

Chapter One

EXPLORING CULTURE



What is “Culture”?

What are some words that come to mind when you think of the word “culture”?

Does art create culture or does culture create art?

Introduction

Imagine you have just been informed that you have to leave your home in 24 hours. You will never be able to return. Along with your family and friends, you will be travelling to a distant place where you will have to build a new home and community. You are able to take some of your belongings with you. However, all of your possessions must fit into a single travel trunk. What will you take?

In the exercise above you began to identify various objects that form a part of your culture. In simple terms, **culture** is the way of life of a group of people.

Given the fact that you did not have much room in your trunk, you had to give some careful thought about what to pack. Some of your objects may have been for practical purposes, such as cooking or hunting for food. Other objects may have been for relaxation, such as a guitar or a game. You may have included some photographs because they reminded you of close relationships or something special from your past.

Each of the things that you chose to include provides some insight into your culture. However, culture is made up of more than objects. It also includes things

1.1



that are less tangible, such as the way we behave and the values that guide our decisions.

Cultures are complexes of material and non-material features or traits, also sometimes called tangible and non-tangible items. **Cultural traits** are the identifiable elements of a cultural complex. Groups of similar traits are called **components** or sub-systems of culture.

Cultural traits can be organized into three components:

Artifacts – the objects, material items, and technologies created by a culture. They provide basic necessities, recreation, entertainment, and most of the things that

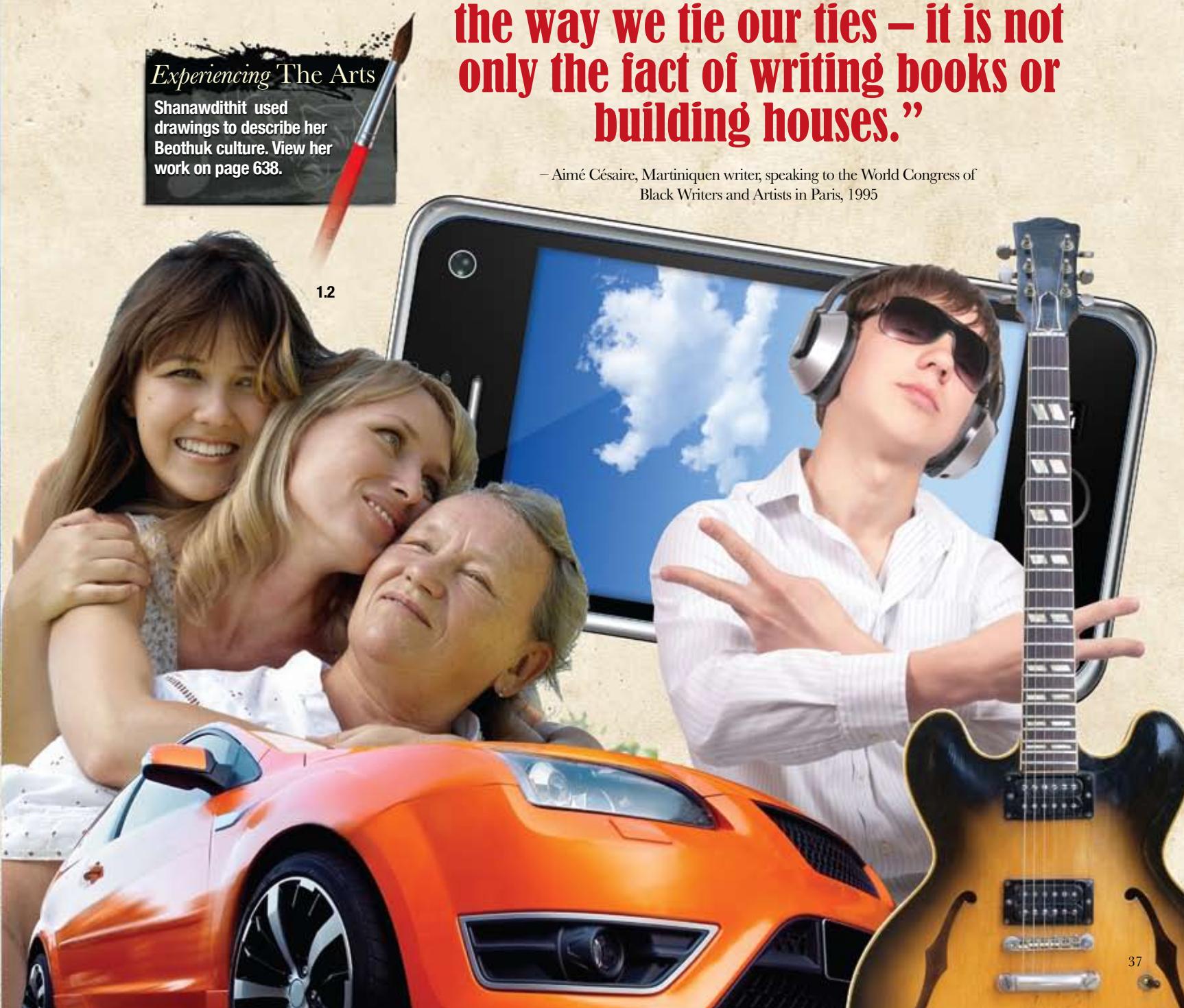
make life easier for people. Examples include buildings, tools, cars, musical instruments, and computers.

