tapers off by the time it gets to Minnesota partly because of the effects of *distance decay*. Places distant from the Yankee hearth of Boston, were less likely to adopt these practices. People from the Upper Midwest (Minnesota, Dakotas, etc.) were also less likely to be English-descent Yankees. Instead, they were often descendants of German, Russian, Ukrainian and Scandinavian immigrants. In addition, by the time the Upper Midwest was ripe for settlement, folk housing practices were beginning to give way to popular housing – designed and built for mass consumption at the national level.



Folk housing in the Yankee region evolved over the period of a few generations to help the largely English settlers cope with the harsh winters of the region, many of which were especially challenging during the 17th and 18th centuries. Look for steeply pitched roofs, massive centrally positioned chimneys and extra large rooms. Ponder how the design of these houses responded to the climatic conditions of that time and place. Keep in mind that the families that lived in these houses were largely farmers, and needed space to complete a variety of chores necessary to their survival, like preparing food, sewing, craftworks, etc.

There are several variations on a single floor plan that features a large central chimney. The smallest version is called a [Cape Cod House](#), and is not surprisingly very common in and around [Cape Cod, Massachusetts](#). The *New England Large* house is in many ways a two-story version of the Cape Cod and is still common around much of the Yankee subcultural region. A later, stylized version known as the *Temple Front House* and its close cousin known as the *Upright and Wing* are found further west as popular style elements crept into the more purely functional folk house design. Finally, there is the *Salt Box House*, named because of the unusual asymmetrical roof line that characterizes the gable ends of the house.



Midland

Immigrants that came to the middle Atlantic states, like Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland were more likely to come from continental Europe (Germany, Scandinavia, Holland, etc.) than their Yankee and Southern counterparts. As a result, folk housing in this region had more diverse cultural inputs than other American folk regions. In some ways, this makes the Midland folk region the most mainstream in terms of politics, religion and cultural practices.

The folk housing of the Midlands evolved in the Middle Atlantic states, and good examples of it can be found in the [Piedmont region](#) as well. This is because westward bound pioneers leaving the Atlantic seaboard frequently were forced south (in to regions like the [Shenandoah Valley](#)) upon confronting the [Appalachian highlands](#). Much of the folk housing of the Midwest originated due east in the Middle Atlantic.



Folk housing of the Midlands is simple and there are only a few designs. There are a few log house models, but by far the most common are the single story *hall and parlor* and the two story *I-house*. The latter two housing types are only two rooms wide and feature gable end chimneys. The hall and parlor is perhaps the archetype of housing worldwide because its basic size and design is common internationally and has an exceptionally long history.

The [I house](#), is on the other hand confined largely to the Midwest and the Piedmont. Reputedly, the I house was named by folk geographer [Fred Kniffen](#) after he noticed how common this house type was Iowa, Indiana and Illinois. Though you can find it in cities and small towns, during the 18th and 19th centuries, the I house became the absolute standard “farm house” of the Midwest and it signaled membership in agricultural middle class for those who lived in one. Its unusual dominance on the landscape in the Midwest is highly suggestive of the massive size of the middle classes in this region of the country. The I house can be read as an important landscape symbol that tells a story about the culture, economics and politics of the region where it is so very common.



Upland South

In the areas of the American South, where the influence of African-American culture is diminished is known as the “Upland South”. Upland South culture can be found in the hilly /mountainous regions of the South, but it also exists in the Southern US where soil conditions discouraged plantation agriculture (and therefore slavery). This is the “white”



South, though by no means is this region devoid of black folks. One might also call it the “Hillbilly South”, though some might find the term offensive. In any case, the Upland South is similar to, but distinct from the Lowland or Deep South in a variety of ways – beginning with the earliest immigration sources, that were Scottish, Irish and English – with some Germans thrown in for good measure. People of the Upland South tended to be poor, so their houses are modest.



The folk housing the Upland South were mostly of log construction. As is the case elsewhere, there is a base model from which more elaborate houses were built using a common floor plan or theme.



The simplest Upland South house is the cabin and porch. Essentially, it is a one room house, with a porch and single chimney. Presumably, settlers on the frontier would construct a single room or “single pen” cabin upon setting up a homestead. If conditions proved ideal enough to remain in the location, additional rooms or pens could be added, and in the process different house types emerged from the single pen “starter home”.

If the settler built a second pen, with a separate chimney and connected the two pens with a single porch featuring a breezeway between the two rooms, then the house is called a *Dogtrot House* or cabin. Dogtrots seem to get their colorful name because a hound could walk or trot between the two room of the house. The heat of the South would make a breezeway an ideal “third room” in which family members could do chores, play or simply relax.



Sometimes, the owner of a single pen cabin would adjoin a second room, but



attach it directly to the first room so that a single central chimney could serve both rooms, and one wall was shared. This type of house, called a “saddlebag house”, references the appearance of a pack horse laden with cargo.

Interestingly, most saddlebag houses did not have an *internal* door connecting the two rooms, forcing inhabitants to go outside to go from one room to the next. Luckily, the weather is mild in the South and most saddlebag houses come equipped with a porch.

Lowland South

The part of the American South where slavery was prevalent is known in academic circles as the Lowland South. In some areas, African Americans constituted over 90 percent of the population, and therefore had a massive impact on a variety of cultural practices, religion, language and the economy. Today, the legacy of these folkways remains strong, especially in those locations that have remained somewhat cut-off from outside influences and in-migration.



The economic structures of the Deep South, deeply intertwined with the history of slavery and [Jim Crow Laws](#) are reflected in the folk housing of the region. Unlike the Midlands region, where the most common folk house (the I house) was a substantial two story affair, or New England where even larger, more comfortable houses was the norm; the Deep South features only two sorts of housing – those for rich and those for poor. The housing built for rich folks though largely falls outside the realm of “folk housing” and therefore is less important in this chapter.

Folk housing in the Deep South, like New England, evolved in a climatic extreme. Building techniques, before the age of advanced chemistry, air conditioning – or even electricity had to account for the unique challenges of heat and humidity. In order to combat termites, wood rot and flooding, houses were frequently constructed using *pier and beam* construction – a



technique that raises several feet from the earth, keeping the wood elements. See image xx above. There may also be some cooling effects generated by building

houses above ground, though this may make cold floors on the occasionally chilly winter days.

The climate also affected the choice of building materials. Where it was available, wood from cypress trees was prized for building houses, and especially for roofing material. Cypress wood is naturally rot and insect resistant, unlike the more abundant and inexpensive pine wood that most were forced to use to build houses. This explains why many examples of folk architecture in the South have disappeared from the landscape.

The most common folk house of the Lowland South is the shotgun house. Several theories regarding the colorful name have been forwarded. If you open the front door and all the interior doors of a shotgun house, you often can see through to the backyard. Theoretically, you could fire a shotgun through the front door and pellets would fly out the backdoor. The word may also come from an African-Haitian word that sounded similar to shotgun.



The design of the house is simple. It's one room wide, a single story and can have multiple rooms stretching back away from the street it faces. Long and skinny, these houses seem to have African origins, but fit perfectly within the French [*long lot cadastral system*](#) common in New Orleans (see chapter xx for additional information on cadastral systems).

There are multiple variations on the shotgun house. For the most part they are very modest because they were generally houses for working class blacks. Shotgun houses were occasionally expanded by building a second house in parallel, sharing a common center wall, roof and porch to produce a "double shotgun". For extra space, some folks added a second story to the rear rooms of the house, creating what is known as a "camelback shotgun". The second story rooms were only added to the rear portions of the houses in order to avoid incurring additional property taxes, which in certain locations were collected based on the area of the house facing the street.



Shotgun houses proved so versatile and utilitarian, they diffused outward to many other parts of the United States, and can be found where large numbers of African-American migrated and also where "company housing" was built to attract and retain workers in industrial districts across the country.

There are a number of other “folk regions” in the US that have unique housing as well, including the Cajun South, the Pennsylvania Dutch region, the Mormon West and the French-influenced areas, but they will be included in the discussion of ethnic housing in chapter xx.

Folk Music to Popular Music

Music is another significant part of our lives that is heavily affected by the folk ways of our ancestors. Folk music is homemade music, produced by largely unschooled musicians for local audiences (see discussion of hip hop music chapter xx). The instrumentation, lyrical content and performance techniques are, like other folk practices rooted in the local conditions. The ethnicity of the musicians and their audiences also play a significant role in the evolution of musical form. There are thousands of folk music genres scattered across the globe. This text will explore briefly only a few American folk music styles, focusing on the geographic factors that have shaped the sonic landscape of the United States.

Perhaps the oldest known American folk music, brought from Scotland and performed mostly in churches was called “[lining out](#)” or “line singing”. Associated originally with New England where it died out, but not before it spread to other more remote parts of the US where it can be still found in a few churches. Lining out, and its southern cousin “[call and response](#)” are products of an earlier time when few people in a church congregation could read a hymnal, and therefore had to rely upon a preacher or leader to sing the line first. The congregation would sing it back, repeating the lyrics and melody. White churches and black churches both adopted this style of singing in the Deep South. *Why do you think this style of music went extinct in New England and remained in Appalachia and the Deep South for so long?*



Figure 2-3: Amazing Grace, in Lining Out style, Old Regular Baptist, Kentucky

Work songs and spiritual tunes crafted by slaves and free blacks of the South, typically with an African emphasis on percussion and [syncopated](#) rhythms also had a long folk history in the United States. The musical styles that developed among blacks in the South was a product of inherited musical traditions, locally available instruments and the living conditions forced upon them. From the earliest forms, evolved better known musical genres, like jazz, blues and gospel.



In the American west, there would have been cowboy songs, and certainly a number of folk tunes coming up through Mexico that were also “homemade” and a product of the local geography.

In almost all folk environments, lightweight, homemade instruments or a capella music is the norm. Pianos and other large and/or expensive instruments are rarely used in folk music, except by musicians who happened to live in a port city. So, for

example, most of the great piano-based musical traditions in the US are along the Mississippi River (New Orleans, St. Louis, etc.).

Rather, in the mountains or out on the plains, easy to carry instruments are the norm. Therefore, harmonicas, violins, guitars and banjos are common. Other “instruments” like jugs, washboards, spoons, etc. were used along with hand claps, whistles and other vocalizations. It was also not uncommon for musicians to build their own instruments from locally available materials. [Gourd banjos](#) and [cigar box guitars](#) are excellent examples. Musical instruments and the style in which they were played before the introduction of amplifiers also shaped the nature of folk music. Take for example, musicians that played music at [barn dances](#) found that certain instruments functioned better than others in that noisy environment. Drums were too big to carry around, so they had to use banjos (they have a resonator to make them louder), fiddles (violins) and guitars. The [dulcimer](#), was a common Appalachian instrument, but it couldn’t cut it at the barn dance. The mandolin was similarly quiet, so players began to use it more as a rhythmic percussion instrument, rather to carry the melody. *Consider how these adaptive strategies echo the development of early hip hop in the Bronx, New York.*

American music has nearly always been a product the hybridization of European and African musical traditions, with the occasional Latin American input. Perhaps the earliest example of this All-American hybridization came from [Stephen Foster](#) of Pittsburgh.

As a youth, Foster would hang out along the boat docks in Pittsburgh where he became enamored with the music of the Lowland South, sung and played by African American boatmen who had come north on steamboats from New Orleans. He blended those sounds with what he learned taking music lessons from his classically trained, German music teacher to come up with something uniquely American and wildly popular during his day. Though technically not “folk music”, because it became internationally famous – the manner in which Foster blended African and European elements established a template that essentially all musical innovations to come followed. Clearly all of the musical genres invented in the US can be explored, so a few select examples will follow.



Figure 2-4: Link to Youtube -
Camptown Races, a typical Stephen
Foster Song

Rock n’ Roll

The most famous American musical invention is, without a doubt, rock n’ roll music, and like all other musical forms, it was rooted in the time and place of its invention. Rock n’ roll was invented in Memphis, Tennessee, a crossroads location, where youth living there in the aftermath of World War II could be influenced by the various musical traditions popular both locally, and regionally. There was blues of the nearby Mississippi Delta, bluegrass from Kentucky, jump from St. Louis and swing from Texas. Of course, gospel singing was ubiquitous. All of these musical styles could be heard on radio programs in Memphis, and if you lived in the right

neighborhood as a kid, you probably had friends whose parents listened (or played) any one or more of these musical styles.

Elvis Presley is the most famous of the kids to come out of Memphis, blending gospel, blues, bluegrass, country, western and R&B music. Presley's first record released in 1954 had only two songs. On the "A Side" was "That's All Right", an R&B tune previously released by Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup (1946). On the "B Side" was another song from 1946 called Blue Moon of Kentucky, but this was a bluegrass song by Bill Monroe, himself the inventor of that genre of music. In hindsight it is an incredible mish-mash of musical inheritance that may have been nearly impossible to create in another location.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qU3ZFNla0t0> Crudup

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NmopYuF4BzY> – Elvis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4syA9aNNa0> – Bill Monroe

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6AAOM-BRxcg&list=PLB46080D8ADBF3494> - Elvis

Presley was a particular musical genius, but clearly, geography played a role allowing that genius to develop. The proof is in the number of other stars that emerged from the same location in the same year. Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis were also famous early rockers that got their start in Memphis and recorded for Sun Records. Each of these performers' biography includes accounts of significant contact with African American musical mentors.



Figure 2-5: The Million Dollar Quartet demonstrate the power of place in the formation of Memphis' most famous musical innovation.

Carl Perkins, for example, grew up the son of sharecropper on a cotton plantation, where his father built him a homemade cigar box guitar. After later acquiring a factory built guitar, he took informal lessons from "Uncle" John Westbrook, a black man who was a fellow sharecropper. At nights he listened to the "Grand Ol' Opry" the nation's most famous country and western radio program, broadcast from Nashville, Tennessee. As a result, Perkins' most famous song, "[Blue Suede Shoes](#)" so confused the record buying public, that it topped the country, R&B and pop charts simultaneously. Blacks, whites and bubblegum pop teenagers all embraced the song. Reputedly, black audiences were surprised to learn that Perkins was indeed a white guy (see also the story of [Charlie Pride](#), the first African American country music star).

A similar process shaped African American musicians from the Midsouth as well. Chuck Berry, the most famous and influential black rocker of the early era of rock n' roll was from St. Louis, another river town rich with opportunities for young musicians to absorb musical influences from contrasting, nearby, regional styles. Berry simply reversed the standard pattern of influence (white boys listening to black blues) and adopted western swing (white) elements into his own blues-based sound. [Maybellene](#), a huge early rock n' roll hit for Berry was essentially an R&B adaptation of [Bob Wills' tune Ida Red](#), itself a [traditional mountain song](#) of unknown origins, but recorded in the 1920s.

Seattle's Grunge Rock – Isolation Effects

A more contemporary example of a folk-like, regional musical innovation becoming international is Seattle's so-called grunge rock that enjoyed exceptional popularity during the early 1990s.

The Pacific Northwest had earlier produced a few bands during the mid-1960s with a specific approach to popular music. According to music geographers that have researched the evolution of the sound, the dance hall environment where many dozens of bands competed for audiences found that singers couldn't be heard, so lyrics or even singers themselves grew increasingly less important. Listen to the songs of bands like Kingsmen ([Louie Louie](#)) and the Ventures ([Walk Don't Run](#)) and you'll see (hear) how the performance venue shaped the sound.


In the mid-1980s, aspiring rock musicians from the Pacific Northwest usually moved to Los Angeles if they wanted to "make it big". Seattle was considered a backwater by record company talent scouts. No popular bands had come from that region in a generation. The bands that remained in the Seattle area, like their brethren from the 1960s, began creating a new sound and a new style designed to please local audiences, with little reference to the sound/style considered marketable by music executives. After a number of years of incubating in *isolation* in Seattle, a remarkable number of bands emerged from the region playing a brand of hard rock that included a punk aesthetic. Lyrically, these bands eschewed the themes common to Los Angeles-based hard rock (girls/money/partying). Though they often had long hair, they often wore decidedly unfashionable working men's clothing (flannels, boots, jeans) that earned the whole group the label "grunge rock". After the band Soundgarden proved the sound/look marketable, a slew of other Seattle bands were signed by major record companies whose executives had long relied on geography as an indicator of a new band's chance for success. They seemed to argue, "if one new band from Seattle sold millions of records, there must be more there!" Quickly, the isolation that had been critical in the development of the Seattle scene was replaced by intense attention to local bands who were no longer playing for local audiences, but rather now for record executives, international audiences, and millions of dollars.


CHAPTER 3 AGRICULTURE AND FOODWAYS

What you eat and why you eat it has a lot to do with where you live. This chapter explores how people's diets are shaped by the interplay of culture and the spatial economics of contemporary agribusiness.

ICON KEY

 [Image Gallery](#)

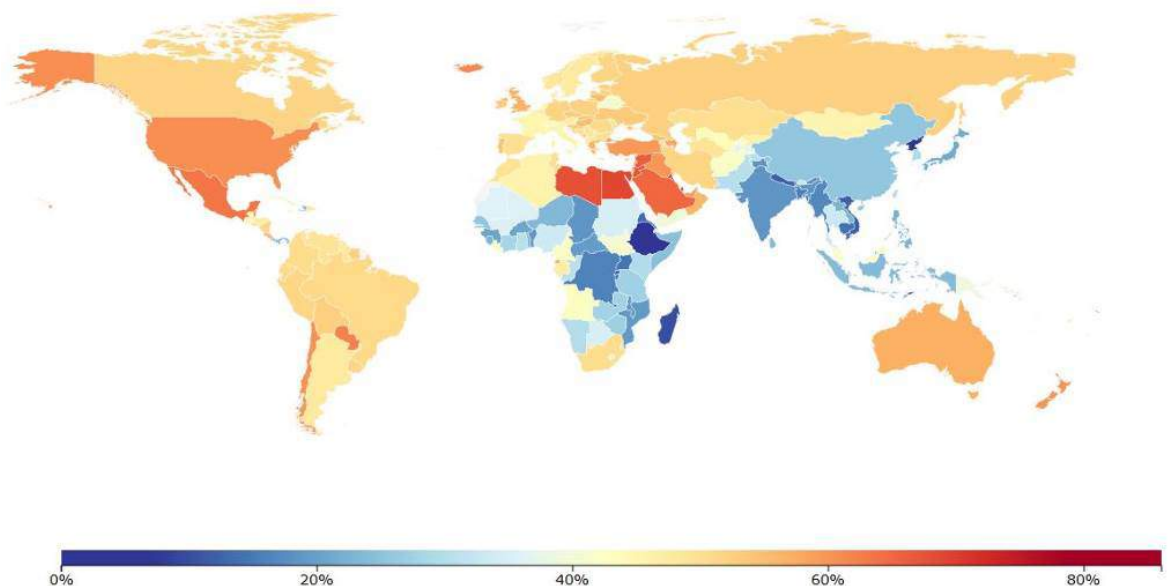
 Find the Data

 Geographer Toolbox

 GIS Lab exercise

Despite what seems like a constant barrage of advertisements on TV about weight-loss strategies and exercise regimes, a number of recent studies have found that roughly 30% of all Americans are obese, and another one-third are overweight. That means only about one-third of Americans are “in shape”. Kids aren’t much better – roughly one-third children in the US are obese or overweight . This isn’t just a problem for those who want to look good in a swim suit. Being overweight has serious consequences for people’s health , and the costs associated with our expanding waistlines are substantial – and everyone pays the price.

The United States is not the only chubby country. We’ve got the MOST overweight/obese people, but other countries have a higher percentages (see figure xx below from <http://vizhub.healthdata.org/obesity/>)



How did it get to be this way? This chapter explores in part the roots of the worldwide obesity epidemic by using a spatial approach to trace the path of your food from farm to fork. Special attention is given to where food comes from and how we come to embrace (or reject) specific diets.

Landscape of Food

About half of all the land in the US is dedicated to the production of agricultural products. Not all “agriculture” is consumed as food. Some farmers grow things like cotton, switchgrass (for biofuel) or even marijuana for medicine and/or recreational purposes. Most crops though do wind up, one way or another, in our bellies. For many, farmlands and ranchlands are common scenes, but for city dwellers they may be hard pressed to recognize agricultural practices on the land. In the United States there are several important agricultural landscapes that you can learn to *read*.



Figure 3-2 Holstein Cattle - Chino, California. These dairy cattle are part of a factory farm system created to deliver vast quantities of milk to Southern California. The constant demand for suitable land for suburbanization threatens to push agriculture further from Los Angeles.

There are also important messages written into the landscape of food *consumption*. Restaurants, grocery stores and other markets all vie for the attention of the hungry customer. Together these landscapes are representative of a \$300 billion industry that employs hundreds of thousands of people and feeds millions.

The landscape of food consumption and production is varied because of the vast number of ways in which we grow food and the perhaps even more numerous ways in which we buy food; at restaurants, grocery stores and farmers markets.

As you drive around, can you find examples of food production? What types of farming can be found near your hometown or college? What types of agriculture is dedicated to crops that are not eaten? Are the crops staples, or are do farmers grow exotic crops for wealthier consumers?

Why do we eat this stuff?

Why we eat what we eat is a complex question. The answer might seem as simple as “I eat what tastes good”, but opinions vary wildly on the issue of taste preference

from country to country –and even within the United States. Taste preference for food vary within and across ethnicities – and even house to house among people that would seem alike in almost every way. Still, there are trends that characterize regions in the US and around the world and many of these *foodways* have roots in the local geography of a place. It has been said, “you are what you eat,” but geographers might add the rejoinder “what you eat depends on where you eat.” Part of that is a factor of traditions, but often understand the evolution of tradition requires an understand of the environmental context.

Migration-Ethnicity

A lot of the taste preference Americans have developed can be attributed to our ethnic ancestry. Eating is a daily ritual, and as such, it is becomes heavily ingrained in our cultural routines. What you like to eat is probably not that different from what your parents and grandparents like to eat. The same was true for your grandparents, and so – these habits have exceptional staying power in our culture. This fact is part of the reason behind our obesity crisis. Our lifestyle has changed rapidly as technology and the economy has evolved, but much of our food culture has been stubbornly resistant to change. The foodways that served our ancestors who were farmers or laborers engaged in strenuous daily activities, provides too many calories and /or fat for a generation working and living in the information age.

Ultimately, American foodways are largely European where a large percentage of Americans trace their ancestry. Beef, pork, chicken, bread, pasta, cheese, milk and a number of the fruits and vegetables we eat would be readily recognized by Europeans 200 years ago. Many dietary *staples* would be recognized by our ancestors from 2,000 years ago. Other parts of our diet can be traced to Asia and Africa as well – this is especially true of Asians, many of whom have migrated more recently to North America.

Corn – America’s Pride and Shame.

A sizeable portion of the American diet is purely American. We have adopted a number of foodstuffs favored by Native Americans. Maize, or as it is commonly called in America, corn is perhaps the most American part of our diet. Domesticated by the indigenous people of Mexico thousands years ago, it has proven a versatile and hardy plant. Much of the world eats corn in some fashion today. Most folks know [sweet corn](#) well. We eat it as “corn on the cob”; buy it canned, frozen and fresh “off the cob”; and in a variety of dishes. Many are less familiar with *field corn*, although it is far more common because it has a vast number of uses. Field corn is too hard to eat raw, so it is modified. Some of it is processed into corn meal or corn starch, that is then used in to make things like corn chips, tortillas and sauces. We also consume a lot of corn syrup and high fructose corn syrup (**HFCS**) made from field corn. Corn syrups are used as a sweetener, thickener, and to keep foods moist or fresh. Politics is one of the main reasons!