Sociofacts – the structures and organizations of a culture which influence social behaviour. Sociofacts include families, governments, education systems, sports organizations, religious groups, and any other grouping designed for specific activities.

Mentifacts – The shared ideas, values, and beliefs of a culture. Examples include religion, language, viewpoints, and ideas about right or wrong behaviour.

“Culture is everything; culture is the way we dress, the way we carry our heads, the way we walk, the way we tie our ties – it is not only the fact of writing books or building houses.”

– Aimé Césaire, Martiniquen writer, speaking to the World Congress of Black Writers and Artists in Paris, 1995



Culture Complexes

Examined on their own, culture traits can only provide us with limited information about a particular culture. However, when we examine how culture traits connect, we gain deeper insight. When two or more culture traits interact with each other, they form a **culture complex**.

Consider how the following culture traits might interrelate: a pair of skates, knowing how to skate, and enjoying winter activities. What culture complexes can be formed? Playing hockey? Ice dancing? Speed skating? Skating just for fun? Each of these interactions is a distinct culture complex.

Culture complexes help influence and define us. For example, a person who skates may practise at the rink

early every morning before going to school. He or she may also participate in dance to help improve his or her skill as a skater. That individual's circle of friends might also include other skaters. Also, during the Winter Olympics he or she might be more inclined to watch skating as opposed to another sport.