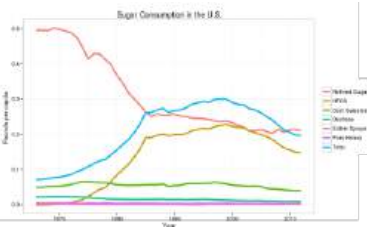
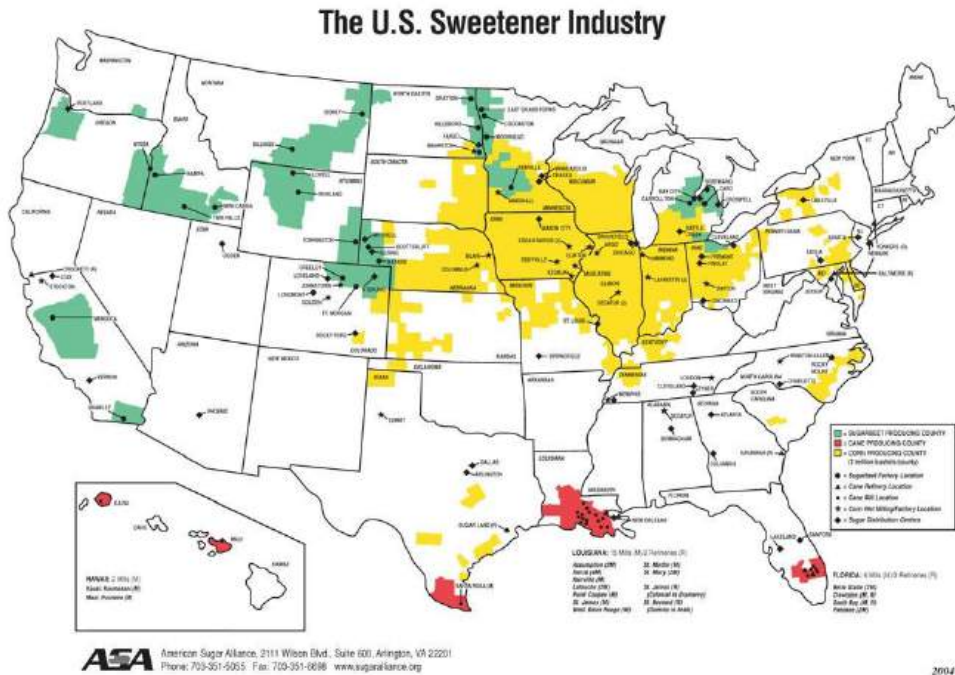


THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SWEET

One of the controversies surrounding corn sweeteners is their role in the obesity crisis in the United States. Some critics argue that the body responds differently to HFCS than cane sugar, and since it has largely cane sugar as the most common sweetener, it has led to a variety of health issue. Of course the corn industry disputes such charges. Since this isn't a biology course, there is no intention to wade into questions human metabolism, but geography is at the heart of why we use HFCS in such vast quantities.

The main reason we use so much HFCS, rather than popular alternatives [cane sugar](#) or [beet sugar](#) is that it's cheaper. HFCS is cheaper in part because corn grows well in more regions of the US, but also because of the politics of sugar production.

Sugar cane and sugar beets are the two main sources of granulated sugar in the US. Sugar cane production requires a rainy climate and a very long, warm growing season. Only Hawaii, parts of Texas, Louisiana and Florida can produce sugar cane. The yield, or tons of cane per acre, is highly dependent on climate conditions – and only Hawaii is ideal. Yields there are triple what they are in Louisiana. Sugar beets are more widely grown in the US because they grow well in temperate climate. In the California desert, a top production area, it is a winter crop. Sugar made from beets constitutes just over half the crystal sugar consumed in the US.

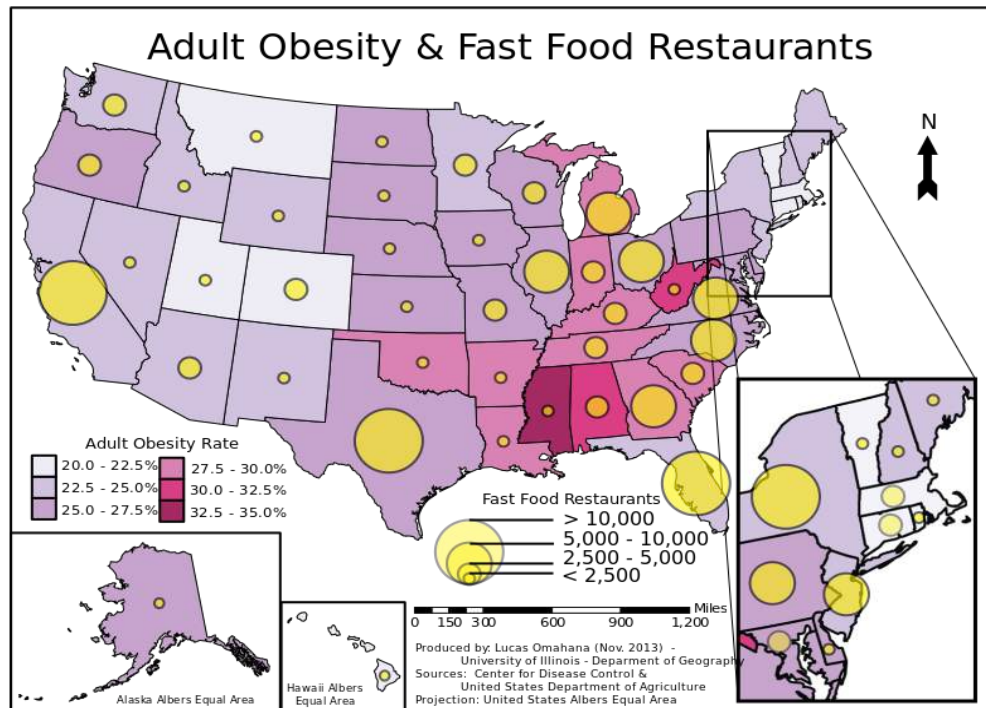


Because climate and labor conditions are so much better for the cheap production of sugar elsewhere in the world, the US government has heavily subsidized (corporate welfare) this industry since the 1930s, and markedly increased the subsidy in the late 1970s. The government even buys left over sugar that couldn't be sold at an

above-world market price. The government also restricts imports from many countries, especially Cuba a geographically obvious source of sugar for US consumers. This is great for sugar farmers, but candy and soft drink manufacturers, along with everyone, else pays higher prices for cane sugar than they would if there was competition. As a result, HFCS is cheaper. You may have had a “Mexican Coke” – a Coca-Cola made with cane sugar, rather than with HFCS. They are made that way, because cane sugar in Mexico costs about half of what it does in the US. Corn production is also heavily subsidized in the United States, but in a way that makes it much cheaper than it should be – leaving food processors little choice in their choice of sweetener.

The nearly \$8 billion subsidy paid to corn farmers is four times greater than that paid to the sugar industry. This has consequences. One is that there is generally a huge surplus of corn. In 2014, there was about 1.63 billion bushels of corn left unsold. Some years it’s higher. One side effect is that only a tiny fraction of corn in the US is consumed directly by humans. A little less than half of it is used to make biofuels, particularly ethanol that may have helped power the car that transported you to class today.

About half of the field corn grown in the US becomes animal feed. Both the grain and the stalks/leaves, called *silage*, are used to feed cattle. Chickens and hogs also are fed corn. Even cat and dog food often has corn in it. Exceptionally cheap corn helps make meat less expensive than many other types of food. College students on a budget already know that it’s a lot cheaper to buy lunch at a local fast-food burger joint than it is to buy a healthy green salad. School lunch programs operate on



many of the same principles – they support agribusiness and give kids cheap, often

unhealthy food. In 2011, congress declared that pizza (or more accurately the tomato sauce) was a “vegetable”, over the [objections of health advocates](#). The availability of cheap, often unhealthy meats and grains increases the popularity of such food – often in the form of fast-food in regions of country where poor people live.

Fast food map Los Angeles.

Because a significant percentage of poor people cannot afford health care, the costs associated with a poor diet are passed on as yet additional costs of the politics of farm production. You’ll read more about the political power and geography in chapter xx.

Geography of Barbecue (BBQ)

Clearly, not all our foodways are by-products of geo-politics and economics. Barbeque (BBQ), another old and favorite American dish that involves cooking meat very slowly over indirect heat (it’s not the same as *grilling* meat over open flame) is a great example. The Spanish, who probably learned how to BBQ from Caribbean Indians, appear to have introduced this cooking technique to settlers long before American independence.

BBQ is most popular in the US South, but there are a number of regional variations, domestically and internationally. Part of the reason it gained popularity in the American South is hot and humid climate. Before the invention of refrigeration, once an animal had been slaughtered, the meat had to be either eaten quickly or somehow preserved to avoid spoiling. There are several ways to preserve meat, but one that gained favor in the US South was to smoke it in a BBQ pit. Pit BBQ allows people to cook large amounts of meat in a few hours, makes some of the less desirable cuts of meat easy to eat and tasty and provides a valuable source of protein in a region where diets tend to be overly rich in carbohydrates.

Other areas of the US copied the process, but as the practice diffused, adopters were forced to adapt to local conditions. As a result there are more than a dozen recognizable BBQ styles in the US alone – each with a unique combination of meat preference and cut, wood used for smoking, and strategies for adding spices. In the Carolinas alone, there are more than a half-dozen variations in the type of sauce or marinades. There are dozens more international BBQ styles in places like Jamaica, Mexico and South Africa.

MEAT

The primary type and cut of meat used in BBQ varies by region. Part of this stems from the agricultural potential in the region during the last century or two. In Appalachia and the Piedmont regions, there is a strong preference for pork BBQ. In these heavily wooded regions of the US, Anglo early settlers raised hogs for meat,

because poor farmers could free-range hogs in the nearby woods. The hogs would wander the nearby forests where they would eat acorns, tree nuts and whatever else they could forage. Sometimes pork BBQ is served as ribs, but often its “off-the-bone” “whole hog” served chopped or “pulled” into little pieces and served on a bun. In more wide-open, grassy regions like most of Texas, the Great Plains and California, beef evolved as the preferred meat for BBQ. In some places beef ribs are preferred, in others – it’s brisket or other cuts. Chicken, turkey and fish are also BBQ’ed, depending on local availability.

WOOD

The type of wood that is widely available locally is another critical ingredient in creating BBQ regions. Hickory, a hardwood tree found in the forests of the Eastern US is a favored wood for smoking the pork BBQ of that region. In Texas, they use Oak or Pecan trees in much of the state, but out in West Texas where beef BBQ is the rule, they use the wood of mesquite trees. It’s dry out in West Texas, and mesquite trees are abundant in the desert southwestern US. Most mesquite trees are shrubby, but their wood is hard, burns slowly and has a unique flavor - making it great for BBQ. In California where Santa Maria BBQ was invented by the Spanish/Mexican settlers, they roast tri-tip steaks over the wood of Coast Live Oak trees. Maple and Apple trees furnish wood for smoking chicken and flavoring pork in other parts of the US, particularly in New England, where BBQ is not as popular. Even the side dishes change regionally – again based on the local availability of beans, bread and greens.

SAUCES AND RUBS

The last, and perhaps most geographically random, element of the geography of BBQ is the flavoring strategies. Many regions apply a sauce. The most widely known and copied comes from Kansas City. Variations on the KC formula (over-sweetened!) are available at most supermarkets in the US, alongside ketchup. Many South Carolinians favor a mustard-based sauce, perhaps an innovation introduced by Germans who migrated there a century or more ago. Many East Carolinians pour a vinegar-and-hot pepper sauce on their BBQ. In the more mountainous areas of the Carolinas, they add a tomato sauce to that mixture. In Louisiana, of course, the Cajun influence means that their BBQ sauce is going to contain their special style of hot-sauce (like Tabasco brand). Memphis, another city famous for its BBQ traditionally didn’t use a sauce at all, but instead put a “dry rub” of paprika, pepper, chili powder, garlic etc. on their meat (typically ribs). Santa Maria style in California is also a simple “dry rub” BBQ.

Agricultural Regions

What sort of food farmers grow in any location is conditioned by several factors. First is probably climate. Weather is a controlling factor for many products. Many crops and some livestock just can’t survive in some climates. Other crops are

exceptionally hardy – and might even need harsh weather conditions to thrive. In the United States, the availability of water, either via rain or irrigation is the main consideration for farmers. Secondly, farmers need to be profitable – and the more profitable the better, so farmer’s choose carefully the crops and animals they raise. There are roughly five major agricultural zones in the United States, each aligned with a climate zone.

Corn and Wheat Belts

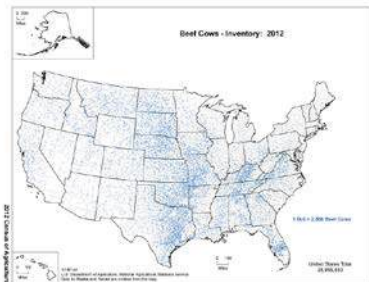
Perhaps the biggest agricultural division can be found along the **100th parallel**. This line marks roughly a transition zone from the more humid eastern half of the US from the drier western half. In the middle parts of the US, where the land is flat and ideal for crops, farmers east of the 100th parallel generally plant corn and soybeans. Frequently this area is called the “corn belt”, and is centered on Iowa (see section xxx)

Farmers on flat lands west of the 100th parallel tend to plant wheat. Corn and soybeans are more profitable per acre, so they are preferred by all farmers, but where it is too dry and/or cold for corn and soybeans, farmers will plant wheat instead. The “wheat belt” runs from the panhandle of Texas up through the Dakotas. There are hundreds of types of wheat, but Americans focus on only six varieties - and these are largely characterized by when they are planted. For example, “winter wheat” is planted in the fall and harvested in the spring. It accounts for about three-quarters of all the wheat produced in the US, and it is used to make bread and rolls. Kansas is at the heart of the winter wheat belt. Further north, in the Dakotas, wheat farmers plant what we call “spring wheat” because they do so in the spring, and harvest it in the fall. This type of wheat tends to be used more for bakery goods, like pastries or cakes. Durum wheat is a special spring wheat that is planted mostly in North Dakota is used largely to make semolina flour used to the production of pasta. Clearly this is a favorite wheat variety in Italy.

Wheat is the leading agricultural export from the US – and the US leads the world in wheat exports, thanks to shifting government policies and **climate change**, overall wheat production has fallen in the US since the 1970s. From 1900 to the present, the growing season north of Bismarck, North Dakota used to be a few weeks shorter. Today, the first killing frost of the year in these parts is often in October, allowing the grain to ripen a few weeks longer, boosting the profitability of corn over wheat. The effect has helped slow the steady out-migration of young people from North Dakota.

Cattle Ranching

Further west, in the rain-shadowed areas between the Sierra Nevada and the Great Plains, there are plenty of prime flat-land valleys, but less than 20 inches of rain per year. This leaves two options – irrigation or ranching. In much of the area, ranching is the only option. Arid lands cattle ranching is probably the least profitable type of farming on a per-acre basis. Vast stretches of land, generally in locations where only short-grasses grow naturally, are suitable for grazing cattle but



little else. Typically, cattle grazed in these wide-open, marginal lands are kept for a period while they grow toward a “market size”, at which point they are “round up” and placed in a feedlot. Once confined to a feedlot, the cattle are fed a steady diet of grain (see above) until they are suitably heavy for slaughter. Some ranchers however, especially in recent years, keep their steers on a grass-only diet. Grass-fed beef is considered by some consumers to be both healthier and better tasting – and



therefore it commands a higher market price.

Irrigated Drylands

In some dry locations, such as California and Arizona, farmers are able to apply vast amounts of water to fields that would otherwise be too dry for most crops. An elaborate system of irrigation canals, pumping facilities and water storage landscapes, built with taxpayer money, allow farmers in these regions to grow an enormous variety of foods. Because these the Southwest has abundant sunshine, good soils and long growing seasons – the addition of irrigation this agricultural region are exceptionally productive (and profitable). California’s Great Central Valley has individual *counties* with larger farm economies than states that are well-known for being “farm states”. Much of the fruit and vegetables in produce sections of groceries across the US come from California and Arizona.

Red Dirt and Chickens

In some locations, particularly the very humid Southeastern United States, the over-abundant rainfall has made many of the possible cropland areas poorly suited for planting corn. Partly this is a result of the various root diseases, insects and other blights that undermine profits, but it is also because the soil in much of this region has been *leached*, a process by which essential soil nutrients are washed away from the soil by excessive rainfall. The famous “red dirt” of Georgia is not ideal for many crops. Still, farmers adapt and they search for agricultural activities that maximize the local potential offered by the soil. A common option is to forgo crop production and focus on raising poultry. Southeastern states dominate the “broiler” industry – chickens raised for meat.

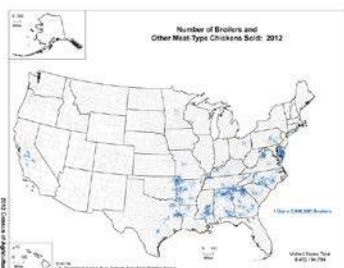
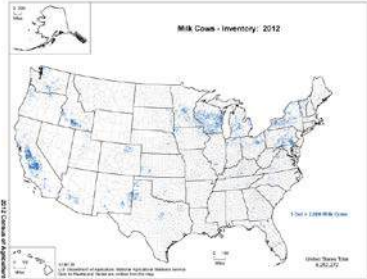


Figure 3-3: Chicken Production in the US.
Click to view in browser.

Speciality Crop Areas

In yet other locations, very specific and local conditions create conditions that allow farmers to focus on a very specialized crop. Oftentimes, these crops are very profitable because the supply is limited by geography – increasing demand and therefore the price of crops. You can probably think of several states that specialize in very specific crops. Idaho is famous for potatoes, Georgia for peaches and onions, Washington for Apples. Thanks to irrigation and its special climate, California is the dominant producer of a number of crops including broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, celery, lettuce, spinach production. California produces more than 99% of America’s almonds, artichokes, dates, figs, raisin grapes, kiwis, olives, plums, pomegranates, pistachios and walnuts.

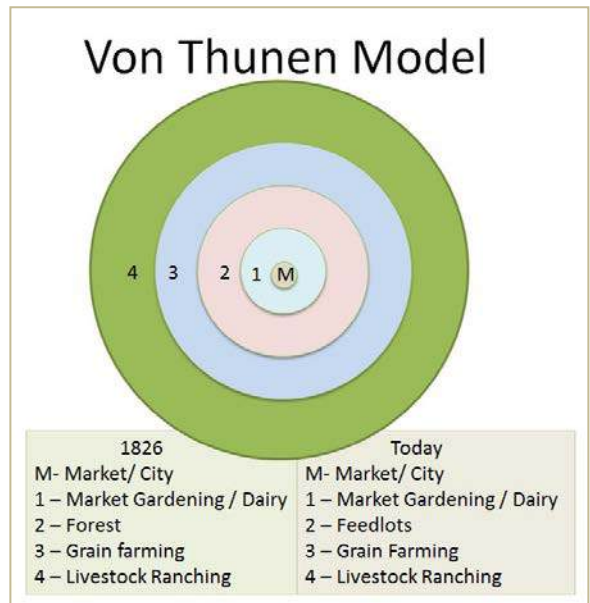


Dairy Lands

Though milk cows are raised in most of the US, and California produces the most milk - the Northeast and Great Lakes region constitute America’s Dairyland. Profitable markets in the region’s populous urban markets, as well as the Northern European ethnic background have contributed to dairy’s dominance. Areas closer to markets specialize in liquid milk, and those areas a bit more distant to New York, Chicago, Boston, etc. specialize in butter, cheese and ice cream. Hay farming is also, quite important in these regions.

Von Thunen’s Model -

Another reason California leads the production of so many crops is that has a very large population, and it makes good sense to grow food that spoils easily, or is costly to transport close to the customers who buy it. Economist (and honorary geographer) [Johann Heinrich von Thunen](#) recognized this principle many years ago as he developed a theory of agricultural *land rent* that is now widely known as the **Von Thunen Model**.



In order to understand this theory you have to make a number of assumptions that may or may not apply in the real world. First, you must assume that the land is flat, of equal quality (soil, water, etc.) and there are no roads. Second, there is only one city (or market) where farmers sell their goods. Third, farmers are economically rational – they want to and know how to maximize profit. Once you accept those assumptions, then it becomes possible to understand how land rent models work.



Figure 3-5: Cattle or **Stock Cars** used to be common sites on rail roads. This one is in a train museum in Los Angeles. What factors led to the demise of this technology?



Figure 3-4: The refrigerated rail car radically changed the way distance factored into the operation of the Von Thunen Model. Can you think of other farm commodities that were affected?

Von Thunen argued that farmers who live closest to the city should focus on the production of milk and/or fruits and vegetables because those products have the shortest shelf-life and are expensive to transport. It would be foolish, especially in 1826, for farmers living at great distance to the city to specialize in foods that spoil quickly. Instead, farmers that live far from the city should specialize in grain crops that can be stored for long periods of time. Farmers that live near the city will also find their land is more valuable, and therefore must engage in “intensive” agriculture – the type that costs/makes the most money per acre, and generally requires the most labor. Farmers living far from the market, because they spend a large portion of their money transporting crops to market, must engage in “extensive” agriculture – that kind of farming that requires cheap land, needs fewer farm hands, and spreads over great stretches of land.

Technological innovations, particularly refrigeration and rapid transportation has undermined some of Von Thunen’s model applicability today, but the logic behind it is still very potent – and a number of current agricultural maps reflect the ongoing importance of transportation costs to agribusiness. New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago all have large areas where farmers remain engaged in market gardening and liquid milk production within a one-day drive from each city’s massive central grocery warehouse districts. Large grain farms continue to be rare in those same areas. The biggest changes from Von Thunen’s original model are the location of forestry operations and the livestock feedlots. No longer are large numbers of hogs and cattle fattened inside metropolitan borders, and forestry regions tend to be the most far removed from urban areas.

Agriculture around the World

Farming outside North America is different, but is subject to the same climatic constraints and market logics that are found in the US and Canada. Some locations are in direct competition with farmers in North America, but most international agriculturalists are engaged in *subsistence farming*, which keeps them largely out of the marketplace. In some parts of Africa and Asia, over 80% of the population is engaged in agriculture, yet food shortages are common. In the US, agricultural workers account for only 2% of the population, freeing the rest of the population to pursue other activities. International farming can be very efficient– some of it far more efficient than western farming techniques when measured only on using a caloric balance metric. The problem with many places in the world is that the land is too poor, or the mouths too numerous.

Herding and Ranching

In the places where there isn’t enough rain or it’s too cold for field crop – livestock predominates. Lots of places ranch cattle like the US, particularly in South America, but sheep ranching is quite popular in many regions where the British cultural influences linger. Herding, the nomadic version ranching occupies large stretches of the world’s lands, but a tiny fraction of the world’s population. Nomadic herding requires those who tend herds of animals (cattle, sheep, reindeer)

to move frequently in search of pasture land that can be grazed. Without constant migration, herders could *overgraze* the land and destroy their all-important livestock.

Wet Rice Cultivation



Rice feeds more people on earth than any other crop. Billions rely on rice as the main staple of their diet outside of North America. The great rice production areas of the world are in Asia, where the seasonal monsoon climate and quality soils make it a logical option. Rice *is* grown in the United States, mainly on irrigated acreage in California and the Mississippi Delta using advance machinery – even airplanes – but for much of East and South Asia, rice cultivation remains an exceptionally labor and land *intensive* style of agriculture. Not only is a lot of rice still planted, weeded, harvested and processed by hand in Asia, there is a significant amount of manual labor involved in the maintenance of the fields (*paddies*) and dikes in order to maintain proper water levels necessary for the rice mature properly. Luckily for those who depend on rice for sustenance, it is a wildly productive plant, capable of providing a generous caloric yield per acre (similar to potatoes and corn). Moreover, thanks to a generation of scientific advancements in rice genetics and fertilizer science, known as the *Green Revolution*, rice farmers in Asia can get two, and sometimes three crops from the same field each year.

Because rice is a carbohydrate-rich food, people in wet rice regions must supplement their diet to remain healthy. Many Asians, even urban dwellers, have very intensive garden patches – sometimes on the balconies of high rises. Paddy rice farmers also [introduce fish and other forms of aquaculture into their fields](#). Adding fish, often a species of carp, helps reduce pesticide and fertilizer demands,

while adding a good source of protein and a valuable commodity at local markets. Fish that eat mosquito larvae may also contribute to a reduction in disease.

RICE AND MATHEMATICS?

Paddy rice farming may contribute to the success of Asians on math tests as well. At least that's the argument forwarded by [Malcolm Gladwell](#) a journalist who writes best-selling books that rely on (suspect?) statistical analysis to explain society and cultures. One argument that he forwards is that Asians may be good at math because of the amount of work required by wet rice cultivation. The theory goes that because people from these regions are so accustomed to the exceptionally burdensome effort and careful planning required to survive in a wet rice environment, the dedication required to do well in math is a sort of built in characteristic of the culture. Alternatively, those cultures living in locations where agricultural abundance is easier to produce, the relationship between effort and reward is undermined. This theory is an attempt to replace racial narratives about intellectual talent with a cultural or environmental ones. While geographers often argue that cultural and physical environments have significant influence upon each other, the specter of *environmental determinism* continues to challenge a full embrace of ideas like this. This is a reminder to all of us to keep in mind the logical pitfalls associated with the *ecological fallacy*.

Slash and Burn – Shifting Cultivation

In some ways, the opposite of wet rice farming is slash and burn agriculture, sometimes also known as *swidden* farming; and in Latin America as *milpa*. Whereas paddy rice farming is predominant in the wet-dry monsoonal climate, requires good soils, a large labor input and feeds millions, *swidden* farming is practiced almost exclusively in the equatorial rainforests where few people living on poor soils require a lot of land to feed themselves– but at least it requires little labor. By some estimates, slash and burn agriculture is the world's most efficient style of agriculture on a calorie-for-calorie basis.



Slash and burn works like this – in the rain forest where soils have been leached of essential nutrients, farmers must cut down a patch of forest in order to allow it to dry so they can burn it. The ashes of the burnt forest act as a fertilizer for the soil, allowing farmers a few good years of crops, before the rains once again wash away the nutrients of the soil – and forcing farmers to burn a new patch of forest. The exhausted fields are left *fallow*, and eventually the forest regrows. Eventually, after

many years, the farmer will return to the same patch of re-grown forest and begin the process anew. Because this type of farming requires a lot of land, but very little labor, it is known as *land rotation system*, a kind of *extensive* farming.

Slash and burn farming is sustainable as long as the population engaged in it remains small. For thousands of years, indigenous people of Asia, Africa and Latin America have engaged in slash and burn agriculture without seriously threatening the critical balance between themselves and the forest. Population growth in places like Brazil have threatened precious rainforest reserves as ever larger patches of land are cleared for agricultural purposes. [Inga Alley Cropping](#) offers an intriguing alternative to slash and burn, while not seriously disrupting existing lifeways.

In the Americas, slash and burn farmers often plant the so-called “three sisters,” corn, beans and squash, an ingenious solution to a variety of problems. Corn provides carbohydrates to the diet, and supports the vining bean plant. The beans provide protein, a critical need in locations where fish and/or game are scarce. Beans also are nitrogen fixers, meaning they fertilize the soil for the other two crops. Squash is highly nutritious and functions in the field to sustain soil moisture and discourage weed growth because it grows on the ground and its leaves are so broad. It is reported that planted together, a strategy called *intercropping*, generates a sort of natural pesticide. After the harvest, the dying plants can be plowed back into the ground as an excellent mulch / fertilizer.

Plantation Agriculture

In many of the coastal areas where European colonial powers once ruled, plantation agriculture is dominant. In this agricultural system, agricultural land is dedicated to growing cash crops, generally at the expense of staple crops. Many parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America rely on plantation style agriculture to generate badly needed foreign currency. Some of the more popular plantation crops are bananas, cotton, tea, cacao trees, and coffee.

There are multiple, serious problems with the plantation agricultural systems, but most countries find themselves hard-pressed to find viable alternatives. Food insecurity is the first problem. Because the best land is given over the production of export-oriented cash crops, little may remain for the production of food for local consumption.

Secondly, most plantation regions are guilty of *monocropping* – or relying on a single crop. Not only are monocrop economies vulnerable to crop failure (insect invasions, diseases, droughts), such economies can be devastated by unfortunate swings in market conditions. The US has regions where monocropping is common, but the US as a whole has a diverse farm economy. Many third world countries do not have this luxury. In those situations, if the market price for the main farm commodity falls, the entire economy can be in trouble and the greatest burden is on the poor people – many of whom might work on the plantations themselves. Commodity prices can fall when too many competitors join a market, bloating the



supply and crashing the price. Coffee in particular has seen wild price swings since the 1960s. Part of the cause of the famous [debt crisis](#) of the 1980s, was the failure of export agricultural commodity prices brought during a spike in oil prices that caused a global recession.

Plantation agriculture also is tied to a variety of nearly intractable problems surrounding land tenure in regions that rely upon it. Export oriented plantation economies were developed by colonial powers during the 18th and 19th century. The indigenous people were robbed of their land and often became tenants, laboring on plantation farms or peasants confined to marginal lands less desired by the landed elites. The descendants of both groups continue in their roles for many generations, creating a permanent underclass and an oligarchic elite. Violent clashes between land reform advocates, often backed by Cuba or the USSR, and those who favored the status quo, often backed by the United States erupted frequently during the 20th century. The economic hopelessness and violence that it helped spawn continues to spur international migration – much of it to the United States where opponents of Latin American land reform also constitute the core of the vocal opposition to immigration reform.

Because plantation agriculture is often highly competitive, and sometimes highly profitable endeavor – efficiency is a paramount concern. Large plantation operations can take advantage of *economies of scale* that small-hold farming cannot, so there is significant pressure from the market (and the agribusiness corporations who own large plantations) to keep massive farms on the best land intact. In those rare instances where land reform has taken place, and good lands were redistributed to the poor; the export economy has faltered. Zimbabwe's land redistribution is the classic [modern example](#).

WE ARE THE WORLD



In the mid-1980s a drought, war and bad governmental policies in the Horn of Africa led to one of the great humanitarian crises of the modern era. Famine struck Eritrea and Ethiopia leading in part to half-million or more deaths. A documentary news crew broadcast news of the famine back to the rest of the world, shocking many into action. Two of the better known charity relief efforts came from pop / rock musicians. [Live Aid](#), [Band Aid](#) and [USA for Africa](#) were efforts launched by famous pop musicians, raising money and awareness of the crisis. Many gave freely and were led to believe that the crisis was largely the result of a natural disaster. While there was drought, few at the time understood that during the famine, Ethiopia was a net exporter of food. Grain and other agricultural commodities were being shipped to first world countries – often as animal feed, while thousands were starving. Transportation and

safety issues complicated food delivery, but in the end, the mass starvation was a result of land distribution and poverty as much as it was drought and desertification. Poor people, if they can't grow food, cannot buy food either.

Key Terms and Concepts

For Further Reading

Goldwyn, Craig. Make Your Own Signature BBQ Sauce: A Taxonomy of America's Regional BBQ Sauces. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/craig-/make-your-own-signature-b_b_206598.html

CHAPTER 4 LINGUISTIC GEOGRAPHY

The language we speak is the most important element of our culture. What we speak, and how we speak are extraordinarily powerful markers of our identity. Language shapes our world view, both constraining and liberating what we can know and feel. Language, like other elements of our culture is a product of geography and a force acting upon the lives of people in all places.

Introduction

What we speak and how we speak is the most powerful marker of who we are, not only as individuals, but as groups. Our language constrains and liberates our thoughts and feelings; and battles over the control of words and phrases are central to how power is exercised in most communities. The pen, or the turn of phrase, is indeed mightier than the sword.

A **language** is a system of communication that persons within a community use to convey ideas and emotions. The study of languages is called **linguistics**. Sometimes, people who speak (or sign) the same language find it very easy to communicate with each other. Chances are, people who communicate easily speak a very similar version of a language, known as a **dialect**. On the other hand, dialects can become so different from each other that they border on becoming a different language because they extend past what is called **mutual intelligibility**. Consider that many speakers of American English find that they cannot understand speakers of Scottish English if their **dialect is extreme**. Part of the problem is the differences in **accent**, which refers to the *way* people pronounce words. For example, the Scottish “roll” their tongues when they pronounce words with the letter R in them and Americans do not. Americans pronounce “to” like “tu” and the Scottish pronounce it like “tae”. A dialect is more than just accent, because different dialects use different vocabularies and may structure sentences differently than Americans. A Scotsman might use “wee bairn” to describe a small child, where Americans might use “little kid” instead. So different is Scots English that some linguists even consider it a separate language.

There are other forms and uses of language as well. In places where two or more languages are spoken, a **pidgin language** may develop. Pidgin languages are simplified versions of a language or several languages that help people communicate, especially in matters of trade or business. Lots of pidgin languages have formed around the world, especially in border areas and in places where colonial empires were built. Sometimes a pidgin will become more complex and evolve into a language in its own right; a native tongue. Linguists call these newly

created tongues *creole languages*. Most creole languages remain unofficial, but some like Haitian Creole, a blend of French and West African languages, become an official language with rules about spelling and syntax, formally taught in schools, etc.

Louisiana has a fascinating mixture of all these elements. Louisiana Creole, the creolized language of many people in south and southwestern Louisiana is spoken by people who call themselves Creoles. It, like the language of Haiti, is a hybrid of French and African languages, plus probably a healthy

dose of Haitian Creole as well. Many other people in the region speak a variant called “Cajun French”, which is less a creolized language, and more a very wayward dialect of Canadian French. The popular culture chapter in this text discusses how the linguistic differences among French speakers in South Louisiana is express in terms of music and ethnic identity.

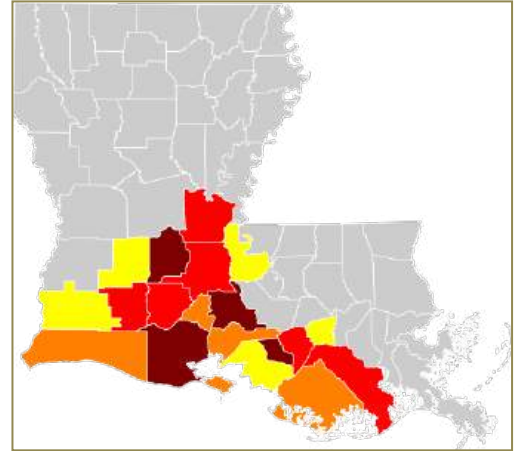


Figure 4-1: Linguistic Map of Louisiana
Percent of Persons Speaking French at Home.
Yellow – 4-10%; Orange 10-15%; Red 15-20%; Dark Red: 20-30%. Source: http://www.mla.org/map_data

Language on the Landscape

Spoken languages, like songs, jokes and other intangible elements of culture is a *mentifact*, and is therefore invisible on the landscape. However, written elements of language are quite common on the landscape in the form of signs. Because signs generally have words on them, they provide an easy and fascinating opportunity to

practice reading the landscape, as a geographer. Be careful though, because frequently the words on the landscape do not “tell” the same story as the landscape in which they are found. Consider for example, a sign that is not uncommon near the entrances to college or high school campuses that reads, “This is a drug free campus”. Do you believe that there are any college campuses free of drugs? There are probably few high schools that could legitimately claim to be drug free, and even fewer colleges. Why do



Figure 4-2: Motel Sign. The sign above, once just off U.S. 101 in Oxnard, California made use of a font that conformed to the “western” theme used by the business to attract tourists. This helped reinforce their effort to sell “down home cooking” and “friendly hospitality”. How do you think the aqua background and the use of neon (visible at night) fit with the overall motif of the business?

you think then, school administrators would place a sign like that on a campus? Are they naïve? Are they making claims for political gain? Are they just trying to create a drug-free environment and believe that a sign will encourage students to abstain from using drugs? If you see a sign proclaiming something that is clearly false, or laughably untrue, and you realize that the location in which the sign is erected makes it obvious the message on the sign is erroneous, then you are reading the landscape. Try reading the landscape of the house in the photo below.



Figure 4-3: House with Realtor Sign: Attempt to read the sign and landscape of the photo of this working class neighborhood in Louisiana above. Can you spot the irony? Focus your attention on the sign and the windows of the house in the foreground.

Not only are words inscribed on signs occasionally misleading, but often they don't match the media or materials used in the sign. For example, a sign made of wood might be appropriate and effective for a restaurant specializing in Bar-B-Q ribs or cowboy boots, but would seem inappropriate and misleading for a store that sold laptop computers or high-definition televisions.

World Languages

There are hundreds of languages around the world and many thousands more dialects. Often, the world's languages are arranged into a sort of family tree, with languages that share similarities occupying a close spot on a branch and more distant relatives sharing a common *proto-language* that forms the trunk of the tree, much like an ancestor who died thousands of years would on a human family tree.

The major world language families are Indo-European, Sino-Tibetan, Afro-Asiatic and the Niger-Congo. The distribution is displayed on the map below.

With nearly a billion speakers, more people communicate using Mandarin Chinese, a Sino-Tibetan language, than with any other in the world. However, there are multiple dialects of Chinese, so you may find that even in the United States people from China who are from Beijing have a hard time understanding other Chinese

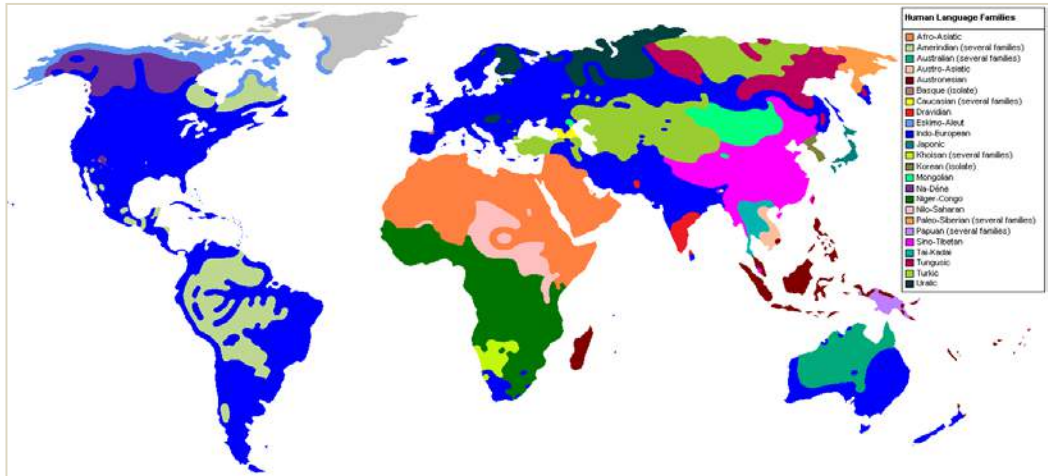


Figure 4-4: Map of Major World Language Families. Note that much of India and Southwest Asia share a common language with Europe. What does this suggest about ancient migration patterns? Why do you suppose the people of Madagascar speak a language related to Malaysia, rather than East Africa?

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ed/Primary_Human_Language_Families_Map.png Source: By PiMaster3 (Own work) [CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons

immigrants who came from Guangdong province in Southern China. The Chinese language has been translated into English using several different systems over the years, so you may find older Americans (or older maps) calling China's capital city things like Peiping or Peking. The Chinese use a character based *orthography* or writing system that has a complex relationship to the spoken language. Chinese characters (logograms) have been adapted for use in Korea, Japan and Vietnam; even though those languages are not in the Sino-Tibetan language family. Because Chinese characters represent entire words, literate Chinese readers must know over 3,000. An even bigger challenge has been designing software that can write Chinese using a standard computer keyboard (or cell phone key pad) developed for another language system, using around 50 keys. Several ingenious methods have been invented, but each requires significant effort and may have implications for the adoption of certain technologies by Asians using a character based writing system.

The second most commonly spoken language is Spanish, a member of the Indo-European language family and one of a number of Romance languages that evolved from a common ancestor known as Vulgar Latin. While certainly there were swear words in that language, "vulgar" in this instance refers to its use among the *common* people (unlike Classical Latin). Other Romance languages include, Portuguese, Italian, French and Romanian. There may be as many as two dozen additional Romance languages (Catalan, Romansh, Sicilian, etc.) Many of the less well known members of the Romance family are found in mountainous locations, on



Figure 4-5: Languages in Europe. This map displays many of the language boundaries of Europe. Note how often the boundaries follow physiographic features on the lands, such as mountains or water bodies. http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/14/Languages_of_Europe_map.png

***MAP READING:** When languages and language families are drawn on a map, those languages that are similar should be drawn using the same color family. In the map above Slavic languages of Eastern Europe (Russian, Polish, etc.) all share shades of green, while Basque, which is not related to any family is marked in yellow.*

islands or other isolated locations. Each language in this language family will feature words and linguistic structures that are similar, but they remain generally unintelligible to speakers of other Romance languages.

In addition to the Slavic languages of Eastern Europe, the other major linguistic family in Europe is Germanic which dominates Northern Europe. English, German, Dutch as well as the languages of Scandinavia are related. Most people in North America speak English, as do other locations that were once part of the British Empire. In fact, the map of world languages offers important clues into the military history of the world. Languages, as well as other elements of common culture, were carried by armies and navies where ever they roamed.

German and English are closely related members of the Germanic language family, but English has become the most international of all languages, with more people speaking it than any other. English isn't a particularly easy language to learn, it includes an enormous number of words adopted from other languages; loads of irregular spellings and verbs, and the it is awash in slang; so why has it become the world's most popular second language? The answers lie mostly in the political and military prowess of England and the United States. British naval power and their

ambitious colonization program during the 18 and 19th centuries expanded the use of English around the globe. During the 20th century, the United States' ascension into the realm of military and technological superpower elevated the status of English even further. An example can be found on jet airliners around the world. Most communication between pilots (and traffic controllers) is in English in large part because the airplane was invented by Americans and the British began the first international commercial flights. It's similar to the doctrine of first effective settlement, discussed earlier, but now with a technology. Consider the other technologies, invented by Americans, and used worldwide. Many users, especially early adopters of such technologies, find them easier to use if they know English. Certainly, the massive cultural influence of rock and hip hop, plus the success of Hollywood has spread the appeal of English worldwide.

COOL LINK

[HTTP://WWW.FESTIVAL.SLEU/2013/ONE_WORLD_MANY_VOICES/MAP.ASPX](http://www.festival.sleu/2013/one-world-many-voices/map.aspx)

Some locations, particularly those that were difficult for armies or navies to conquer boast unique languages. Locations that are isolated by high mountains, on islands, across vast wastelands or deep in swamps have a tendency to house people who speak uncommon languages. Hungarians and Finns speak a language that is different than most of the rest of Europe. People on the islands of Corsica and Sardinia speak a language similar, but different than their neighbors in Italy. Others, like Armenian and Greek are very far removed from their “cousins” on the Indo-European family tree, and so are called *linguistic isolates*.

Perhaps the best example of this is found in the Eastern Pyrenees Mountains of Spain and France where people speak Basque. This language is so unique, that it appears to be unrelated to any other in the world. There are theories that suggest the language is exceptionally old, perhaps dating back around 40,000 years, before the time that most European's ancestors

migrated (with their proto-language) into Europe. Some genetic evidence suggests there has been less interbreeding between Basque people and their European neighbors, which may account for how this language survived when presumably other very old European languages went extinct. The rugged mountains where Basques have lived for thousands of years surely played a role in protecting their language and culture from invasion and succession.



Figure 4-6: Basque Restaurant, San Miguel, California. Basques came to the United States and largely settled in California where the landscape resembles their home territory in Spain.

Over the centuries, membership in a language or even a language family has proven critical in the fates of both individuals, regions and nations. When the Germanic Archduke of Austria Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo by a Bosnian Serb, it touched off World War I. Though there were numerous additional reasons for the First World War, the first alliances were based on linguistic alliances. The Russians had agreed to help their Slavic cousins in Serbia. The Germans were allied with the Germanic Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The earliest rumblings of World War II in Europe were also generated when Adolph Hitler attempted to expand Germany's borders to include parts of neighboring countries where a significant population of German speakers lived. German speaking Austria was effectively became part of Germany in early 1938. Nazi Germany later that year forcibly annexed parts of Czechoslovakia known as "the Sudetenland" because the language created a right to take that land for Germany. Later all of the Czech and Slovak areas were taken. It was when Germany invaded Poland, to take land where the language was once primarily German, World War II began.

It should be noted that many wars have been fought between people of similar linguistic heritage, (Germany vs. England, e.g.), but the longstanding alliances between the U.S. and other English speaking nations of the world is no doubt a product of the way our common language has shaped a common core of values that bind us in ways that are especially strong.

COOL LINK:
MODERN
LANGUAGE
ASSOCIATION
MAP DATA
CENTER

[HTTP://WWW.ML
A.ORG/MAP_D
ATA](http://www.mla.org/map_data_center)

American Dialects

Your ability to communicate efficiently with other Americans may depend on where you (or perhaps your parents) grew up. Some parts of the United States have very distinct dialects that others find challenging to understand. People in the Midwest and much of the West Coast, on the other hand, speak a kind of "ordinary" American English that is used by national television news anchors, and spokespersons for various products advertised on TV and radio.

There are quite a few regional dialects in the United States. Some argue that distinct dialects exist within different boroughs of New York City, or that Cincinnati has its own dialect. The map in figure ff is a very clever use of youtube videos to plot differences in the pronunciation of words can be found in the US. However, the main dialect regions



Figure 4-7: Menu Sign This menu sign from Jim's Steaks in Philadelphia uses the word "Hoagie" to refer to the large breaded sandwich, that most of the United States calls a "sub" sandwich. Can you think of other words for these sandwiches?

COOL LINK:

[HTTP://ASCHMAN.N.NET/AMENG/#LARGEMAP](http://aschman.n.net/ameng/#LARGEMAP)

in the United States align reasonably close to the main folk culture regions. In the northeastern states, they speak in the family of Yankee dialects. In much of the Mid-Atlantic and Midwest, people use the Midland dialect, and the South is broken into Upland and Lowland Southern dialects.



Figure 4-8: Water Tower - Florence, Kentucky. This monumental sign welcomes motorists leaving "the North" into "the South" just below Cincinnati on Interstate 75. Why do you think the vernacular "Y'ALL" is included so prominently?

Mapping Dialects

Maps of dialects in the United States are fascinating to inspect, generating a lot of laughs at the "crazy things" other Americans say; but keep in mind there are significant cultural differences frequently at play as well. You should check out Joshua Katz's excellent dialect survey and the accompanying maps. Possibly the most entertaining for students is the "What do you call a soft drink?" question. Most Americans use "pop" or "soda", but in much of the south, people use the word "Coke" to refer to any soft drink, even a Pepsi or a Dr. Pepper. This is funny to others, but you probably use "Frisbee" to refer to a flying disc, or perhaps "Kleenex" to refer to a facial tissue.

LISTEN:

[A TOUR OF BRITISH ACCENTS](#)

LISTEN:

[TOUR OF AMERICAN ACCENTS](#)

COOL LINK:

[REGIONAL DIALECT MAPS OF THE US](#)

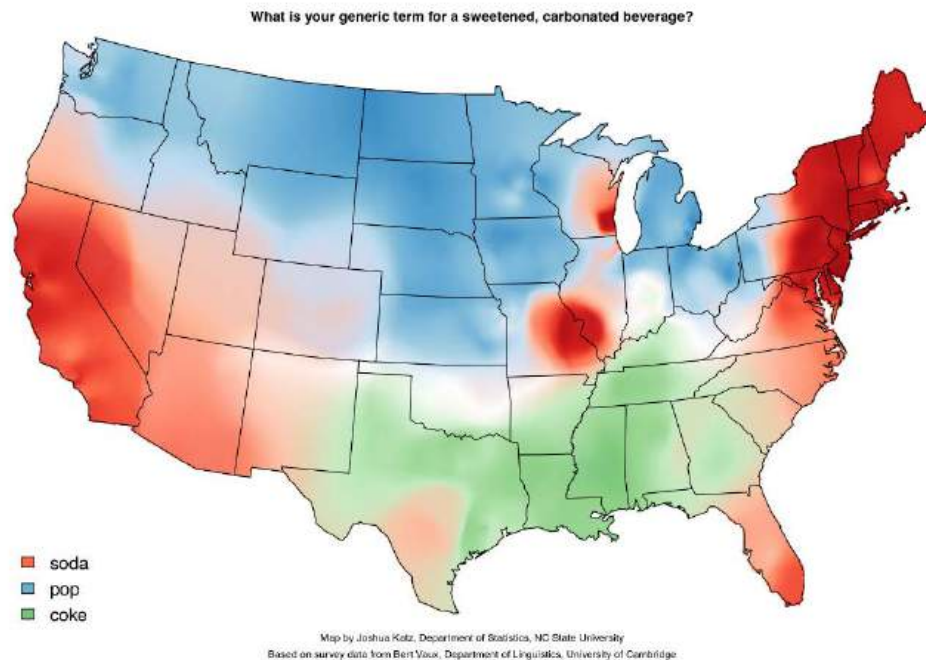


Figure 4-9: This map depicts where people use the words, "pop" - blue, or "coke" - green, or "soda" -red, to refer to a soft drink.

Why Omaha?

Have you ever called a toll free (1-800-) phone number to order some product, make hotel reservations, or get service for something like your internet connection or cable television? If you have, there's a chance you've been connected to an American from another part of the United States. Sometimes, you'll be connected to someone from India, Ireland or the Philippines. Maybe you were connected to a "computer voice" that prompted to push buttons and enter data with your key pad. Did you have trouble understanding the accent of the person on the line? Did they have trouble understanding you? Difficult phone calls to toll free numbers are more common today than they once were. They are partly a product of cost saving strategies by companies, and a general lack of concern for customer service. From the late 1970s, when toll free calling began to become common through the early 1990s, the operator on the receiving end of many 1-800 calls was likely to be in Omaha, Nebraska.