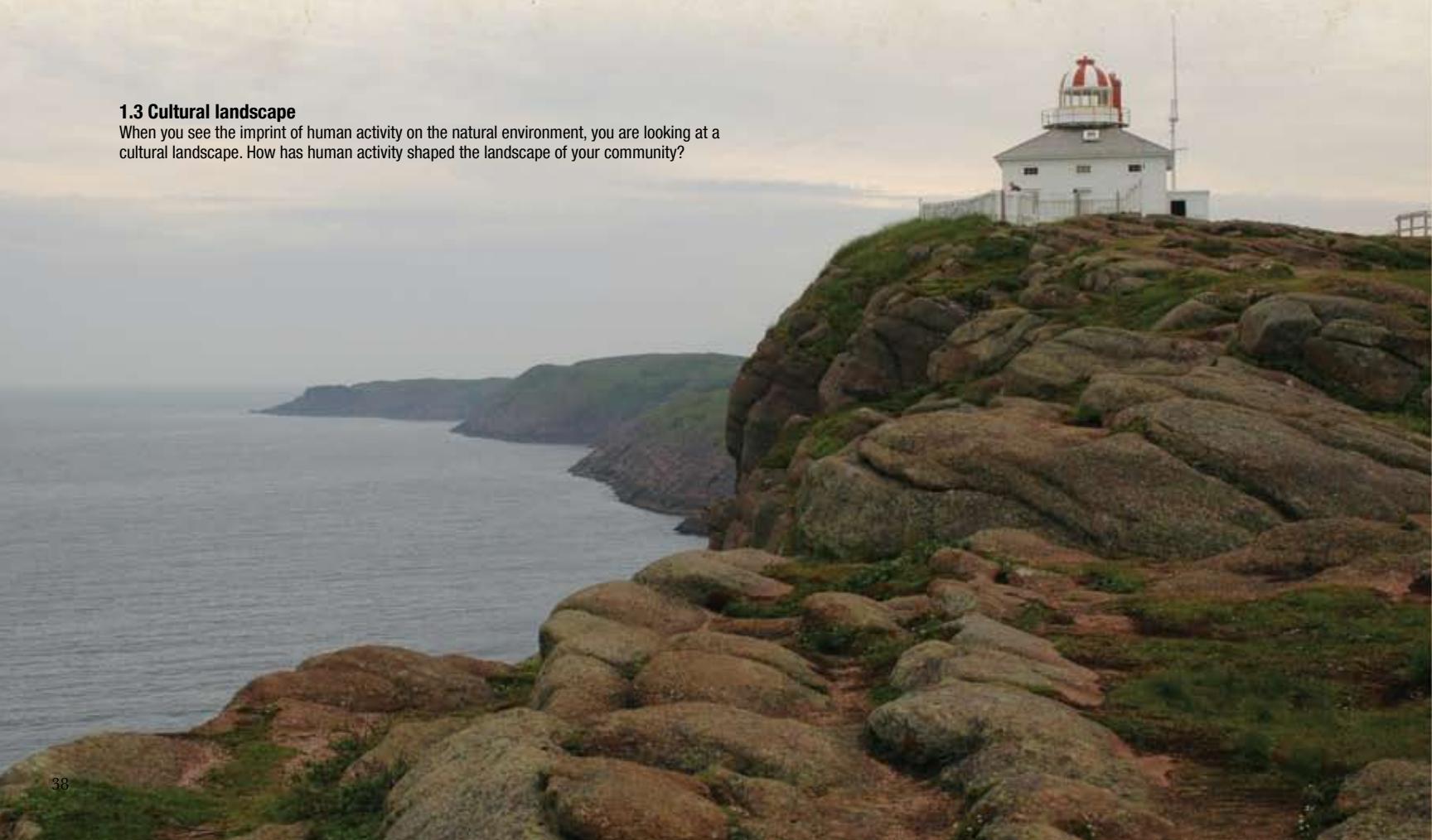
Throughout this course you will be examining the way of life of the people who have occupied "this place" since humans first arrived here over 9000 years ago. By exploring various culture complexes, you will gain a deeper understanding of our way of life today and what our way of life may look like in the future.

"A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people."

— Mohandas Gandhi

1.3 Cultural landscape

When you see the imprint of human activity on the natural environment, you are looking at a cultural landscape. How has human activity shaped the landscape of your community?





1.4

Each photograph depicts a culture complex. Identify the artifacts, sociofacts and mentifacts that are a part of each activity.



Questions:

1. Think of your school. What are some examples of artifacts, sociofacts, and mentifacts? Use a chart to organize your answer. Record 10 examples of each.
2. Human activities have shaped the landscape of your community. What are the five most prominent features of your cultural landscape?
3. Which of the following has the most influence on a person's way of life – artifacts, sociofacts, or mentifacts? Explain.
4. As a class, create a collage that represents either the “culture of the class” or “youth culture” in general. Each student should bring in photographs that represent the most significant artifacts, sociofacts, and mentifacts of the culture chosen.

1.5 Expressing culture

Culture can be expressed in many ways, through music, dance, sports, fashion, religion, language, etiquette, gender roles, courtship, design, and gestures.



TOPIC 1.2

Describing Culture

Do you have the same culture as someone who lives in another province or country?