LISTEN :

[OMAHA,](#)
[NEBRASKA](#)

LISTEN :

[WESTERN](#)
[NORTH](#)
[CAROLINA](#)

LISTEN :

[TANGIERS](#)
[ISLAND,](#)
[VIRGINIA](#)

LISTEN :

[OUTER BANKS,](#)
[NORTH](#)
[CAROLINA](#)

LISTEN :

[SOUTH](#)
[LOUISIANA](#)

LISTEN :

[SEA ISLANDS,](#)
[SOUTH](#)
[CAROLINA](#)

This Midwestern city has developed as one of the leading cities in the United States for telecommunication because of its central location. During the Cold War, the US military placed the Strategic Air Command just outside Omaha. This central, but isolated, location made it harder for other countries to strike at this key element of our national defense. Because the Strategic Air Command was nearby, Omaha benefitted from the nation's most advanced (and secure) telecommunications network. This telecom-munications network permitted nearby businesses to experiment with toll free call centers. Nebraska's location in the Central Time zone made Omaha more convenient for workers there to make and receive calls from both coasts. Perhaps most importantly, the local dialect is what some linguists call "Middle American". This accent or dialect is the most ordinary and easy to understand speech pattern in the US for most Americans. Is it any surprise that a city located on a plain, in the center of the continental United States would have a "neutral" accent? The growth of the call center industry in Omaha spurred on additional growth in telecommunications, high tech and other service industries. Had Omaha been isolated by mountains, or swamps; or if it was on the coast, not only would its dialect be quite different, but so would its economy (and probably politics, religion and other elements of its culture).

Several places in the United States have site and/or situations that are partly responsible for significant linguistic differences from what folks in Omaha have experienced.

Appalachian English, sometimes affectionately (sometimes derogatorily) referred to as "hillbilly", is commonly spoken by people by many people who live in the less accessible reaches of the Appalachian (and Ozark) Mountains. Many of the people who moved into these areas during the 18th and 19th century were from Scotland or Ireland. Their speech patterns, though certainly changed since those times, have perhaps undergone fewer changes because the inaccessibility of those regions discouraged waves of immigrants from elsewhere. Because these locations have been spatially *isolated*, there's a good chance that dialect innovations made by

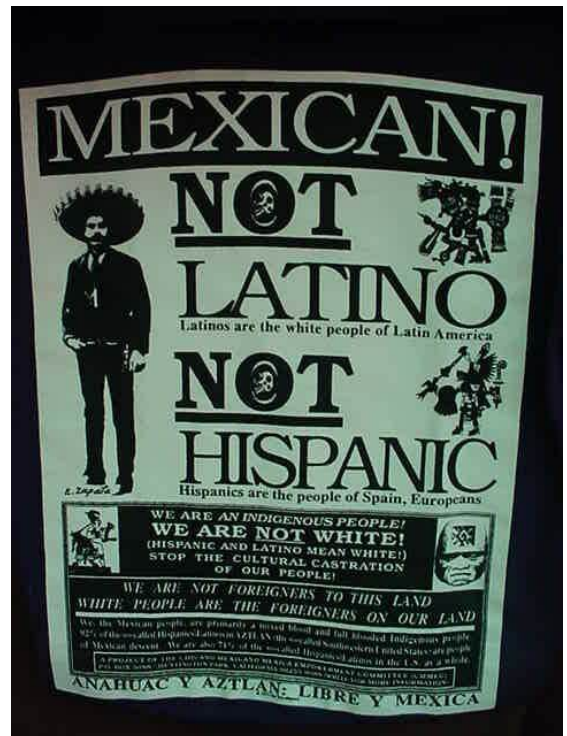
people in these mountains are prone to spreading throughout the neighboring communities, but rarely enter the speech patterns of the rest of the United States. Similarly isolated dialects can be found in other remote locations, such as islands or in swamps. Check out the links on the left.

Ethnicity and Dialect

Ethnicity is frequently expressed through dialect; and conversely a dialect may be a marker of one's ethnicity. Geographers contend that both are products of the peculiar spatial experience of each group. Each of the dialects spoken in the United States, or anywhere for that matter, bears the mark of the ethnicities and therefore source points of the people who once lived there.

So for example, the dialects of New York City bears the imprint of the massive numbers of Italian, Irish and other second wave immigrants that moved there in the mid-19th century. They adopted English, but retained some elements of the languages and dialects they brought across the Atlantic. Intermarriage and decades of living and working together no doubt created dialects that *hybridized* elements of speech into a new working whole.

Today, speech patterns in regions of the US that border Mexico are progressively reflecting the influence of the many Spanish speaking immigrants that live there, so that many places it is easy to find people using a hybridized "Spanglish". These influences may be much, much older though. African American Vernacular English, sometimes called Ebonics, demonstrates not only the power of place, but perhaps also the stubbornness of cultural change.



Ebonics is a source of some controversy for a couple of reasons. In 1996, the Oakland, California school board passed a resolution recognizing "Ebonics" as language. This sparked some measure of outrage among politicians and pundits, many of whom characterized Ebonics as mostly lazy, street slang. The primary motivation of the Oakland School Board was to find additional funding to help black students in their district better master standard American English by tapping into funds used to teach English as a second language. Linguists were generally sympathetic to the side of the Oakland school board and weighed in with studies

NEW YORK TIMES
EDITORIAL:
[OAKLAND AND
EBONICS - 1997](#)

that show that a proper understanding student's home dialect or language was useful for teachers who sought to instruct students in Standard English.

COOL LINK:
 PBS.ORG "DO
 YOU SPEAK
 AMERICAN" -
 EBONICS

The controversy in Oakland revealed several interesting issues for cultural geographers. First, it is curious how some everyday practices like language exert a special resistance to cultural change. In this case, elements of African language systems appear to, even after centuries, remain lodged the speech patterns of many black folks today. Second, the controversy highlighted the important role space and place plays in the maintenance (and diffusion) of dialects. The long history of social, and later spatial, ghettoization of Blacks has helped preserve relic speech patterns brought from Africa. The effects of isolating people on an island/mountain/swamp was somewhat replicated elsewhere in the US through restrictive covenants and other discriminatory housing practices. It is also apparent to anyone who has listened to the speech of white southerners, or urban white folks who were raised in predominantly Black neighborhoods (or regions) that those speech patterns easily transcend racial and ethnic lines. Finally, the Ebonics controversy of the mid-1990s, was depressing because of the rush to judgment by those who knew nothing of linguistics. The vitriolic response in the media to an suggestion that a dialect might be given some of the same pedagogic considerations as a language was surprising. The dimensions of the controversy highlighted very clearly how important language is to the creation and maintenance of political-cultural order.

Toponyms – Place Name Geography

Toponyms are the words we use to name places. Toponyms are applied to huge places, like "Russia", and to small places like "Windsor Arms Apartments". Toponyms, if they are interpreted carefully, may offer a number of clues into the history of a location and the priorities of the people (or person) who named a place.

Many of the place names that are very common to us, those used to refer to states, cities and towns are compound terms. These toponyms often utilize a generic indicator and a specific one. For example, Charleston, Boston and Newton are all city names that have the "–ton" suffix, which is a short-hand way of writing "town". So you could read "Charleston" as "Charles' Town", especially if you're in South Carolina. As you might guess there was some famous "Charles" years ago (King Charles II of England) for whom the town was named. The use of the word "town" or "ton" is an indication that the founders of Charleston were not only English, but also happy with the king; which in turn should also suggest *when* Charleston was founded – well before the unrest that led to the



American Revolution. Charleston, West Virginia, founded around the time of the Revolution, was *not* named after any English King, but still uses an English generic suffix.

The English weren't the only folks who settled in the United States, so there are numerous other generic terms for "town" scattered across the landscape. In those areas where German speakers settled in large numbers, town names have a tendency to use "burg". Pennsylvania has lots of "burgs", including Pittsburgh. Sometimes, as in the case of Pittsburgh, "burgh" appears to be a corruption of the word "borough", an Anglo term for an administrative district in a town or rural township. The corruption may have come courtesy of the many Germans who settled in these areas. Because German and English are quite closely related, the evolution of town names was both easy and common. Other common markers of German settlement in the U.S. can be found in the numerous cities named in honor of German cities; including multiple places in the US named Hanover, Berlin or Hamburg.

Where the French settled in large numbers in North America, towns with the suffix "-ville", as in Louisville, are common. Many of these are in Louisiana, where French speakers were once very dominant in the southern reaches of the state. Still, there are many dozens of other cities with French names as well, including Detroit, St. Louis and Des Moines.

Other immigrant groups, especially those that settled rural areas have left their mark on the landscape, even though many other cultural elements have disappeared. Russians, Poles, Italians, and other came later so there are fewer toponyms associated with these groups. Far more common are cities that have names supplied by the American Indians. Chicago, Milwaukee and Seattle are perhaps the largest, but perhaps far more common are names for physical features, like rivers, mountains and valleys.

A good example of American cultural hybridization can be found in places like Anaheim, California (home of Disneyland). This town's name combines a reference to Saint Anne (or St. Hannah – revered particularly in Greek Orthodox and Islam), originally applied to the "Santa Ana" by the Spanish missionary Junipero Serra. Later "Ana" was adopted by German settlers who added "-heim" (home) in order to indicate "home by the Santa Ana".

Toponymy and Place Marketing

Toponyms are also used to great effect by real estate developers, who seek to convince potential home buyers, or even renters of the quality of their location or their building. One of the most common ways real estate people market their land and buildings is by making an "appeal to snobbery". It's a simple ploy that frequently uses a reference to a place or activity associated with rich or powerful people. For example, an apartment complex on Maple Street, might be named

“Chateau Des Maples”, to make it sound French, and therefore more exotic. A gated community trying to appeal to upscale homebuyers might be dubbed “The Oaks at Hunter Crossing” in order to evoke large landed estates, where wealthy folks who engage in sports like fox hunting might live. The more comical efforts at leveraging snob appeal appear on the signs of liquor stores, or nightclubs in rundown neighborhoods. Casinos have employed this strategy for years, cashing in on the ability of the landscape to make people feel like “high rollers”. It’s really quite silly once you think about it; but clearly it is effective or it wouldn’t be so very common place.



Figure 4-10 Mall Sign, Agoura, California: This sign made of materials, and engaging terminology that evokes exclusivity in attempt to generate 'snob appeal' for businesses here.

Language and the Environment

The environment shapes language and in turn, attitudes about nature are shaped by language. There are the obvious things, like the large number of words in Castilian Spanish for rough, hilly terrain versus English. However, it is probably a myth to argue that Eskimos have 50 words for snow. The point is that languages do adapt to the physical environment so that their speakers have a better chance of surviving.

A new line of research in linguistics finds that other elements in the environment may have an effect on the way language *sounds*. One anthropologist recently found that languages developed in high latitudes with “ejective sounds” using a burst of are more common among cultures living at high altitudes.

Another fascinating recent study of particular interest to geographers is from the world of cognitive psychology. Researchers have found that the way people think spatially is shaped by their language. For example, Australian Aboriginals who speak Kuuk Thaayorre, don’t have words for left and right, so in order to give people directions or even remark on something mundane, like “there’s a bug on your left leg”, they must reference cardinal directions (north, south, east and west). In order to do that, they must know at all times where they are. You



Figure 4-11: Road Sign, West Texas - The word "draw" is a regional expression for a stream. In other parts of the US, you'll find locals use words like: river, creek, brook, wash, or run.

RESEARCH
FINDINGS:

HIGH
ALTITUDES AND
SPOKEN
LANGUAGES.

RESEARCH
FINDINGS:

LANGUAGE
AFFECTS HOW
YOU THINK.

must know which way is north too if you're going to understand which leg has a bug on it. If you turn in fright, then a new instruction would have to be issued. For people born into languages that rely upon cardinal directions, their brains become hard wired like a GPS. They are acutely aware of where they are at all times, and researchers have found it difficult to disorient even small children by blindfolding them, placing them in windowless rooms, etc. These effects spill over into many other areas as well, including how people experience time and how they see cause and effect. It's just another example of *what you know* being shaped by *how you know* it. It reminds us to pause a moment before dismiss what others think of as "truth".

CHAPTER END MATTERS

Chapter

5

CHAPTER 5 RELIGION

Most people believe in the supernatural and consider it sacred. Those beliefs help many cope with the stresses and joys of life. At one point, those stresses and joys were as often as not a product of human interaction with the natural environment. Today, religion reflects and conditions our interaction with the natural environment, but also many other aspects of our daily lives.

What is it?

Religion comes in many forms. Most scholars characterize **religion** as a system of beliefs that connect humans to the supernatural. Religious beliefs and practices are generally considered *sacred* because practitioners believe these rules, rituals, and beliefs were conceived by a supernatural power, god(s) or person that has extraordinary power or insight. Religion is also generally practiced in a group setting, so those committed to a religion, or **adherents**, are bound by beliefs and practices that become the basis for group and individual identities. Religious beliefs and practices are a product of the natural and social environments from which they evolved and in turn critically inform the adherents how they should think and act about a wide range of issues, from politics to economics to interaction with the natural environment.

Religion *in general* is hard to characterize though because it comes in so many different forms. One way of categorizing religions is to look at how a religion gets new members. Some religions actively recruit people into their faith. You may have had young men in white shirts and black ties come to



Figure 5-1: Mission Church - San Gabriel, California. Mission church architecture was surely a tool to help Catholic missionaries attract local Indians who had no formal architectural traditions.

your door and encourage you to join the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. These missionaries from the Latter Day Saints church, known as Mormons, are members of one of the more high profile *proselytic faiths*. These are *universal religions* because anyone can join. Most Christians actively seek new members, and many go to great lengths to achieve that goal. Other religions rarely proselytize. Closed religions are called *ethnic religions*, and generally you have to be born into them to become part of that religious group. Judaism and Hinduism are the two best known ethnic religions; so it would be very rare indeed to have a Jewish rabbi invite you to temple so that you might consider becoming a Jew.



Religions can also be lumped together on other criteria. Religions can have a single god or many gods. Those focused on a single *deity* are called *monotheistic*. Islam, Christianity and Judaism consider themselves monotheistic religions. Other religions have multiple deities, with various responsibilities, personalities and capabilities. The religions of Ancient Greece and Rome are the best examples of polytheistic religions. Some religions are *pantheistic* in which the divine is everywhere and in everything. Practitioners of some religions direct their energies inward in an attempt to achieve an elevated state of mind, while others seek paradise through outward deeds or acts of devotion. Frequently these categories get messy and overlap in many ways.

Some religions are easy to recognize for Americans. Adherents meet regularly as a group, or *congregation*, in a building. Some religions are harder to recognize. They may not have a building, or meet in groups. Other presumably *profane* (i.e. not sacred) belief systems make take on many of the characteristics of a religion: they may have texts that are treated as sacred, or nearly sacred; they may have many followers who engage in well-practiced rituals; they may even have holidays, and special clothes for priest-like figures. Fascism and Marxism, for example, have been likened to religion. Whether that is a fair characterization is certainly open for debate.

Even within a single religion, there are frequently lots of sub-divisions or *denominations*, and within those sub-divisions, even more sub-divisions and so on. Even with a single small group of believers or congregation, individuals will interpret or understand religious doctrine or practice differently, making it difficult to say much definitively about any specific set of beliefs.



Frequently, small religions, or denominations within a religion are called *cults*. This can be a derogatory term, but isn't necessarily so. Many conservative Christians characterize Mormonism as a cult. So when Mitt Romney, a Mormon, ran for President in 2012, there was some consternation from some sectors. Of course, many of these same people were convinced that President Obama was Muslim, so it may have had a negligible effect on the outcome.

What does it look like? The Landscape of Religion

Religious practice shapes the landscape in a myriad of ways. The landscape is capable of revealing a great deal about the belief systems and values of the dominant or even minority religions of a place or region.

Christian churches are the most obvious part of the religious landscape of the United States. Churches may be grandiose, like many Catholic Churches, or simple like the buildings used by the Amish. Both rely upon a particular understanding of the Bible. Lots of other religions have temples, shrines and other houses of worship as well that sometimes pass unrecognized by Christians. Dozens of other spaces on the landscape are given special consideration as



sacred space, including cemeteries, mountains, trees, and other more unusual spots.

For some, clearly the architecture of the church reflects the desire of its congregation to glorify their God. They attempt to create as best they can a monument worthy of a "House of God". Catholic churches, and certainly their cathedrals and basilicas qualify as monuments. Inspiring architecture may help people feel the presence of the supernatural, instruct the faithful or recruit new converts. Consider how useful stained glass artwork would have been to telling stories from the Bible a century ago, when congregations may have had poor literacy skills. Consider the impact of what we would today consider modest, the mission churches of California upon the mission priests' ability to recruit Indian converts in the late 18th century. Architecture, and landscape in general is a very powerful communicative medium.

Approaching in size and grandeur of the Catholic buildings are many new mega-churches, which have become popular in the Deep South among Evangelical Christians. These churches, which are sometimes called "Six Flags Over Jesus" by local towns people, may feature multiple buildings; gymnasiums, classrooms,

coffee shops and bookstores, in addition to the more common chapels and rectories. These churches offer a lot of services for the convenience of their congregations, and therefore are easy to justify as great recruiting tools. Churches would claim that buildings that bring people to the faith are worth the cost and effort. Still the extravagance of the building programs has created some controversy. Some feel that these mega-churches threaten to overwhelm, and destroy smaller congregations without the money to compete. Government officials and businesses have also occasionally questioned the tax-exempt status of churches that appear to operate in as business enterprises.



Elaborate church buildings also draw the scorn of those who believe that Christian doctrine calls the faithful to “go humbly before the lord” in all areas of life. Amish and certain orders of the Mennonites are the two groups in the US that perhaps best embody this notion. Some of the more conservative Amish groups don’t build church buildings at all, but rather gather to worship in private homes. This is because they focus on a particular passage in the Bible that suggests that God “does not dwell in temples made with hands”.

Other congregations also prefer simple church architecture. Some of the oldest churches in America, those built by Puritans in New England adhered to strict rules regarding simplicity. They built churches without stained glass, crucifixes, or statues or other artwork. The buildings were generally square, to help enforce communalism and also functioned as the civic center as well; because there was not yet a separation between church and state. Many other congregations have carried forth the tradition of very simple churches, believing important to spend precious church monies on things other than buildings.



Of course impoverished congregations lack funds to build elaborate churches, so they may seek out buildings that were not originally designed as sacred space. The adaptive reuse of profane space as sacred space brings into question the process by which spaces become sacred. What process, for example, transforms an abandoned gas station or convenience store into a proper church? Can any place be a “House of God” or are certain places unavailable for such a distinction.

Shrines

Clearly the practice of turning profane, ordinary, spaces into sacred ones is commonplace. In areas where Catholicism is prevalent, small folk-art shrines, generally dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and enclosed in an artificial grotto; sometimes fashioned out of an old bathtub, thereby lending the colorful name “Bathtub Mary”, or “Madonna on the Half Shell” to these home-made devotional



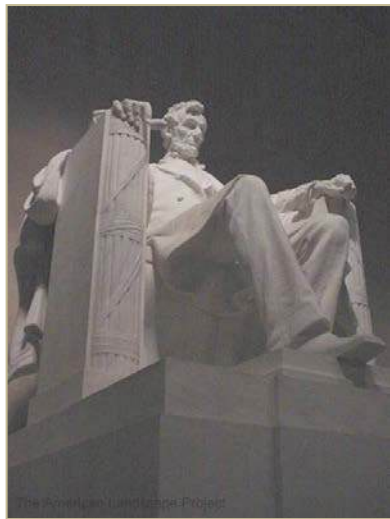
spaces. Similar are the impromptu, frequently temporary shrines erected to victims of car crashes or other accidents. Candles, crosses, crudely painted bicycles and other memorabilia may be piled together at the site of an accident, temporarily creating sacred space for the unfortunate few who may have known the victim.

Occasionally, the site of a particularly public tragedy will instantly become sacred space; inviting religious-like pilgrimage and even *dark tourism*. The “ground zero” location in New York City, Dealy Plaza in Dallas and Ford’s Theater in Washington, D.C. have taken on elements of sacred space because people come to remember, grieve and engage metaphysical questions. Behavior in such locations often approximates that which one would witness in more formally recognized sacred spaces; with people talking in hushed / reverent tones, etc. Other spaces in the United States, like the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. have taken on the status of quasi-sacred space.



Religious Holiday Space –

Religious holidays, particularly Christmas, transforms a great deal of public space into quasi-religious space. Most of it is rather mundane, and quite removed from any sort of actual religious doctrine or practice, such as what one might find in shopping malls, or along roadsides. So, even though Santa Claus and Saint Nick are obviously tied to the Christian tradition, they are also widely embraced as symbols of a public holiday that is celebrated enthusiastically by non-Christians and even in non-Christian nations, like Japan. More controversial though is the use of



more purely public space, like courthouses or parks for the display of crosses and menorahs during holidays. Judges frequently have to decide exactly when and how specific public spaces can be used for what purposes.

Other examples of an uneasy intersection of church and state occur when public funds are used to promote, organize or otherwise regulate large religious festivals. Mardi Gras, which for the faithful, is a celebration preceding the start of the Lenten fasting season attracts huge crowds, many of who are tourists, to New Orleans each year. Many other towns in the Gulf Coast regions have public celebrations, frequently including a parade. St. Patrick's Day parades, Halloween festivals and many other such celebrations require significant public endorsement, but seem to pass without controversy.



Cemeteries

Cemeteries are common landscapes that often function as religious space, though they are often regulated and maintained by the public. How a society treats the corpses of their dead, and how they treat the places where the dead are buried (if they bury their dead) may reveal a great deal about the beliefs of the people who build them.

The Abrahamic faiths generally have a similar set of beliefs about the “end of time” in which humans, and the remains of humans shall reconcile with the divine. For this reason, it is tradition for people in these faiths to bury their dead so that the remains of the deceased may be



brought back to life, or resurrected in some form at the end of time. This belief has multiple implications in geography, not the least of which is the amount of space given over hosting the remains of the dead, especially in large cities like New York; or very old cities like Cairo. Some cultures hold these grounds inviolable. Other traditions are more flexible, allowing for the removal of remains from gravesites so that the space may be re-used or recycled. Some burial sites may add new remains to existing mausoleums, or crypts; particularly when a family “owns” a particular site.

Before the 20th century it was common practice in many parts of the United States to buried loved ones somewhere on a family's property. Backyard cemeteries may



have made sense generations ago, but are generally forbidden today for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the fate of cemeteries upon the sale of a property. Many Americans find cemeteries “creepy”, so having a number of unknown people buried in your backyard would be even more so. It’s certainly enough to inspire movies, like *Poltergeist*, among others.

Americans’ attitudes toward cemeteries have evolved. The Puritans of New England paid little attention to matters of cemeteries and gravestones. All were buried without much ceremony in a common plot, often without permanent markers. Later, New Englanders marked burial plots with morbid-looking “winged death heads” and “skull and crossbone” imagery to remind the living of their own mortality. Later, as religious practice evolved, so did the nature and variety of grave markers; as well as the function of cemeteries. For some time during the 19th century, cemeteries were treated much like parks are treated today, a place where death and dying could be encountered in a pleasant, tranquil setting; a place for a stroll or a picnic. The design aesthetics of these early cemeteries influenced the development of public park space in the United States.

Traditional “monumental” cemeteries are costly and difficult to maintain. Headstones marking the location of burial sites erode, crack and break. Wealthier families, especially generations ago, were also prone to building large monuments to family patriarchs in an attempt to raise the stature of the deceased in perpetuity. Of course, over many generations they too deteriorate and may become hazards. The cost of simply trimming grass has led to the popularization of “memorial garden” type cemeteries that have only flat grave markers that permit lawn tractors to mow grass quickly and efficiently. The sight of heavy machinery passing over the remains of loved ones may violate the sense of propriety for some. The other “problem” with lawn-style cemeteries is the uniformity of the gravestones. Many people hate the thought of commemorating a loved one with a generic marker, so they leave mementos or plant flowers; which undermines the ease of maintenance.

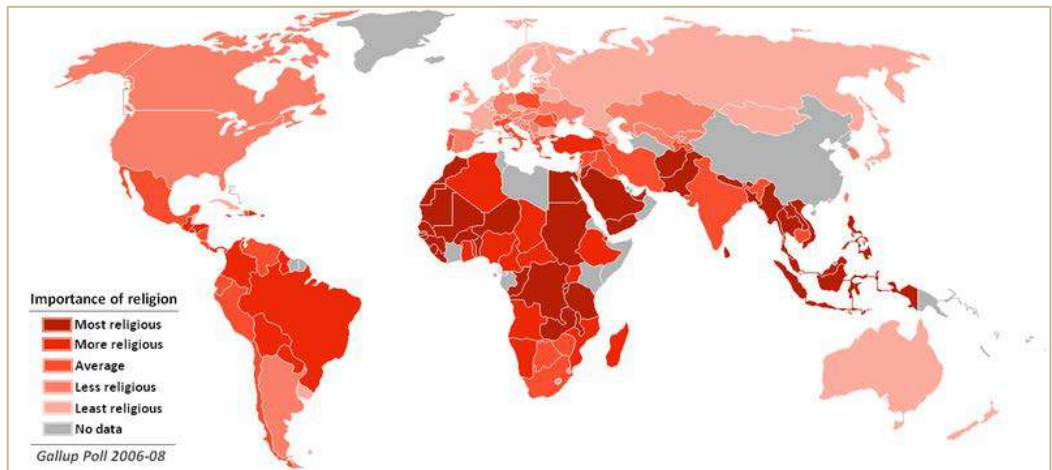
More recently, the costs associated with burials have invited an increasing number of people to consider cremation, or “natural burial” to mitigate the environmental consequences of conventional American burial rituals which often involve a large number of processes that slow down the inevitable decomposition of a corpse. Natural burials exclude coffins, burial vaults, embalming and traditional headstones, etc.

Where is it?: Religious Realms

Most people in the world adhere to some sort of belief, however most people belong to one of

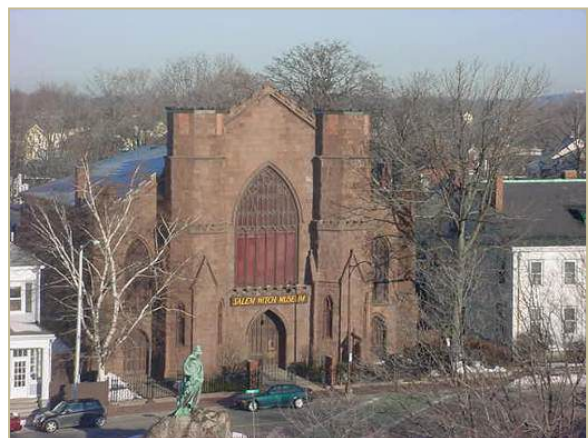


two major world religion families: Abrahamic and Indian. Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Judaism and Islam) all evolved in the Middle East, cover much of the world today and share a number of commonalities. Indian Religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Shinto, etc.) evolved on the Indian subcontinent and spread northeast across Asia. People who are not part of either of these grand traditions, may adhere to a local (or folk) religion; or may not belong to any particular religion.

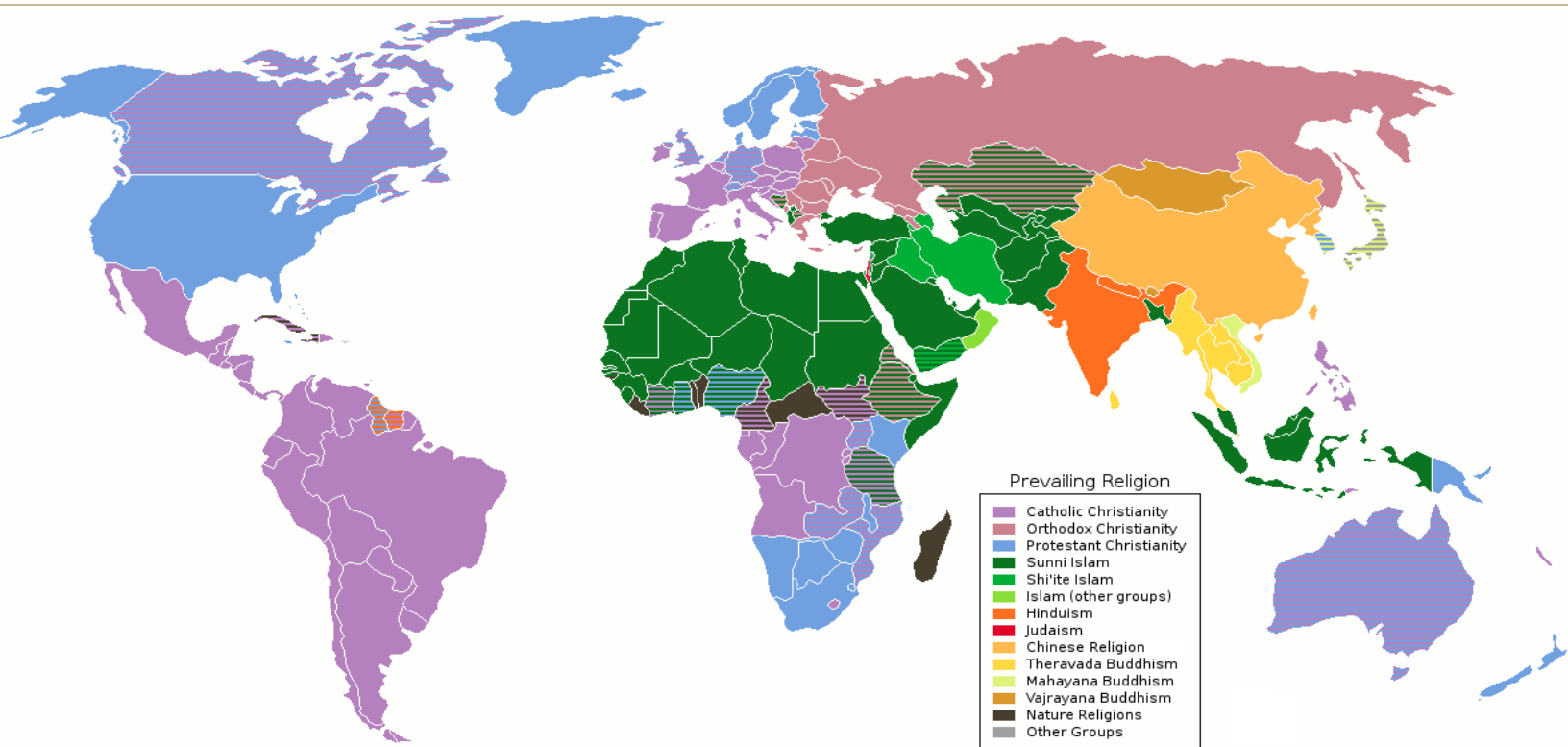


There is wide variation in the religiosity of people worldwide. In some parts of the world, essentially every person's life is centered around their faith. This is particularly true in the Muslim world, and many parts of the developing world. In much of the developed world, religious fervor is not as great. Americans, contrary to what many people here think, remains a fairly religious country; especially when it is compared to other regions with advanced economies, like Europe and Japan.

The map below shows the distribution of the major world religions using national boundaries. Religions certainly cross boundaries, so this map isn't as accurate as one might like, but it does provide a general picture of the distribution of world's faithful.



Christianity, with about 2.2 billion followers is the religion with the most adherents, but many in the developed world are not committed to their faith. This is a process called *secularization*, and it characterizes much of Europe's Christianity. Christians are also split into various, generally peaceful, factions. The "Great Schism" of 1054 led to the creation of two great branches of Christianity: Eastern and Western. The Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church, which now includes multiple, national Orthodox churches (Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, etc.). Many people of Southeastern and Eastern European areas (and their descendants who have migrated to the US) are Orthodox. They have many similarities and important differences with Western Christians. One the landscape, you may recognize the distinctive



“onion dome” architecture.

Western Christians or the Roman Catholic Church also broke apart during a period called *the reformation* that began in 1517. A number of highly religious Catholics began protesting the manner in which Roman Church was being run. They demanded reforms and have since become known as **Protestants**. They were upset about a lot of things, but eventually their demands included among other things, that the Holy Bible could be interpreted by individuals, thereby removing the total authority of the Pope. Because increasing numbers of Europeans could read, and many people fancied themselves capable of interpreting holy texts, a large number of Protestants formed denominations of their own, splitting from one another like branches from a tree. A series of religious wars followed. Much of Germanic

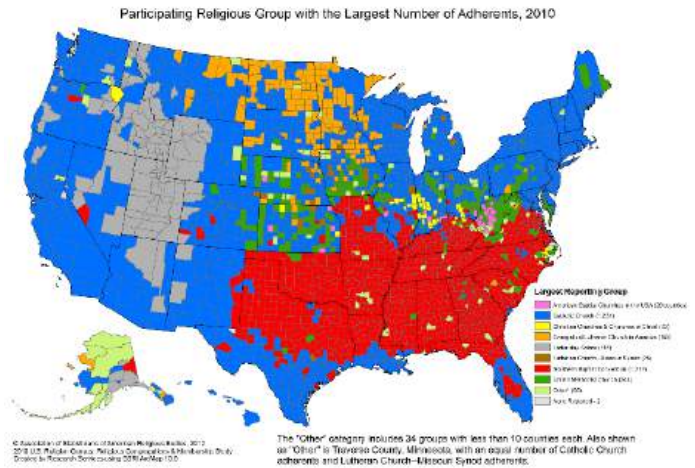
speaking people of Europe abandoned Catholicism altogether. Those who could not worship as they wished migrated to other locations where they felt safe, or at least comfortable, if not dominant. The United States was a destination for many of Europe's religious refugees, but it is *not* true that religious refugees were always tolerant of other religions once they arrived in the New World—quite the opposite is true. In fact, Rhode Island was established as a colony in part by those fleeing religious persecution in other parts of colonial America. The United States was forced to separate church and state because it was the peaceful solution in religiously pluralistic society that the US had become.

American Christianity

Just as Americans are quite ignorant about the diversity of religion in other countries, outsiders (and a lot of Americans) are unaware of the diversity within American Christianity. So great are the differences, that it would seem sometimes that it is inappropriate to lump all the various denominations and congregations together under a single label. Nevertheless we do, and so it is worthwhile to examine the distribution of the main American denominations.

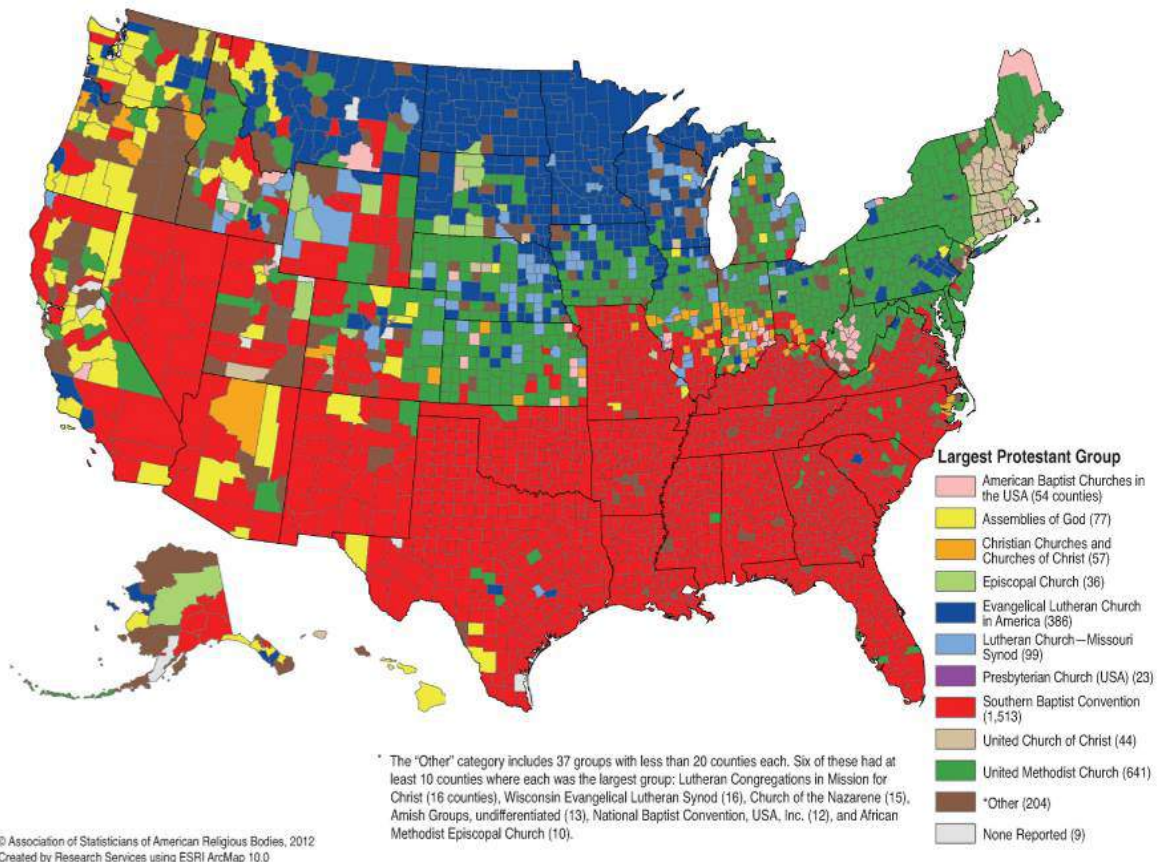
COOL LINK:
[ASSOCIATION OF STATISTICIANS OF AMERICAN RELIGIOUS BODIES](#)

About 60 million American are Catholic. Catholics are the largest religious group in the country. Catholics are concentrated in New England, around the Great Lakes and along the southern US border from Louisiana to California. Massachusetts is about 50% Catholic, but several southern states have fewer than five percent. Many large cities, including those in the Midwest (St. Louis, Chicago, Cleveland) also have large percentages of Catholics.

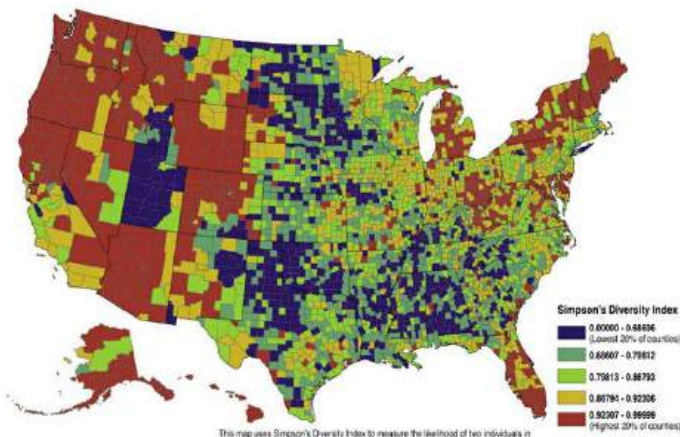


Evangelical Protestants are concentrated (by percent of adherence) in the Deep South and Appalachia, mostly in places where the Catholics aren't. However, large

Largest Participating Protestant Christian Group with the Largest Number of Adherents by County, 2010



Religious Diversity in the United States, 2010



This map uses Simpson's Diversity Index to measure the likelihood of two individuals in the same county belonging to different religious groups based on the following groupings: Latter-day Saints, Catholic, Protestant, Other Christian, primarily Orthodox Christian (churches), Islam, Jewish, or Other Religions. The high proportion of Protestants in the central states and the high proportion of Latter-day Saints in the mountain west create areas of low religious diversity. Greater diversity is found where many groups are at least moderately large, such as in many western states or northern New England.

© Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, 2012
Created by Postcard Services using ESRI ArcMap 10.0

number of Evangelical Christians are in places like Los Angeles (nearly 1 million) and Chicago (.5 million). Evangelicals emphasize a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, are prone to be more literal in their interpretation of the Bible and are very interested in spreading their beliefs. They often have very charismatic church leaders. There are about 50 million Evangelicals, but they are spread among dozens of denominations. The best known of these groups are the Southern Baptists (16 million), some Lutherans (e.g., Missouri Synod) and a variety of Pentecostal churches; each also broken into many dozens of sub-denominations, and local variations; plus a very large number of so-called *Non-Denominational* churches.

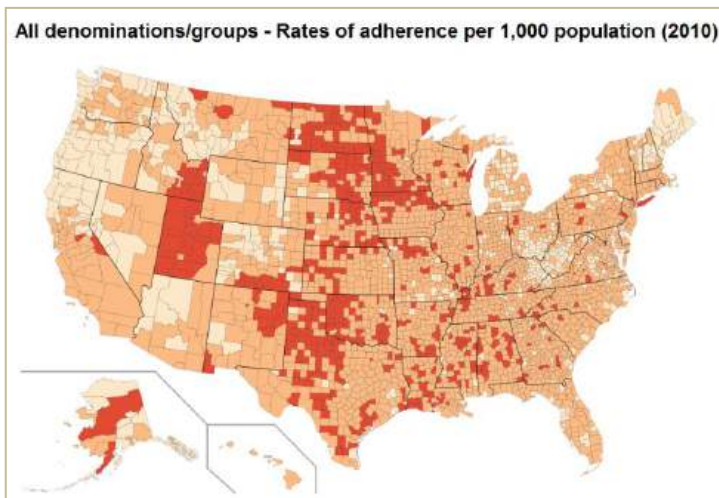
[Mainline Protestants](#) make up the other large category of Christians in the United States. These folks tend to be more (sometimes significantly so) progressive (or liberal) theologically and politically/socially than their Evangelical brethren, less likely to be Biblical literalists and less likely to knock on your door to get you to come to their church. Among the Mainline Protestant denominations are the Episcopalians, Methodists (United), Lutherans and the Presbyterians are probably the best known mainline protestant groups. As one might guess, the Mainline Protestants are found in the middle of the United States. Methodists are really quite common in the Great Lakes/Midwestern states (Pennsylvania to Nebraska); Lutherans are dominant (or nearly so) in the Upper Midwest. The United Church of Christ, which is what the old New England Congregationalists have “become” are common in New England.

Mormons (LDS) are not considered Protestants, because they do trace their history through the reformation; but back to church to the time of Christ. Mormonism originated during the early 19th century during a period of great religious fervor in the United States known as the **Second Great Awakening**. During this time, many new religious denominations were established, and churches flourished. Joseph Smith Jr. founded the LDS Church after translating the Book of Mormon, which he found near his home in Upstate New York, written in an ancient language on gold plates. The Book of Mormon tells a story of Christians during the time of a man named Mormon who lived in America before Europeans came, and before



Christ was born. Though some Christians consider the LDS church “a cult”, and chose to focus on things the Mormon’s history of polygamy (now virtually extinct). It is probably smarter to focus instead on the vast similarities between the Mormons and Evangelical Christians since both have conservative cultural practices, a focus on family life and strongly held religious convictions. The acceptance of Mormons by most American Christians was obvious in the 2012 Presidential election cycle when LDS member Mitt Romney ran as a Republican with minimal attention to his faith.

Just as important as where things are, is where things *aren't*. In this case, it’s important to note that many parts of the Midwest and West, there is no dominant



religious group. Either there is a great mixing of all denominations, or folks just aren’t that religious and therefore don’t belong to a church.

In some areas (Oregon, Maine) of the U.S., less than 1/3rd of the population appears to belong to any faith. Nationally, about 13% of Americans are *agnostic*. Note that West Virginia, also appears to have low rates of “adherence”; but this would seem out of line with the rest of the cultural traits of that state. Can you guess why this map show some very rural areas with low

rates? Could it be that folks in these locations just don’t belong to a church that is included in national surveys of church membership?

Islam

Islam is the world’s second largest religion with over 1.5 billion adherents. Like Christianity, Islam is not monolithic; it has broken into several sub-faiths, but the about 80% of are Sunni. An important minority of Muslims are Shia, and they live primarily in Iran and Iraq, as well as sects such as Syria’s Alawhites. Many other factions exist within the two main groups. Americans tend to think that all, or most, Muslims live in the Middle East and North Africa, but far more Muslims live in places like Indonesia (Southeast Asia) Pakistan, Bangladesh and India (South Asia). Keep in mind that Nigeria has nearly as many Muslims as Egypt, which is the most populous Muslim country in the Middle East.

Because there are about 2.6 million Muslims in the United States, and it is one of the fastest growing religions in the world, and the Islamic world is constantly in the news *and* Americans are generally ignorant about Islam, it is valuable to know a bit about Islam.

First, Islam is the religion and Muslims are the followers of Islam. The holy text of Islam is the *Qur'an* (or Koran -- there are various spellings of many Arabic words). Islam has a number of commonalities with Christianity and Judaism. In fact, Muslims believe essentially that all three faiths are variations of the same universal truth, and recognize Abraham, Moses, and Jesus as prophets. Of course, Muslims believe that earlier versions of Islam were corrupted over the years (becoming Judaism and Christianity) and it wasn't until the Koran was revealed verbatim to the last prophet *Muhammad* that the universal truth of *Allah* was properly codified, and written in Arabic.

Islam has several characteristics and practices that American students should know. First, Islam is *strictly* monotheistic. To them (and Jews), the Holy Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) is not sufficiently monotheistic.

There is an expansive set of Islamic Laws that covers virtually every aspect of Muslim life, so it cannot be treated here, but it does seem logical that non-Muslims should be familiar with the Five Pillars, which are core elements of Islam. First, one must “take the *Shahadah*”, meaning they must recite an oath as a basic profession of faith to become a Muslim. The Sunni version of it translates roughly thus: “There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah”. The *Shahadah* is repeated many times, frequently as part of the second pillar, called *Salah*, which is five daily prayer sessions. Prayers are often recited at a Mosque, where Muslims worship, but any place will suffice when it is time to pray. The third pillar is alms giving, or donating to money to help the poor and other people in need. It's not exactly charity, because Muslims who can afford it are obliged to give a certain percentage of their wealth as *zakat*, and together these amounts likely exceed all other worldwide sources of aid to the needy. The fast (*sawm*) of Ramadan is the fourth pillar and it requires Muslims of faith and good health to fast (no food or water!) from sunrise to sunset for the entire month of Ramadan. There is good food and fellowship at sunset each day during the fast, and a holiday, *Eid al-Fitr*, marking the end of the fast. Some Muslims observe a shortened work day during Ramadan, but basketball fans may recall Muslim NBA players Hakeem Olajuwon and Kareem Abdul Jabbar who played exceptionally well during the fast. The final pillar is the pilgrimage to Mecca called the Hajj. All Muslims, if they are able, must travel at least once in their lifetime to the holiest location in the Muslim world at a specific time of year and engage in a series of rituals alongside as many as three million other Muslims. Clearly it is one of the world's greatest spectacles, but the size of the crowds in recent years have challenged Saudi authorities to ensure the safety of pilgrims.

Judaism

The oldest of the Abrahamic religions is Judaism. It is monotheistic, rooted in the Middle East, text based and fragmented like Christianity and Islam, but unlike its Abrahamic cousins, it is not a universalizing religion. Jews (the followers of Judaism) are broken into several groups. Those are in turn also broken into sub-

LISTEN:
[THE SHAHADAH](#)
 (VIA YOUTUBE)

groups. In the most basic sense, one can divide Jews into three broad categories based on their interpretation of Jewish Law, starting with the most conservative, orthodox groups, a conservative group and a more liberal or Reform group. It's also plausible to add a fourth group; those that are only culturally Jewish – essentially accepting Jewish culture without accepting the religion. Anywhere from about 11 to 15 million people in the world call themselves Jewish. About 40% live in the United States ([mostly in New York, Miami, LA and other select large cities](#)) and about 40% live in Israel, the historic Jewish homeland. About 10% live in Europe and scattered elsewhere. Jews who identify as having a relatively recent European ancestry are often called Ashkenazi, and they are by far the most numerous. The other large group of Jews that are defined geographically are those that identify with a Middle Eastern or Mediterranean heritage. They are called Sephardic Jews; though it should be pointed out that these categories can be slippery and defined differently.

Jews make up a little less than 2% of all Americans, but they have had an outsized effect on American culture. Safe in the United States from widespread persecution, Jews have thrived in the U.S. thanks in part to a historical cultural emphasis on education and career success. Still, Jewish people have for the most part become part of the American mainstream, assimilating to the point of disappearing in some communities. Intermarriage with non-Jewish people, and a low birth rate has contributed mightily to the assimilation process. Orthodox communities on the other hand are growing more quickly and less likely to marry outside the faith.

Hinduism

There are probably around one billion Hindus in the world, making it the third largest religion. Most Hindus live in India, and Nepal, but there are well over a million living in the United States, largely in large urban areas like Los Angeles and New York City. Hinduism is the oldest of the major faiths and probably has more branches and versions of any as well, making it challenging to describe in a coherent fashion. The Indian Supreme Court has even challenged its description as a “religion”, arguing instead that it should be considered a way of life instead. Still, most westerners have trouble understanding Hinduism without framing it within our existing notions of religion. For example, Hinduism doesn't have people who get kicked out of the faith for having alternative beliefs; there are no heresies. Therefore, some Hindus are monotheistic, some polytheistic, some pantheistic and others still atheists.



There are some more common ideas and practices in Hinduism that college-educated Americans ought to know a little bit about, especially since we have incorporated some of these notions into our own vocabulary. You've no doubt heard people say something like, "bad *karma*", if they witness someone doing something mean-spirited. This is a Hindu notion that people get, sooner or later, the life they deserve, but with a twist on the common American understanding – the good or bad you do in this life may carry over to the next life in a process called *reincarnation*. People who can adhere to their *dharma*, or achieve a sort of harmony with an ideal lifestyle (righteousness), may lead them to eventually experience *nirvana*, a state of blissful enlightenment that is the goal for many Hindus. Yoga, what many Americans think of as simply a set of stretching exercises, is actually a set of practices that Hindus use to help achieve spiritual goals; there are a number of different Yogas each with different elements, but for the most part, they are paths to spiritual well-being, not just physical well-being.

Hindus have loads of holidays, some public and some more private. They have a host of rituals as well. In contrast with Christians, burial is not common, but rather cremation. Vast numbers of Hindus make pilgrimages as well. One of the better known is the one made by Shakti Hindus to the banks of the Ganges in the holy city of Varanasi, where the river absolves sin. Many Hindus go to Varanasi to die for this reason.

Why Here?

So why is the US largely a Christian nation? Partly it's because of Christianity's fundamental nature: it seeks out new converts. European conquest of the New World (and elsewhere) was largely undertaken for economic and military reasons, but the religious justifications; the *God part of God, Gold and Glory*, were very real to those who came here as missionaries centuries ago. Religion also helped to salve the conscious of those who recognized the crass economics of colonial expansion. Religious intolerance of some Christians by other Christians also is partly responsible for the religious character of the US today.



Mostly however, the United States is largely a Christian nation because most of the people who migrated here from Europe were Christians. Africans brought to the US as slaves, and many Native Americans who were already here, were forced to

convert to Christianity by militarily powerful, intolerant and genuinely faithful Europeans.

For many generations, Americans were given little choice in terms of religion. Partly this was due to the strong sanctions against adopting new beliefs; partly it was due to the lack of knowledge or opportunity to explore other religions. For the most part, people inherit their religion from their parents and think little of adopting a new one, just as their parents and grandparents had before them. When people do adopt a different faith, or even subtly diverge from familial practice, it often signals significant life changes like marriage, a long distance move, war or other major upheaval.



The map of American Christianity is a little harder to explain. Much of the pattern can be explained by ethnicity. The Spanish converted the ancestors of much of the population of Americans living in the American Southwest. The fact that places like California already had many established Catholic churches, would have been some comfort to those considering migrating to California. Other largely Catholic areas of the US were where Catholic immigrants to the US found jobs and enough religious tolerance to move, and then upon becoming a majority attracting additional Catholics.

Lutherans, largely migrated from the Germanic countries of Northern Europe. It's hardly surprising then that they found the colder climates of Minnesota, Wisconsin and the Dakotas much to their liking; they were environmentally pre-adapted to these areas.

Baptists were not the first group to migrate into the American South, in fact they remained a small minority throughout the colonial period. Their numbers grew as a result of their focus on spoken/oral religious services. This set them apart from the Anglican/Episcopal churches favored by the earliest southerners because many of the later immigrants to the South could not read; and schooling was far less important in the southern US than in New England or the Middle Atlantic states. It became the religion of the ordinary people of the South. Prior to the Civil War, American Baptists split into two large groups over slavery. The Southern Baptist Convention was born, and increased in popularity. Most blacks at that time attended the same church as whites, so today still many black families belong to some version of the Baptist faith.

Mormons are largely found in the Intermontane West because this was a safe place for them to practice their religion in the 1800s. Early Mormons found themselves the victims of extreme religious intolerance in Missouri and Illinois where they had hoped to settle and build their community. After the founder of the church, Joseph Smith, was murdered in 1844, the Mormons moved to what is now Utah in search of a place isolated from persecution. Although there was a short “war” between Mormon settlers and the US Army largely over the degree of sovereignty the Utah territory had over its own affairs, the isolation of Utah and Idaho has helped Mormons maintain a reasonably unique cultural realm.



While religious persecution may have driven early Mormons into some of the most desolate, isolated lands in the United States, religious intolerance (or just the fear of it) keeps other religious minorities in large cities. Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists in the United States tend to be found in many of the same large urban areas. Why? Partly this would be explained by the patterns of economic opportunity and migration. On the positive side, it is easier for those who want to find people of their own religion and culture are more likely to do so in a large city. Religions frequently preach fellowship. On the darker side, there is also a argument to be made that there is safety in the numbers afforded minority communities in large cities where a critical mass of defensive support can be mustered against discriminatory practices. There tends to be a sort of apathy (or tolerance) in large cities. Urban folks are more used to diversity and feel little threat in “the other”.

A final spatial pattern discernible in the US is the manner in which particularly unusual or novel religious practices, like [snake handling](#) in Appalachia. Though similar in outcome to the search for isolation practiced by Mormons; remoteness itself seems to be capable of fostering innovation in



religious practice or doctrinal interpretation. The American West, which at one time featured thousands of isolated towns and villages attracted dozens of Christian splinter groups and fostered via isolation the creation of dozens more. Mt. Shasta in northern California is home to several “new age” cults (or religions).

The Big Picture

Religion affects a great number of elements of any culture, and is itself a product of culture. Economic activity, politics, ethnicity, language, and the environment all interact with religion in complex and compelling ways. The vast extent of the interactions can't be spelled out here (even if we could); so a few examples will have to suffice.

Religion and Politics

In the United States, as is the case elsewhere, religious affiliation is a good predictor of political behavior. Evangelical Christians and Mormons rank among the most politically conservative voters in the US year after year. This relationship was greatly strengthened by the so-called "Reagan Revolution" of the 1980s, when for the first time since the Civil War, conservative Christians (largely from the South) abandoned the Democratic Party in favor of the Republican Party. Certainly part of the switch was motivated by the Democrats stance on Civil Rights, but hot-button religious issues, particularly abortion, drove many Evangelicals to the Right. Leading the charge were several high profile television ministers, such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson. The new alliances, particularly with the pro-business/anti-taxation element of the Republican Party forged during the Reagan era have caused some Evangelical Christians some discomfort however. The numerous Biblical restrictions on usury, for example, have made it difficult for some Evangelicals to fully support Republican policies calling for less regulation of interest rates charged to people taking out loans.

Religion and Economics

Because many religions condemn charging interest on loans, there was little reason to loan money in many parts of the world for many centuries. Jewish people, who faced fewer restrictions on usury, faced little competition in the banking industry until attitudes began to change in modern times. This may explain in part why Jewish folks have traditionally involved with the banking industry. In a very similar fashion, many Evangelical Christians and Mormons expressly forbid the consumption of alcohol. It is therefore not surprising that



few wineries exist in Utah or Alabama. On the other hand, California's long association with Catholicism has helped advance the very profitable viticultural industry in that state. Muslims and Jews (and some Christians) abstain from eating pork because of religious restrictions; therefore pig farming would be very rare in Israel or the Muslim world. Many parts of India abstain from eating any meat, so any sort of animal husbandry would be an unlikely career path.

Religion and Language:

Consider for example that one cannot fully interpret the Koran without a full understanding of the Arabic language.

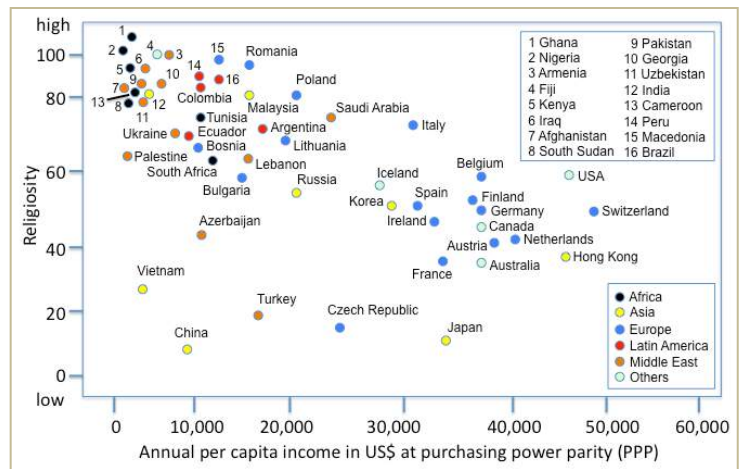
Religion and the Environment

How Christians have understood their relationship with the natural environment has had fascinating consequences in American history. The Puritans of New England, having fled Europe while there were still plenty of vestiges of various nature religions in the religious practices of their neighbors, they held a pretty dim view of the great forests of New England. To them, the city was where Christians were most likely to find orderliness, which was a characteristic of God. Farming landscapes were good too, as long as they were free from the chaos that characterized the wild places on earth (where Satan was influential). Great examples of these views are found in the literary works of 18th century authors, like [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) (e.g., *The Scarlett Letter*), but the notion that the wilderness is a chaotic place for sinfulness can be found today in numerous "[slasher films](#)" frequently filmed at some summer camp in a forest. The NHL ice hockey team, known as the New Jersey Devils derives their name from the [same fear](#) of the woods.



In the 19th century, American attitudes began to change toward wilderness locations. Rather than always being a place of chaos, where you'd become bewildered, people like John Muir argued that wilderness was where one could commune with the Almighty. As the industrial revolution and modern capitalism wrought massive changes, cities were increasingly accused of being the locus of moral degradation and spiritual corruption.

Those two philosophical positions still battle for supremacy and geographers have found that religious affiliation has a great deal of influence over what people think about things like climate change or deforestation. If your religion commands you to be a good steward of the natural environment, you will likely to have a different view of environmentalism than if you have believe, as some Fundamentalist Christians do that ecological catastrophes are a sign of the approaching Apocalypse, and therefore a welcome sign of the end-of-days.



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Religion_economy.png

Heading 3

HEADING 4

xx

dscape, GIS, etc.

CHAPTER 6 POLITICS

That elusive set of rules that govern the way we act is a product of where we are from and where we live. This chapter explores the idea of culture and how place and space shape the way we think and what we do in myriad fashions

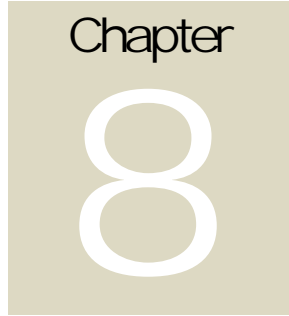
CHAPTER 7 HEADING 1-SECTION TITLE

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HEADING 4

Not sure what to do with this chapter. I'd like to riff of Don Mitchell's *Cultural Geography* book, but I also want to include some old school "folk geography" and quite a few pop culture elements, but I don't know if they really all belong in the same chapter.



CHAPTER 8 ETHNICITY AND IDENTITY

Personal identity can be very complex. Ethnic identity alone is determined by cross-cutting factors, including language, racial characteristics, national heritage and religion. These identities factor into a wide variety of cultural practices – including politics, religion, marriage and economics. Geography play a significant role in the creation, maintenance and erosion of ethnic identity.

“What are you?” It seems a simple enough question. You’ll be asked it on job applications. You may be asked the same question by new acquaintances or even old friends. In the United States, no matter how complex the answer to that question may be, it can be nearly impossible to respond in any way other than the most simplistic terms. Check this box. Some folks find it easy to check a single box, or provide a one-word answer. Others may find checking a single box, or providing a one-word answer makes no sense at all. Moving from one cultural region of the world to another can make answering such questions even more confusing – because “what you are” may is likely to change, even though you are still the same person. This is because your identity is yet another *socially constructed idea*. It’s made up. And because it’s constructed in our collective imaginations, it’s also subject to change through time and across space.

X. INFORMATION FOR GOVERNMENT MONITORING PURPOSES

The following information is requested by the Federal Government for certain types of loans related to a dwelling in order to monitor the lender’s compliance with equal credit opportunity, fair housing and home mortgage disclosure laws. You are not required to furnish this information, but are encouraged to do so. The law provides that a lender may not discriminate either on the basis of this information, or on whether you choose to furnish it. If you furnish the information, please provide both ethnicity and race. For race, you may check more than one designation. If you do not furnish ethnicity, race, or sex, under Federal regulations, this lender is required to note the information on the basis of visual observation and surname if you have made this application in person. If you do not wish to furnish the information, please check the box below. (Lender must review the above material to assure that the disclosures satisfy all requirements to which the lender is subject under applicable state law for the particular type of loan applied for.)

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| BORROWER | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not wish to furnish this information. | CO-BORROWER | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not wish to furnish this information. |
| Ethnicity: | <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Not Hispanic or Latino | Ethnicity: | <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Not Hispanic or Latino |
| Race: | <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska native <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> White | Race: | <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska native <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> White |
| Sex: | <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male | Sex: | <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male |

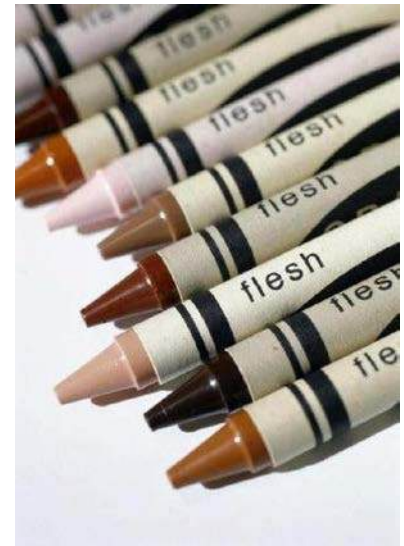
Geography is an especially powerful tool when it comes to understanding questions of race, ethnicity and identity.

Governments create much of what we know as identity “options”. In the United States, that begins with the US Census Bureau, but a number of other government agencies have since the earliest days of the colonial period, been interested in establishing categories into which people could be placed.

Slavery was a founding institution in the colonies of the New World. Though nearly universal and as old perhaps as agriculture itself, slavery as it was practiced early on in the Americas shaped much of the “rules” regarding ethnic identity we use today. Nearly 100 years before the English established the Jamestown colony in Virginia, the Spanish brought African slaves to North America. The indigenous people of the Americas, “Indians” were also captured and sold into slavery. In both instances, *race* was the predominant characteristic qualifying someone to be a slave in the European system. Most people whose ancestry was African or indigenous American were at risk.

Race

Essentially, three *visual* determinants are used in the United States to classify someone by race. The first factor is the pigmentation of the skin. People with darker skin are distinguished from those with lighter skin. Second, people with darker skin are further categorized by the texture of their hair. People with naturally straight hair, but dark skin are generally not considered “black” or “African-American”, but rather reserved for another category. Finally, people are categorized by the shape and color of their eyes. People with brown “almond shaped” eyes, and straight hair, are placed in the “Asian” category. Using this “three-factor test” generates three groups: White, Black and Asian. Americans use this test, very clumsily, all the time, and a lot of people are left out – poorly categorized or not categorized, so additional measures have been created by society.



There is substantial reason to doubt whether race even exists. Clearly, the three-factor test used widely in the United States is a *social construction* – meaning we made it up. On a deeper level, anthropologists, biologists and geneticists argue quite a bit about [whether the concept of race is scientifically valid](#). Clearly there are genetic markers for physical characteristics, like skin color or hair texture, that be identified by DNA testing, but only a few of these DNA markers match up well with our very convenient social constructions. We could choose from thousands of alternative genetic characteristics to classify people. If our social constructions were to change, and we suddenly decided to group people by height, [fingerprint patterns](#) and blood type (rather than skin color, hair texture and eye shape), we would have an entirely different set of races lumped together quite differently across the globe.

Because there is as much genetic variation *among* people of the same race, as there is *between* people of different races, statisticians would argue that race fails the simplest definition of what constitutes a “group”.



Figure 8-1: Fingerprint patterns vary across the globe much like skin color, but because they are difficult to see, they were not chosen as markers of race.

Despite the fact that the concept of race, is essentially dead among scientists, it remains a vital reality in the lives of many people and in most societies. Clearly race exhibits spatial characteristics on the landscape that are of interest to geographers.

Language and Ethnicity

Hispanics make up about 17% of the US population, but they can't be categorized by race. Hispanics constitute an "ethnic" group in the United States because they share a common linguistic heritage. Hispanics may include people from any "race". Asians (Filipinos, e.g.), Whites and black folks all speak Spanish. A sizeable percentage of Hispanics whose ancestors came from Latin America have a mixed *racial* background – part European and part Indigenous American. These folks, traditionally labeled "mestizo", frequently identify so strongly by language that they are not sure what race to put on government forms. Oftentimes, mestizos in the US select "other" when prompted to self-define by racial category. Therefore, maps of *race* in Los Angeles large swaths of the race "Other" in the same neighborhoods that are linguistically "Hispanic". Complicating the issue of race among many Hispanics is the varied way the expression "La Raza" (translated "the race") is used by people who speak Spanish. It was used for years by the Fascists in Spain to celebrate the uniqueness of Spaniards, but has since been adopted / adapted by various Latino groups to refer to a host of sometimes competing claims to ethnic identities that are not based on race as the term is used above.

No other group in the United States is so widely categorized by language as Hispanics. Clearly many dozens of languages other than English are spoken at home by millions of Americans, and those who speak those languages generally *identity themselves* by language before they would use a racial category. Americans of Chinese, Koreans and Japanese descent think of themselves as quite different from each other, but the government (and indeed many non-Asian Americans), frequently collapses all these linguistic/national identities into the monolithic, but over-expansive "Asian" category.

Switzerland is a country that is overwhelmingly "white", with less than 10% of the population non-European. Still, in many ways, Switzerland is highly multi-ethnic because of its linguistic diversity. The majority of Swiss



speak German, but there are sizeable numbers of persons that speak French and Italian. Even Romansh is recognized as an official language in Switzerland, though only about 1% of the population speaks.

The jigsaw-puzzle like linguistic map of Switzerland is similar to those found in other rugged, mountainous or inaccessible regions where the friction of distance is significant (see chapter 5). What makes Switzerland somewhat unusual though is the manner in which the Swiss have embraced their linguistic diversity, even requiring school-aged children to become bilingual. Together since the year 1291, the Swiss have focused on commonalities – such as their neutrality, love of democracy and Alpine sports to build a special sense of nationhood. It probably helps that Switzerland has one of the highest qualities of life in the world (health, wealth, happiness), – but they have shown the world that people of diverse backgrounds can live together quite happily and thrive perhaps because of it.

Religion

In some parts of the world, religion is the primary marker of ethnic identity, but in the United States, religion is not widely used as a marker of identity. The US government collects little to no data on religious affiliation because to do so would infringe upon the separation of church and state. Jews and Muslims are probably the two groups in the US that would most likely self-identify using religion – but even that is not common.

In areas where racial or linguistic markers are not readily available, religion can become the primary marker of ethnicity. The recent conflicts in Iraq between Sunni and Shia factions are a good example. Perhaps the most tragic example in recent memory was the violent dissolution of the country of Yugoslavia – the “anti-Switzerland” of Europe.

From 1918 to around 2003, Yugoslavia was a multi-ethnic country in southeastern Europe held together by a common language, a strong leader and numerous common cultural practices. Translated literally, “Yugoslavia” means literally “Land of the South Slavs” – and so there was a strong linguistic bond helping hold this country, with multiple religions groups together; as it does in many countries. However, after the death of their leader, Marshall Tito, in the 1980 the religious differences among the groups proved unmanageable. The country broke up quite violently largely according to the religious identification. The Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) follow Islam, and they now inhabit much of is called Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Slovenes and Croats (Croatians) are largely Roman Catholic, and they now occupy the countries of Croatia and Slovenia. The Montenegrins, Macedonians and Serbs (Serbians) are Eastern Orthodox Christians, and they now

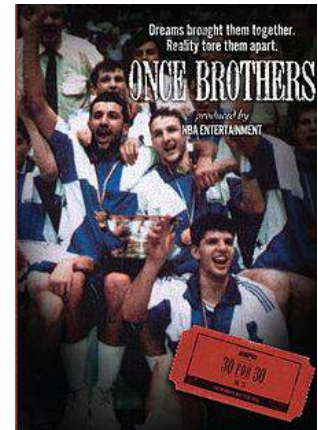
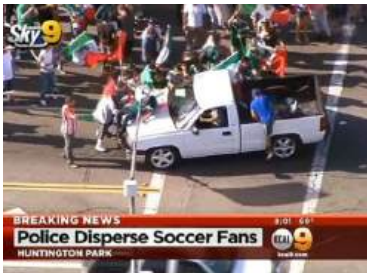


Figure 8-2: Once Brothers is a documentary film by ESPN detailing the emotional toll on former Yugoslav teammates who saw their former country and friendships torn apart by ethnic strife.
<http://vimeo.com/36827025>

live in Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia respectively. Of course, given the years that they all lived together sometime significant minorities of each group lives in another group's primary territory. Today, they largely get along, although each of the separate countries have taken steps to create official languages from the various dialects of the common Serbo-Croatian language they all speak.

National Heritage

Where your ancestors are from may be how you identify yourself as well – this may be a case of nationality-as-ethnicity. Certain groups in the US do this regularly, others couldn't even tell you if they have a nationality. Most of the time in the US, this comes in the form of hyphenated identities, such as Chinese-American, Mexican-American, etc. However, it would be unusual to hear someone self-identify as “English-American” or “Canadian-American”, even though the England and Canada have been significant sources of migrants over the years. Part of that stems from the fact that English migration largely took place many generations ago, and that English (and Canadian) culture is so similar to American culture, that in some ways, differentiating one's self makes little sense. Another reason surely stems from the “melting pot” trajectory of many of European immigrants to the United States. European immigrants to the US over a number of generations have so frequently married people from other European countries that the countries of national origin have been forgotten. *Intermarriage*, is the most effective means by which groups *assimilate* into the *host culture*. This is especially true for Americans whose ancestors came to the US a long time ago.



For some more recent immigrants, and for groups that either 1) chose not to assimilate; and/or 2) were discouraged from assimilating, national identities may remain. It is interesting to observe the rooting interest of ethnic groups during the Olympics and during the World Cup soccer tournament. These events provide a window into the processes of identity construction and maintenance. Though not always a reliable measure of national identity, most Americans who identify simply as “American” would have trouble cheering for any country other than the United States.

Region

The US Government also uses much broader strokes to classify minority groups as well. “Asian” is probably the most absurdly broad category, because it lumps several hundred people from a vast continent together. People whose ancestry lies in China, Japan, Korea, India, Pakistan and parts of Russia could be technically “Asians”.

White people are also overly broadly categorized. Clearly, this category is used to classify people who are European, or whose ancestry is mostly European; but it also appears to include people from Saharan *Africa* and the Southwest *Asia*(Moroccans, Egyptians, Iraqis, Saudis, Turks,etc.).



African-American is another similarly confusing category, because 1) Africa is made up of about 50 countries – but only the Sub-Saharan ones count 2) some immigrants from Africa are white (South Africans). Some African-American reject the term, preferring “black”, partly because “African-American” has no equivalent to “European-American”, and partly because of the manner in which the term “black” was culturally appropriated as source of cultural pride / power during the Civil Rights era.

American-American?

There’s some that consider all the hyphenated versions of Americans is too much. What do people call themselves who would rather not be classified, or those who think they’re being left out? What about the millions who aren’t really sure what to check off on the “ethnicity” or “national origin” question? “[American](#)” is an option that a lot of white folks chose, especially in the Appalachian South. This could be interpreted as a bit *xenophobic*, but for families from that region (the author included), many of whom trace their American roots back to the 1600’s – the number of ethnicities represented in the family tree is too varied, and sometimes lost to time, to call oneself anything other than “American”. Anyone with complicated family tree is almost by default “American”.

During the last two census periods (2000, 2010), there has been an effort by small political groups in some southern states to make “Confederate-American”, or “Southern White” as an [official ethnic designation](#). This seems clearly an outgrowth of the racially charged, anti-Federal politics still quite common in the South, but there may be some logic to it as well. Ethnic groups should be allowed to self-identify. Certainly many of the official and unofficial strategies we use to “place people in a box” are illogical. One could make an argument that because many people in the American South have a unique dialect, religious beliefs, politics and social customs – they may indeed be entitled to call themselves whatever they want.

MEXICO-CANADA-UNITED STATES – FOOD AND ETHNICITY

There’s a [well-circulated speech](#) by a Mexican-American essayist Richard Rodriguez compares the assimilation strategies pursued by the United States and its neighbors to the north and south.

Rodriguez points out that Mexico has largely realized the American dream of becoming a true “melting pot”. Racial minorities in Mexico are not very visible. There are several million indigenous people living in Mexico for sure – the Nahuatl, Mayans and Zapotecas come to mind, and there is a small population of Afro-Mexicans as well, but their experience has been different than equivalent groups in the US. The main factor was the high rates of intermarriage between Europeans (Spaniards), the native population and Africans. The host culture of Mexico is mixed. Rodriguez likened it to a burrito – a lot of things rolled up into a single creation. Therefore, it makes little sense for the host culture to aggressively



discriminate against any of the constituent elements of the mixture. As a result, Mexican identity and culture is more cohesive, generally happy and perhaps more monolithic than that in the US.



Rodriguez points out that Canada, a country known for its typically genial multi-national culture has become a welcoming place for immigrants by celebrating diversity and respecting the rights of all who come to *maintain* their identity. As a result, Canada has had little of the racialized ethnic strife that has marked many US cities over the decades. Of course, some French-speaking Canadians have argued for cessation, but it was handled in an orderly, democratic fashion (and rejected twice). This strategy though has perhaps undermined the growth of a solid, national identity in Canada. Short of perhaps a love of hockey and beer, it's hard to think of what makes Canadians "Canadian". Rodriguez notes that you will never be asked to go out to a Canadian restaurant. Canadian cuisine maybe largely unknown because without the cultural hybridization of the type one finds in the US and Mexico, it is difficult for a new cultural practices to emerge.



The United States has pursued to some degrees both the Mexican and the Canadian models. Many of the nationalities that migrated to the US have assimilated in true melting pot fashion, but others have not for a variety of reasons. There is some pressure to do so – to act “like an American” – to adopt “American” ways, cultures and traditions. On the other hand, Americans are regularly encouraged to respect the diversity of the many dozens of ethnicities who constitute the American “salad bowl” at the same time. The result has been complicated. Neither Mexico, nor Canada has had the sort of ethnic tensions, riots and violence that the US has seen, but neither of America’s neighbors have spawned the sort of cultural innovations the US has become so well known for – rock n’ roll, rap and jazz; air planes, light bulbs and movie theaters; football, basketball and skateboarding.

Space Makes Race

Spatial processes are responsible for the creation of ethnicities. Geographers like to note “space makes race”. Hypothetically, if there was no friction of distance, and people were free to move about the globe at will, then we would all look alike (generally speaking), we would all speak the same language, we would likely have fewer religions (a single religion?), and we would likely think of ourselves a earthlings, rather than “Americans”, “Germans”, “Chinese”. Or maybe not. There may be some psychological reason compelling people to consider themselves part of some group – and not another. What is clear is that geography factors heavily into the formation of such groups.

In the early history of humankind, there were no ethnicities. All belonged to a single, very small group. As our species grew more numerous and the search for resources (or adventure) led groups to venture out of Africa, our languages evolved, multiple religions were established and our bodies changed in response to the new local climates and conditions in which people found themselves.

Ebony and Ivory – Physical Geography of Race

Human beings have a number of physical adaptations to climate, but skin color is perhaps the classic example. Humans living in the tropical regions of the world are exposed to much more sunlight during the course of a year than those living closer to the North or South Poles. Researchers suggest that the variations in skin pigmentation may have taken as little as 100 generations to appear across the globe and there is evidence that the process is reversible.

Theory holds that dark skin is an evolutionary adaptation that helps protect people from the damaging effects of ultraviolet radiation that comes from the sun. Darker skinned people had an evolutionary advantage over lighter skinned people in very sunny locations. However, sunlight also provides vitamin D, an essential dietary nutrient, especially for lactating mothers. People living in sunlight-deprived areas, like Europe, get less vitamin D from the sun than those in Africa. Dark skin, great where sun is plentiful undermines the production of vitamin D. Therefore, persons with lighter skin could absorb more vitamin D, and had a slight evolutionary advantage over those with darker skin in places like Europe.

The inability to get vitamin D into the system may also have factored into the development of lactose tolerance – and the dairy industry among Europeans. Most adult mammals cannot drink milk because of an inability to produce lactase, an enzyme that metabolizes lactose. Most Europeans *can* drink milk. Was this because millennia ago they were, as a group, so deficient in vitamin D / calcium that the rare persons that were lactose tolerant had a massive evolutionary advantage over those who were lactose intolerant? Moreover, did dairy farming become a staple of European farming because Europeans were lactose tolerant or did lactose tolerance develop among Europeans because they raised cattle? In any case, *where* was and continues to be foundational, causal variable in the construction and maintenance of our ideas about *who* we are, *what* we do and *why* we do it..

Baby's Got Back – Geography and Standards of Beauty

Cultural variables are also partly determine our “race” or biological characteristics as well. Some of these characteristics, like skin tone, height, or body morphology are partly determined in part by the localized standards for physical attractiveness. Across the globe there are differences in what men and women consider attractive. Preferences regarding height, weight, eyes, hair, skin tone and body morphology vary. For centuries many, the Chinese (men presumably) valued tiny feet and therefore would bind the feet of girls and young women. In West Africa, where maternal societies and a cult of fertility, coupled with food insecurity, may have led to a preference for large buttocks, especially on females. In Japan, a place with a vastly different agricultural and religious history, this taste preference is muted or even reversed.



8-3: Youtube - Click to Watch. This video cartoon, inspired by the Dr. Seuss story, "The Sneetches" cleverly captures the desire of some groups to build identity, and construct "the other" through reference to physical appearance. (8:45 minutes)

In the United States, especially during the 1970s and 1980s, there was great emphasis on tanning the skin to achieve a standard of beauty. Working on one's tan however would have made little sense to earlier generations that sought to shelter from the sun as much as possible to *prevent* tanning. A standard explanation for this shift in cultural practice is rooted in



time and space. Once, a tan was a sign of *poverty* because it indicated excessive exposure to the sun by agricultural field laborers. Following the industrial revolution, impoverished people – now working in factories - were kept pale by working long-hours indoors. The wealthier classes finding themselves now indistinguishable from the impoverished classes, chose to tan in order to signify their status via their ability to engage in outdoor leisure activities, like going to the beach. It should be noted that in recent years, the threat of skin cancer and shifting demographics have confounded this beauty standard once again.

Over the course of thousands of years, these preferences – rooted in local conditions (and perhaps random fascinations) lend themselves to evolutionary changes in body morphology. They also help explain some differences in the lyrical content of pop music as well.

Identity Maintenance

Once these various categories of identity are created, they are in constant danger of alteration or elimination. People can move away from a region, draining a group of the critical mass needed to sustain a group identity – this is the *clearance model*. New people can move in, overwhelming the “host” group and eroding their identity – this is the *changeover model*. There are other processes that could affect the maintenance of ethnic identity as well.

Several of the key ways identities are preserved, maintained or enforced are spatial. The simplest way this happens is when people live in an inaccessible location. In the United



States for example, Cajuns and Creoles (French speaking people of Louisiana) have managed to maintain their identity for hundreds of years, partly because they lived in a swampy part of Louisiana where railroad and highway infrastructure was late to arrive. People on various islands, in mountainous regions and other hard-to-get to places find their identity insulated from the degrading effects of immigration and emigration.

The less benign practice of *ethnic ghettoization* attempts to force the maintenance of identity in many locations. The term *ghetto* has been historically used to identify areas of a city where specific minority groups were forced to live. In recent years the term has been largely used by Americans to make reference to African-American neighborhoods – especially if the residents in the neighborhood were poor. In reality, ghettos are not reserved for solely reserved for black folks and they can be found in many large cities around the world. Many cities’ Chinatown district would have qualified as a ghetto before legal changes made housing discrimination unlawful. The Nazis confined Jewish people to ghettos during their reign of terror across Europe.

A less value-laden term, *ethnic enclave* probably better describes neighborhoods dominated by a single ethnicity today. Some more well-off ethnic neighborhoods are called “ethno-burbs”. The largely concentration of Asians in Los Angeles’ San Gabriel Valley is a good example of an ethnoburb.

It is reasonably easy to understand why a group of people invested in racist/bigoted ideologies and/or sheer ignorance would seek to isolate people who are different from themselves. Keeping groups separate makes it easier for groups in power to maintain a status quo. Residential proximity might lead to people from different groups falling in love, mating, having offspring or just learning from one another. Any of which could lead to the dilution of the “purity” of identity – whatever that identity is based upon (race, religion, nationality, language, etc.).

Environmental Racism

In addition to keeping specific groups of people residentially separated, ghettos seem to have served a variety of other functions as well. Ghettos have served as dumping grounds for a variety of social ills and civic *disamenities*. Prostitution, the illicit drug trade and gambling are often less vigorously policed in ghetto districts, signaling those involved that such activities are more widely accepted among minority residents, when in fact such activities are as likely a sign of



8-4: Altgeld Gardens: Chicago, IL. This public housing project built after World War II to house black veterans after the war was built on an abandoned landfill. It remains a black neighborhood and numerous toxic hazards remain in the vicinity.

the lack of political power among ghetto residents.

Ghettos are also frequently subject to industrial disamenities - health hazards not found elsewhere in the urban environment. Air, water and ground pollutants are frequently worst in poor, minority neighborhoods leading to the construction of what some have called *environmental racism*. Clearly black and brown residents in many cities suffer from higher rates of things like asthma and obesity than non-Hispanic Whites. These statistics may be caused partly by ethnic cultural practices and poverty, but it is also clear that poor people are least able to move from polluted neighborhoods – some of which were established long before the Civil Rights era. Minority groups also have more trouble defending their right to healthy neighborhood via the political process.

In addition to the obvious toxic pollutants, environmental hazards in the form of things like predatory lenders, fast food, noise and even the lack of disaster planning may undermine the ability of residents living in poor minority neighborhoods to live as long and well as fellow citizens across town. For example, during Hurricane Katrina (2005), black residents of New Orleans were neglected by the city's hurricane evacuation plan because the plan was designed to cater to people who owned automobiles. A significant percentage (100,000 people) of the city's black population relied on public transport and were therefore unable to take advantage of the city's evacuation plan.

Positives

While many of the effects of ghettoization undermine the quality of life of minority groups, it must be noted that there are positive outcomes from ghettoization as well. This is not to justify the official and unofficial discriminatory practices (see section below), but to argue instead that the spatial concentration of minorities creates situations that affected groups have leveraged to their advantage.

First, diversity *is preserved* via ghettoization, just as those who engineered these elements of cities hoped. By undermining the prospects of intermarriage and assimilation, excluded groups remain somewhat distinct from the host culture. If every minority group melted perfectly into the host culture, then everyone would be robbed of



many of the wonderful cultural aspects of a diverse society. Large cities are exciting and enriching precisely because they have diversity. Certainly, lots of people enjoy the wide variety of ethnic foods in cities where ethnic identities remain strong –but there’s far more at risk should the distinctiveness of ethnic populations erode. Minority religious traditions, languages, philosophies, arts and economic practices would all suffer if complete assimilation were to occur.

Other benefits accrue to ethnic groups remain living in close proximity to each other. Mutual support, in a variety of forms – economic, political, recreational, etc. is easier when residents live close by. A reduction in some types of conflict may occur if people of like values and traditions are neighbors. Opinions regarding how late a party should go, or what a proper lawn should look like may vary less in neighborhoods where residents come from a common background. Recent immigrants, even those seeking to shed their ethnic heritage, no doubt would find an ethnic enclave an easier place to begin the acculturation and assimilation process than a neighborhood dominated by a host culture group.

Ethnic minorities seeking to preserve their traditions or identities also stand a greater chance of exercising political power if they live together; concentrating voting power in specific areas. A number of voting districts are gerrymandered in order to help promote (or deny!) the interests of specific ethnicities. Even simple pleasures, like finding someone who also likes to play ethnic games like dominoes or cricket; or finding a bakery that makes an ethnic-specialty food (e.g., [pan de muerto](#), [king cakes](#), [laffa bread](#) or [knishes](#)) is easier when people who share an ethnic identity live in proximity.

Space and Race

Geography plays a significant role in the construction of ethnic identity. During the early period of human history, there was probably not strong sense of “us and them”, because finding a “them” would have been difficult. The Chinese symbol for “China” also mean middle or center. It seems to suggest that the Chinese, like many other ancient civilizations, thought of themselves as the center of the world – they were “the people”.

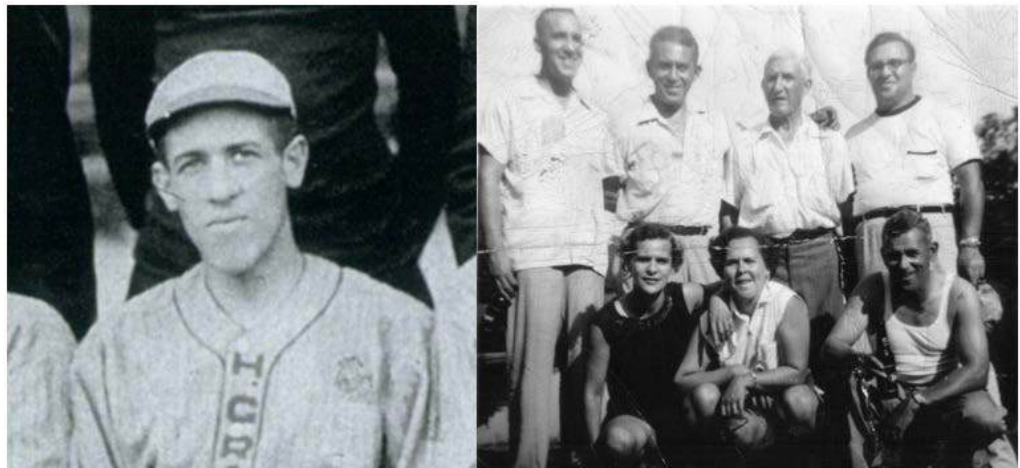


Contact with outside groups created a sense of difference and thus the evolution of ethnicity begins. Migration and invasion heightened the importance of identity. People who had never given their identity much thought might have found themselves, *after migrating elsewhere*, considered strange or peculiar – a source of fascination or ridicule and scorn. People once part of the majority – and therefore not “ethnic” may become “ethnic” by migrating to a location where they are in the minority. Alternately, one may move from a location where they are considered an ethnic minority to another location where they are not considered ethnic. This could happen if they migrated to a location where their ethnicity was in the majority, or it could happen if they migrated to a location where the characteristics

that classified them as a specific ethnicity did not exist. The social construction of ethnicity is fluid.

African-American and Blackness

In some states in the US, for many years, there was an official policy that any person that had *any* ancestry from Africa was considered African-American – regardless of their physical appearance. It is interesting to note that before the great period of European migration in the late 1800s and early 1900s, a much larger percentage of Americans were of mixed ancestry. In 1930, the US Census Bureau stopped using the designation “mulatto” to indicate people of mixed ancestry. Subsequent censuses (1940-1960), “black” and “white” were the only options. It wasn’t until the 2000 census that the government allowed people of mixed heritage to once again identify by more than a single category.



8-5: Cumberland Posey, a famous baseball player from Homestead, Pennsylvania was considered "black" because local people knew of his family's partial African ancestry. He had to play baseball in the "Negro Leagues". His first cousins, (right) moved to Ohio in the 1920s where locals were unaware of their ancestry – so they became “white” and each male served in a white regiment in the military during World War II. The act of moving about 100 miles changed the family on the right’s racial classification.

It was only during the 20th century, during the height of the Jim Crow era, that stricter “blood laws” were enacted. Some states declared specific percentages (one-fourth, one-eighth) of ancestry as a legal limit to be considered legally white or black. Some of these laws remained intact until the late 1960s, when the Supreme Court struck them down. Such laws were necessary in part because even the US Army was segregated until 1948 – the military had to know which type of unit each individual should be assigned to. Similar laws, known as “blood quantum” rules have been applied to determine membership in various American Indian tribes.

The effect of these laws remains strong in the United States. Persons of mixed ancestry generally are pressured by society to identify align themselves with a single heritage – especially if they are “black”...even just a little bit. Black people were the group targeted most often by the old blood laws. Those definitions linger. The “average” African-American is about 20% “white” according to DNA evidence. About 10 percent of African-Americans are more than half white – yet still identify (or are identified) as “black”. Even very well-known people, like

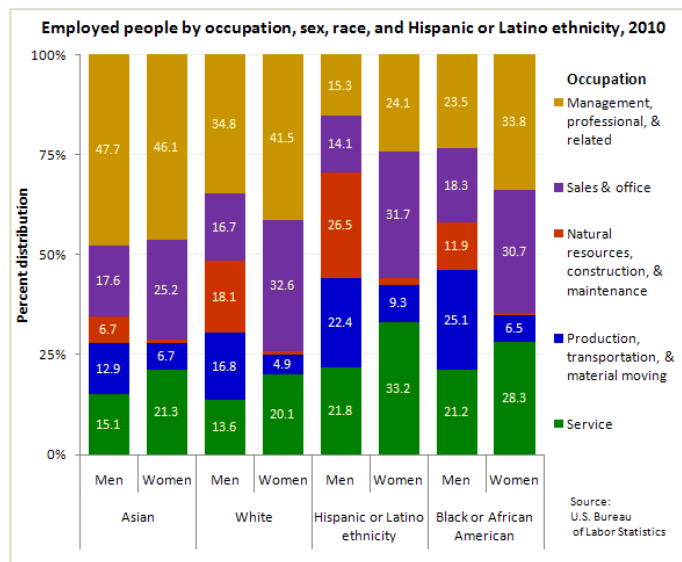
President Barack Obama and golfer Tiger Woods are shoved into a single ethnic category – sometimes over their very public objections. Woods is considered “black” in America, but he calls himself “Cablinasian” – a made up word that reflects his ancestry that includes **C**aucasians, **B**lack, **A**merican **I**ndian and **A**sian. In Thailand he is embraced as “Thai”, the home country of his mother. The unfortunately lesson here is that in America, it frequently doesn’t matter who you think you are – if everyone else insists that you are something different.

In South Africa, where race-based apartheid government policies lasted until the mid-1990s, a variety of tests were devised to determine individual’s inclusion as a “white”, “coloured” or “black”. One of the criteria was judged using the so-called “pencil test” in which a pencil was stuck in an individual’s hair. If it did not come out easily, the individual might be classified as “black”. In one famous case, a girl whose parents were both legally recognized as white, was reclassified as “coloured”, and subsequently removed from her all-white school – though her parents remained “white”.

In other countries, such as Brazil and the Caribbean, light skinned persons of mixed ancestry are generally considered “white”. One could be white or black – depending where they live. Brazilians who were considered white in their home country often find themselves “black” once they move to the United States. Such migrants must navigate a potential minefield of bigotry and anger. Americans may simply consider these immigrants “black” without reflecting much about the way the person from Brazil might self-identify. Discrimination could ensue. If the immigrants deny their African heritage by claiming “whiteness”, then American blacks may be off-put or upset.

Ethnicity and the Economy

Your ethnicity may guide (not determine!) your career choices. Students on multi-ethnic campuses can see this process unfolding across the university campus. Certain ethnicities are easier to find in engineering and business buildings. Other ethnicities are particularly rare in majors like Anthropology or



8-6: A graphic from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Note the significant differences in occupation by gender and ethnicity. http://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2011/ted_20110914.htm

Agriculture. Gender biases are perhaps even stronger (see graphic xxxx, chapter xxxx). Students chose majors in part because of the values placed on certain career paths by their family and/or community. These biases play out in a number of areas in the economy.

Some of these difference come from what varying ethnicities value. Some groups seem to value most careers that are high-paying. Other groups seem to value prestigious occupations. Still others value occupations that have intrinsic rewards or those with specific fringe benefits, like ample vacation time, or good health care packages. Some folks just hate to have a boss.

About 13% of white males are self-employed. Black males are about half as likely to be self-employed. Men from Israel or Korea are about mostly like to be self-employed at around 30%. Immigrants come to America sometimes pre-equipped with specific skills – especially if they are coming a great distance. Because it can be expensive to get into the US, groups including Koreans and Israelis often have some business experience *prior* to arriving in the US. Other migrant groups, especially those from nearby countries like Mexico or Honduras, generally have a shorter, less costly journey into the American economy, allowing them to arrive in the US with a less fully developed set of business skills. Again, *proximity* – location factors into a robust understanding of why things are the way they are.

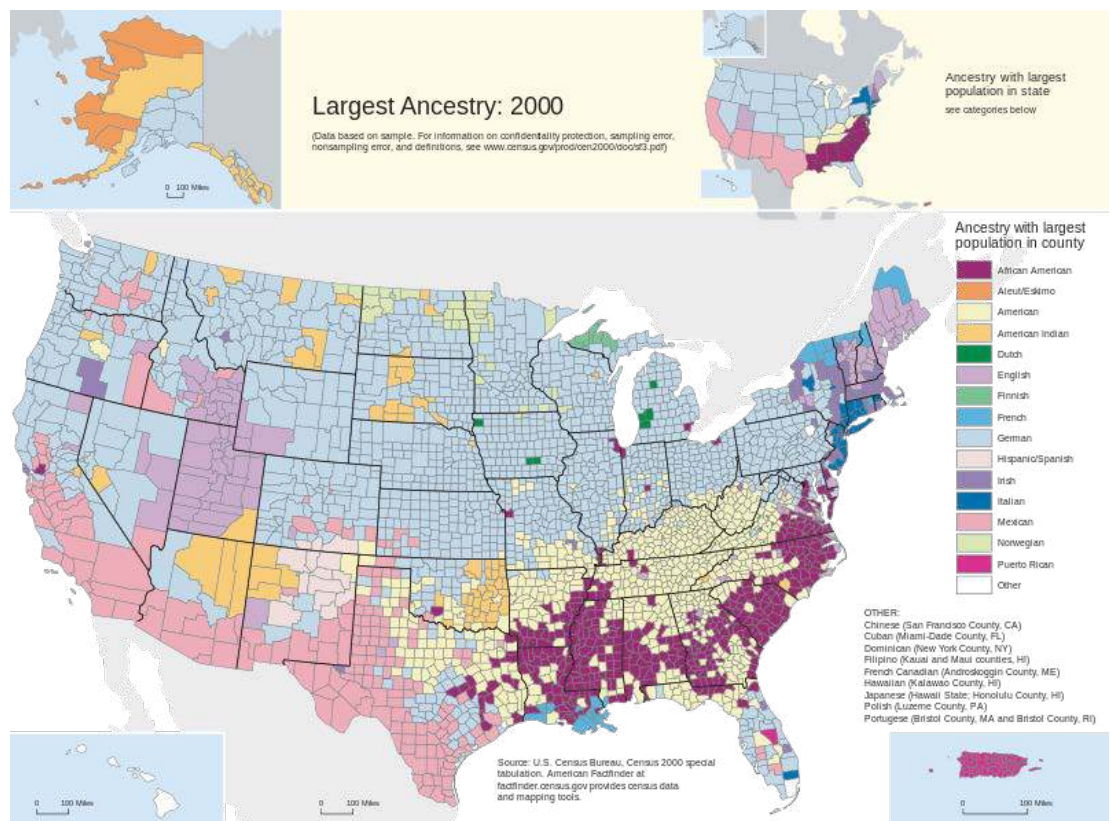
Other elements of occupational choice are a bit more mundane. You may get a job in a field because some relative helped you get started. Particularly in big cities, where employment niches get a chance to fully develop, you'll find specific job categories or business dominated by a single ethnicity. [A great example is the motel or hospitality industry where South Asian-Americans run about half of all motels.](#) Interestingly, most of these South Asians are Gujuratis, a linguistic ethnic group mostly from India, but also from Pakistan. Even a last name dominates – lending itself to the catch phrase used to describe these establishments: the “Patel Motel.” It appears that a single Gujurati man who opened a sort of youth hostel in the US during the 1940s, may have started a snowballing process. He was able to demonstrate that a farmer from India could succeed in this particular industry, inspiring others. Many of the others that tried, and succeeded in running a motel, invited friends and relatives to work for them; and naturally after a few years those employees ventured out and started running a motel for themselves. This particular industry has built in advantages for impoverished immigrants seeking a better life for their family – including built-in “day care” and housing; do-it-yourself attitude and a willingness to sacrifice greatly for long-term success.

Other sectors of the economy may have a less random origin. For example, Koreans own almost all stores that sell hair-care products for African-Americans. It is somewhat bizarre reality, but it can be traced largely to a few international trade policies adopted by the US and South Korea decades ago that made Korean wig manufacturers and distributors more competitive than those from other countries. They came to dominate the industry, and the web of familial and linguistic ties (and

barriers) has made it difficult to non-Koreans (including African-Americans) to break into a business that largely caters to African-Americans.

Ethnic Regions

If you zoom out from the scale of the city, you will see ethnicity articulated on the landscape, sometimes over vast distances. In the United States, there are a handful of regions that are heavily influenced by a single ethnicity, but barriers to entry to any of these places is uncomplicated; and most Americans don't really care too much about it. The US constitution does a reasonably good job of protecting the rights of minorities of all stripes. In other parts of the world, regional and ethnic



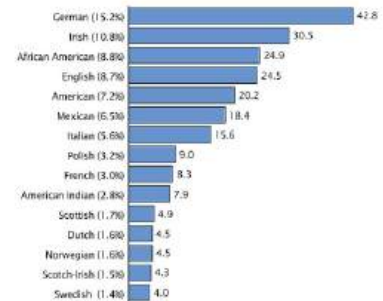
differences can be explosively dangerous.

Three main ethnic regions dominate the United States. Around a dozen small ethnic regions, known sometimes as *ethnic islands*, occupy areas as small as a county. The map in figure xxxx shows that the largest ethnic region, in light blue is German-American. It's hard to discern what would make such a vast region "ethnic" because so much of it conforms to, or possibly creates, the culture of the host country. Clearly some areas are more culturally Germanic than other locations within the vast swath of counties that are predominantly German-American. For example, people in Wisconsin may drink more beer, eat more knackwurst and sauerkraut, and celebrate Oktoberfest more heartily than people in Southern Oregon

– but for the most part, German-America is difficult to characterize as distinct from the Mid-South which appears on the map as “American-American”.

The other large ethnic regions are the Mexican Borderlands and the so-called “Black Belt” in the Deep South. These latter two regions are distinguished by cultural traditions that are more recognizably distinct from the mainstream. Foodways, musical traditions, holiday celebrations and a host of other cultural practices mark these two regions as culturally unique. In the Southern Black Belt, you might eat a [soul food](#) supper with collard greens, black-eyed peas and chitterlings (chitlins) with sweet potato pie at a [Juneteenth](#) celebration. In the Mexican Borderlands, you might eat gorditas, pozole and tamales with churros for dessert at a Día de Muertos party. You might not as well – those characterizations are stereotypical – but either scenario would be very atypical in Iowa or Vermont.

Figure 2.
Fifteen Largest Ancestries: 2000
(In millions. Percent of total population in parentheses.
Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection,
sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see
www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/sec/s3.pdf)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulations.

There are a number of much smaller ethnic islands. They are too numerous for an introductory textbook, but so interesting that at least a few deserve some attention in hopes that students will be interested in visiting or learning more. Italian-Americans are the dominant group in many areas in the Northeast. The Irish live in many of the same locations as the Italian-Americans. Norwegian-Americans, as well as other descendants of Scandinavian ancestors form a number of ethnic islands in Minnesota and the Dakotas. Cajuns, descendants of French-Canadians migrants dominate regions of swampy southern Louisiana. People who claim Spanish ancestors are numerous in much of northern New Mexico.



Process

The processes that create ghettos, ethnic islands and ethnic regions are varied. Much of it is mundane or ordinary. Other causal factors are more interesting and a few are downright ugly. There is an element of accident to a number of migration stories – and accidental or random processes should not be discounted. It’s not unusual to hear a story about why some great-great-grandfather moved to a certain location be as simple as “my car (wagon) broke down here” or “I only had enough money to get this far”. [Chaos theory](#) and [stochastic processes](#) help social scientists explain and/or predict a number of social and cultural phenomena. Less random processes were at work as well.

Environment and Ethnicity

Many of the locations that are attractive to migrants are those that remind them of their homelands. It makes some sense that Scandinavians found Minnesota to their liking. The Spanish found a familiar Mediterranean climate in Southern California. Germans may have found the Midwest similar enough to the North European plain. When cultures are well suited to thrive in a new environment, they enjoy some measure of *cultural preadaptation*. For example, Dutch people from Holland, having generations of experience with draining the Zuiderzee using an elaborate system of drainage ditches, windmills and dikes found taming the marshy, tall-grass prairies scattered across the Midwest of little trouble. Other Europeans settlers considered these soggy wetlands wastelands. On the flip side, the English were *cultural maladapted* to settlement in both the Massachusetts and Virginia colonies – occasionally resulting in catastrophic failure. They had to learn new strategies for survival in the extreme climates of the North America, where heavy forests and unusual soils posed considerable challenges. Mormon migrants to the Great Basin in Utah were forced likewise to quickly adapt to different climate conditions from those they were accustomed back East. It's really very surprising that the Cajuns managed to survive in the swamps of Louisiana at all.

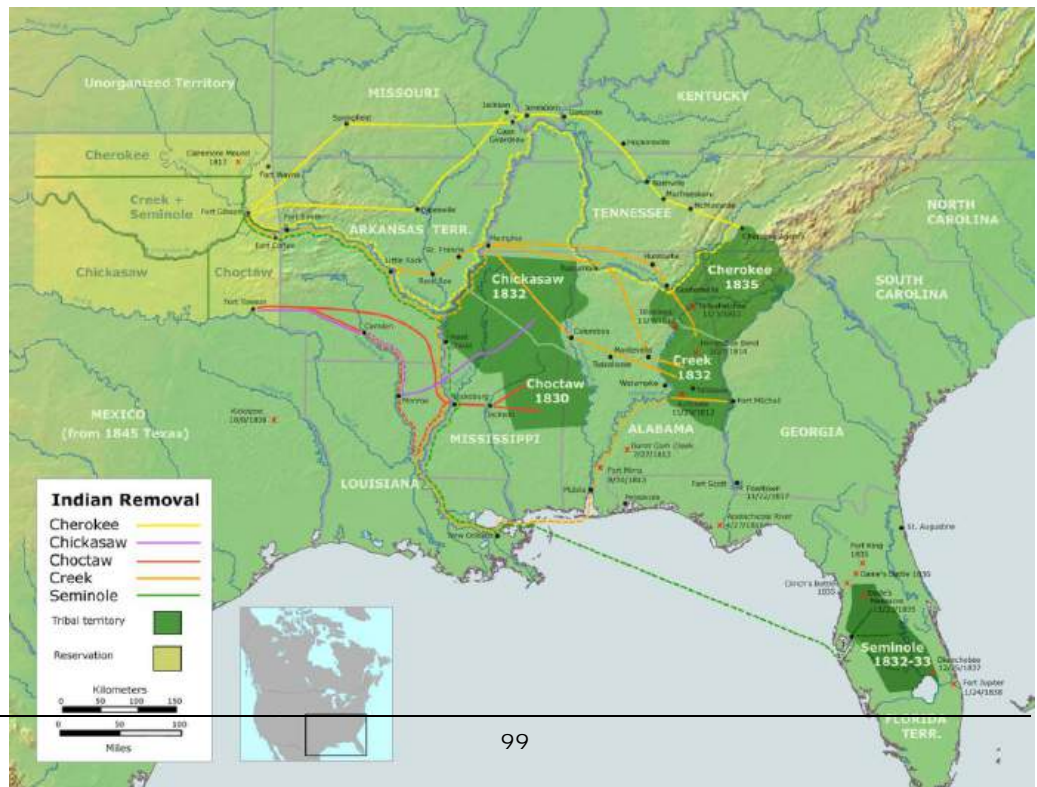


8-7: Preadaptation and European Colonization in Rural North America. Terry G. Jordan *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 79, No. 4 (Dec., 1989), pp. 489-500

Doctrine of First Effective Settlement (Zelinsky 73, and Kniffen 65) xxx

Enforced Ethnic Regions

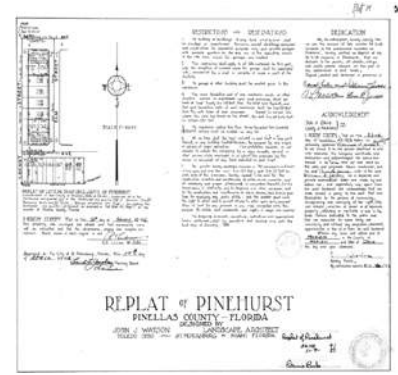
Smaller ethnic regions, ghettos, enclaves and islands, have frequently been engineered to purposefully isolate specific groups. North American Indians were forcibly removed from their lands, eventually restricted to small parcels called reservations – sometimes near ancestral lands of the tribe. Occasionally, Indians were relocated to reservations many hundreds of miles from their homes. The



8-8: Trail of Tears Map. How different or similar are the topography, climate, flora and fauna of Oklahoma to the homeland areas from which Indians were removed?

famous “trail of tears” was a product of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which led to the relocation of some 46,000 Native Americans to Oklahoma from various locations in the American Southeast. Dozens of similar evictions characterized the settlement of the American West.

Following the Civil War, a wide variety of strategies, aimed at limiting the geographic distribution of African Americans evolved in the United States. Early on, very simple legal measures were enacted that restricted African Americans to certain locations, especially in the Jim Crow South. Such laws were found unconstitutional in 1917 in Buchanan v Warley. More sophisticated measures were soon invented. Restrictive or exclusionary covenants were written into the deed of sale for many homes sold in the 20th century. These legal documents required owners to do things like not build garages, erect fences or porches – and not sell the house to undesirable ethnicities. Black folks were frequently the target of this discrimination, but Jews, Catholics, Asian and other ethnic groups also found themselves victims of legalized housing discrimination – depending on the peculiarities of local bigotry. For example, it was once illegal to sell or rent property to Jewish people in Beverly Hills.



8-9: A homeowner's deed containing restrictive and exclusionary covenants, sold in Ohio for housing in Florida.

After 1948, when the Supreme Court found laws enforcing ethnic housing discrimination unconstitutional, other means to keep specific groups segregated from each other evolved. Realtors, fearing a loss of profits through the degradation of home values, sometimes would simply refuse to show/sell minorities houses in specific neighborhoods. Other practices might involve making it harder or more expensive for specific ethnicities to buy or rent in certain neighborhoods. Banks and other lenders also practiced *mortgage discrimination*, which could effectively keep ethnic homebuyers out of selected neighborhoods by denying loans, or making them irrationally expensive. There is evidence that this last practice continues to some degree today. Another related practice, redlining, is discussed in chapter xxxx.

One of the most controversial practices, known as *blockbusting* was used to some effect, especially in cities in the Industrial Midwest. The practice worked like this: realtors would try to convince white home owners that once a black person had moved into a neighborhood,



8-10: This sign was erected in 1942 near a proposed housing project in Detroit. Rioting followed. Note the use of the American flag, during World War II. Eventually the national guard arrived to protect the black residents.

the value of housing would fall. If they could scare the white owners enough, they would buy the property, *at below* market value, and seek to sell it to a black owner at *above* market value. Real estate speculators, land developers and lenders all made substantial profits from the scam, white and black both lost money – while reinforcing residential segregation largely through *white flight*. The Fair Housing act of 1968 outlawed the practice.

More benign, perhaps subconscious, actions also likely create and maintain ethnic neighborhoods. One realtor behavior called *steering* may be widespread still today. Steering happens when a realtor, in an attempt to sell a prospective buyer a house, focuses the buyers attention on houses in neighborhoods predominated by persons of the prospective buyers ethnicity. Whether this is always a purposeful, discriminatory act, or simply a logic geared to help find people homes in neighborhoods where they “feel at home” is less clear.

Even some of the actions taken by national and local governments seem to have contributed to ghettoization of minority groups. There is some debate about the intentionality of the government, and the overall-long term effect of American public housing efforts, but public housing projects appears to have, at the very least, contributed to the maintenance of ethnically segregated neighborhoods in many cities where they were built. They certainly became for many years icons of black ghettoization in the United States.



8-11: Good Times was a television show that helped viewers understand some of the issues of life in public housing projects. It also reinforced many negative stereotypes about African Americans. It was implicit that the TV family lived in Cabrini-Green, Chicago's most infamous project. Watch an episode: http://youtu.be/6OTwW2_8Bao



8-12: Housing Projects in St. Louis (left) and Chicago's Robert Taylor Homes in the mid-1990s. These well-intentioned public housing efforts concentrated poor minorities in small areas of the city. Crime and other social dysfunction was common. Later programs replaced large scale housing projects and have relieved some of the segregation.

Jedi Googles - Reading Ethnicity on the Landscape

Ethnicity is heavily inscribed onto the landscape. It appears in many forms and helps us better understand each other. Landscape also can be misleading as well, helping undermine enlightened understandings, while helping create or maintain faulty stereotypes about *the other*.

One of the prime sources of simplified ideas about ethnicities are found in touristic landscapes, like ethnic-themed destinations (Chinatown), “wild west” themed locations and ordinary tourist traps.

Ethnic islands, or enclaves dominated by a specific ethnicity often try to attract visitors by theming their location as a tourist destination. Many cities’ Chinatowns have done so successfully over the years, turning degraded slum areas into attractive spots for tourists to spend cash. Much of the architectural motifs in Chinatowns are exaggerated to conform to touristic expectations about what Chinatown *should* look like, even if one would be challenged to find actual examples of such architecture in China itself. Local residents (Chinese-Americans) have every right to cash in on the erroneous beliefs held by Americans, but it can also be argued that places like Chinatown may reinforce negative stereotypes. On the other hand, if such destinations did not build upon silly notions about what Chinatown should look like, then others might not visit at all, perhaps foregoing any opportunity for outsiders to learn about Chinese Americans or Chinese culture.



More dubious tourist attractions have been built, playing upon the ethnic heritage of many dozens of towns and regions. Some claims to authenticity are more dubious than others. The towns of Kingsburg (Swedish) and Solvang (Danish) California both attempt to leverage muddled Scandinavian imagery to attract visitors. For example, both make ample use of windmills on the landscape, assured that few Americans are aware that the Dutch (Netherlands) are the ones who are most famous for them. Still visitors crowd the streets, particularly of Solvang, happy to be strolling along buying sweets in a miniature fantasy land.

Perhaps the most unfortunate representations of ethnicity in the US seem to involve Native Americans. Indian imagery is used to sell everything from trinkets at roadside stands to motel rooms to slot machines. Surely no other ethnic group is so consistently misused a tool for touristic commerce. This long standing trend may help explain why Indians remain the only ethnic group so consistently used (and misused) as mascots for sporting teams.

Part of the reason Indian imagery is so compelling is that it is hopelessly tied to our collective ideas about frontier times on the American West. Most people have little idea of the staggering diversity of



8-13: Buffalo Bill was a late 18th century entertainer whose popular “Wild West” show helped to greatly simplify American knowledge of Indian culture. Hollywood adopted the imagery which is preserved to this day, despite its inaccuracies. Click to enlarge.



8-14: This sign welcomes visitors to a national park. Is this an appropriate representation of Native Americans? Why would this imagery be linked to a park known for large trees? Would the imagery of any other ethnic group be used in such a manner?

languages and cultural practices among the hundreds of Indian nations, tribes and bands that continue to exist in the United States. Instead most Americans, at least casually, think of Indians as a monolithic ethnicity – noble, but war-like, silent, primitive and respectful of nature. Most of the time, Indian imagery is derived from a few tribal practices common only among plains Indians and heavily modified by Hollywood.

Tipis (or TeePees) a folk housing tent-house favored by nomadic tribes, such as the Lakota, Sioux and Blackfoot, can be found representing Indians from California to Maine to Florida, though there is ample evidence that tipis were little used outside the Central Plains. Indian headdresses, scalping, bows and arrows, horseback riding



8-15: Touristy tipis. Clockwise from upper left - Upstate New York, [San Bernardino, California](#); Moab, Utah and Holbrook, Arizona. None of these locations were likely to have had Indians that used this sort of housing. Why are people drawn to this imagery? How does it maintain stereotypes about Native Americans?

and other elements of the Hollywood stereotype of Indians can be found readily on the landscape in diverse – spatially inappropriate locations.

Mapping Ethnicity – Patterns of Land Settlement and Division

Blkjafsd

Black Ghetto Typology

Ford and Griffin (1979)

Early Southern, Classic Southern

Early Northern, Classic Northern

New City

CHAPTER 9 WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE-URBAN GEOGRAPHY

Heading 2

Redlining

Reverse Redlining

Heading 3

HEADING 4

Body text I'm not sure what's going on here. It's block formation and

xx

dscape, GIS, etc.

CHAPTER 10 ECONOMICS

That elusive set of rules that govern the way we act is a product of where we are from and where we live. This chapter explores the idea of culture and how place and space shape the way we think and what we do in myriad fashions

CHAPTER 11 HEADING 1-SECTION TITLE

Heading 2

Heading 3

HEADING 4

Not sure what to do with this chapter. I'd like to riff off Don Mitchell's *Cultural Geography* book, but I also want to include some old school "folk geography" and quite a few pop culture elements, but I don't know if they really all belong in the same chapter.

Starbucks in San Francisco: <http://coolmaps.esri.com/Starbucks/>

CHAPTER 12 URBANIZATION

What you eat and why you eat it has a lot to do with where you live. This chapter explores how American diets are shaped by the contest between culture and the economics of contemporary agribusiness.

CHAPTER 13 HEADING 1-SECTION TITLE

Heading 2

Heading 3

HEADING 4

Tweet Map: <http://www.mapbox.com/labs/twitter-gnip/brands/#5/36.897/-102.437>

CHAPTER 14 HEALTH AND DISEASE

That elusive set of rules that govern the way we act is a product of where we are from and where we live. This chapter explores the idea of culture and how place and space shape the way we think and what we do in myriad fashions

CHAPTER 15 HEADING 1-SECTION TITLE

Heading 2

Heading 3

HEADING 4

Not sure what to do with this chapter. I'd like to riff off Don Mitchell's *Cultural Geography* book, but I also want to include some old school "folk geography" and quite a few pop culture elements, but I don't know if they really all belong in the same chapter.

CHAPTER 16 CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

What you eat and why you eat it has a lot to do with where you live. This chapter explores how American diets are shaped by the contest between culture and the economics of contemporary agribusiness.

CHAPTER 17 HEADING 1-SECTION TITLE

Heading 2

Heading 3

HEADING 4

Body text I'm not sure what's going on here. It's block formation and

xx

dscape, GIS, etc.

CHAPTER 18 GENDER

That elusive set of rules that govern the way we act is a product of where we are from and where we live. This chapter explores the idea of culture and how place and space shape the way we think and what we do in myriad fashions

CHAPTER 19 HEADING 1-SECTION TITLE

Heading 2

Heading 3

HEADING 4

Not sure what to do with this chapter. I'd like to riff off Don Mitchell's *Cultural Geography* book, but I also want to include some old school "folk geography" and quite a few pop culture elements, but I don't know if they really all belong in the same chapter.

CHAPTER 20 ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE

What you eat and why you eat it has a lot to do with where you live. This chapter explores how American diets are shaped by the contest between culture and the economics of contemporary agribusiness.

CHAPTER 21 HEADING 1-SECTION TITLE

Heading 2

Heading 3

HEADING 4

Body text I'm not sure what's going on here. It's block formation and

xx

BOOK FORMATTING

HEADING ONE

CHAPTER 22 FORMATTING TIPS

The “picture” icons are Wingdings typeface symbols formatted in white with a shaded background. To insert a new symbol, select the character and then click **Symbol** from the **Insert** menu. Select a new symbol, click **Insert**, and then click **Close**. To create new icons, format a one-character paragraph as the Icon 1 style.

To change the shading of the Icon 1 style, click **Borders and Shading** on the **Format** menu. Select a new shade or color, and then click **OK**.

CHAPTER 23 SECTION BREAKS ARE KEY

In this manual, section breaks are the secret to success. Double-click the section

Using the Break command, you can insert a page, column, or section break.

break above to activate the **Page Setup** menu. Click the **Margins** tab. As you can see, this section (page) has margins of 1.25 inches top and bottom, 2.33 left, and .83 right—with headers and footers of .67 inches. Special section margins

make it possible for this manual to use framed Styles—such as the Icon 1 style—which will move with the text.

- Breaks in a Word document appear as “labeled,” dotted double-lines.
- To insert a section break, click **Break** on the **Insert** menu. Select one option, and then click **OK**.

CHAPTER 24 ABOUT PICTURES AND CAPTIONS

Assuming that you see your paragraph marks, you’ll notice a paragraph mark attached to the lower-right corner of the picture. Click the picture, and notice too, the name of the style—not surprisingly, the Picture style. Pictures attached to paragraph styles make it possible for pictures to act like paragraphs.



FIGURE 21.1 uses this caption text. In Word, the Caption style can be automatically numbered and labeled. Click **Caption** on the **Insert** menu to access and control the caption settings. Press the F1 key to search for additional information and Help on captions.

This is Heading 5. Like all styles in this margin, it can flow with the text.

To change the picture, first click it to select it. Point to **Picture** on the **Insert** menu, and then click **From File**. Clear the **Float over Text** check box. Select a new picture, and then click **Insert**. To change the color of the picture, double-click the graphic to activate the drawing layer—where you can group or ungroup picture objects, and re-color or delete objects. Click an object, and then click **Drawing Object** on the **Format** menu. Select a new shade, and then click **Close**. To delete an object, select it, and then press DELETE. Click **Close Picture**.

To crop the picture, click the picture. Hold the SHIFT key down and re-size the picture by moving the picture “handles” with your mouse.

Try this: Click in the framed text below, and choose **Body Text** from the **Style** list on the **Formatting** toolbar. The headline should now appear as the paragraph below this paragraph. To change the paragraph back to Heading 5, click the **Undo** toolbar button, or click **Heading 5** from the **Style** list.

Framed text, like this heading, can be cut, copied and pasted like regular paragraph text.

To cut and paste framed text, click on the bounding border of the frame to reveal the frame handles. Press CTRL+X to cut the frame from the page. Place your cursor before the first letter of the paragraph that you want the frame to appear next to. Press CTRL+V to paste the frame next to the paragraph.

How to Generate a Table of Contents

To create a Table of Contents, click where you want to insert the Table of Contents. On the **Insert** menu, click **Reference**, and then click **Index and Tables**. Click the **Table of Contents** tab. Select any formatting preferences, and then click **OK**. The Table of Contents will be automatically created with words contained in Headings 1 through 3.

Note

The TOC is generated from text formatted with Heading styles used throughout the document.



How to Create an Index

To create index entries for the Word automatic indexing feature, select the text to be indexed, point to **Reference** on the **Insert** menu, and then click **Index and Tables**. Click the **Index** tab. (For more information, click **Microsoft Word Help** on the **Help** menu, type **index** into the question space, and then click the **Search** button. Finally, select the “Create an Index” Help topic.)

CHAPTER 25 HOW TO CHANGE THE HEADERS AND FOOTERS

Written exercise
pages 121 - 123 in your
workbook.

In print layout view, double-click the header or footer to activate it, or click **Header and Footer** on the **View** menu. You can change or delete the text just as you would regular document text. To specify placement and whether the header or footer should be different on odd and even pages, or different for the first page only, click **Page Setup** on the **File** menu, and then click the **Layout** tab.

CHAPTER 26 HOW TO CREATE A NUMBERED PARAGRAPH

To create a numbered paragraph:

1. In the **Font** list on the **Formatting** toolbar, click the **List Number** style; or
2. Click the **Numbering** button on the **Formatting** toolbar.

If you choose to format more than one paragraph, Word will automatically number the paragraphs.

CHAPTER 27 HOW TO SAVE TIME IN THE FUTURE

When you save the manual template with your changes, it will be easier to create documents in the future. To customize this manual:

To link a picture to your template, link the picture when you insert it by clicking on the Link to File box.

1. Insert your company information in place of the sample text on the cover page, as well as the inside-cover page. If you plan to use styles such as the “Icon Key” or Icon 1 style, set them now (see instructions, page 1).

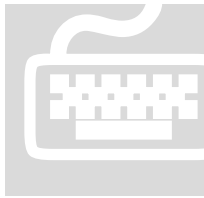
2. Click **Save As** on the **File** menu. In the dialog box, click **Document Template** in the **Save File as Type** box. (The file name extension should change from .doc to .dot.)

How to Create a Document

To create a manual from your newly saved template, click **New** on the **File** menu to re-open your template as a document. If you followed the steps above, your company information should appear in place. Now, you are ready to type your manual.

CHAPTER 28 MORE TEMPLATE TIPS

There are three ways to view the various style names of the template sample text:



1. In normal view, click **Options** on the **Tools** menu. Click the **View** tab. In the **Style Area Width** box, dial a number, and then click **OK**;
2. In any view, click a paragraph and view the style name on the **Formatting** toolbar; or
3. On the **Format** menu, click **Styles and Formatting** to display the **Styles and Formatting** pane.

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