What do you think is the most significant way that culture is expressed in your class?

Introduction

What cultural traits do you share with your neighbour? With someone who lives in a different town in Newfoundland and Labrador? With someone who lives in another province or country?

Culture complexes reveal a lot about our lives. Some patterns of behaviour, such as playing music, are practised in many parts of the world. Other culture complexes, such as catching capelin, are not as widespread. By examining the various culture complexes that make up our lives we can begin to define ourselves.

When you identify on a map the places where a particular culture complex is found, you are identifying a **culture region**. Culture regions can be as small as a neighbourhood or larger than a continent. Generally, culture regions are grouped into three categories:

Local culture – expressions of culture that are not widely practised. For example, the practice of

cooking Jiggs dinner as a family Sunday dinner is not common to many parts of the world.

Regional culture – these expressions of culture are practised over a broad geographic area. For example, the use of chopsticks is common throughout much of East Asia.

Popular culture – when a culture complex is widely accepted and practised by people around the world, it is referred to as popular culture. Often, popular or mainstream culture is associated with commercial products and conveyed through mass media such as magazines, television, and the Internet. Eating hamburgers at fast food restaurants or the use of Facebook are both examples of popular culture.

With increased globalization, culture regions are less confined by national borders or other human-made divisions – their shapes are constantly evolving.

Did you know?
 Ches's was opened in St. John's in 1951 by Ches Barbour. He used to fish outside The Narrows in the morning and cook up his catch for customers for dinner.



1.6 Locations of Ches's Fish & Chips restaurants
 What category of culture does this represent?



1.7 Provinces/states in which Tim Hortons stores are located.

This map illustrates the culture region where Tim Hortons franchises are located. What category of culture does this represent? Are you wondering about the Tim Hortons located smack in the middle of Asia? It's operating out of the Canadian military base in Kandahar, Afghanistan.



1.8 Countries in which McDonald's restaurants are located.
 What category of culture does this represent?

Camping on the Humber River — Nfld.



1.9 Victoria Day celebrates the birthday of Queen Victoria who reigned from 1837 to 1901.

Long before the death of Queen Victoria, when May 24 was decreed to be Empire Day, the date was widely celebrated. In St. John's, the cornerstone of the Colonial Building was laid on May 24, 1847. What is your family's tradition for the May 24 holiday?

In addition to examining how culture is organized **spatially**, you can also examine how culture is organized **temporally**. For instance, some culture complexes in Newfoundland and Labrador trace their roots back through hundreds of years, while other culture complexes are quite recent. Culture traits that have been passed down to us from our ancestors are referred to as **traditional**

culture. Examples of traditional culture include the celebration of holidays such as Christmas or Valentine's Day. Culture traits that originate in modern times are known as contemporary culture. Examples of these are the use of digital cameras and cell phones, bungee jumping, indoor wall climbing, parasailing, and paintball.



Canadian Idol

2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008

1.10 Countries that have or had Idol shows Reality and star search shows are examples of contemporary culture. Prior to 2001, the culture region shown left would not have existed.



1.11 Countries where Christmas is celebrated as a national holiday

The celebration of Christmas is an example of a traditional culture trait that is still widely observed.

Experiencing The Arts

Photography is a good medium for exploring the basic ideas related to the examination of culture. Select one of the themes listed below and explore it by making a series of photographs:

1. Traditional Culture and Contemporary Culture
2. Local Culture and Popular Culture
3. Youth Culture in the Twenty-First Century

Ideally you should make at least 20 photographs – from which you can choose six for this assignment. (Keep the other photographs for use in the future.) While you are making your photographs, pay particular

attention to the principles of design – in particular focusing on balance and composition.

Arrange your images in a **viewbook**. As you select and arrange your images, be sure to include a title for each image and a brief caption that provides an explanation of what you were attempting to capture or represent.

As you think about your subject matter, attempt to capture those representations that you feel are significant or revealing. Explain the significance of each item in the caption.

Questions:

1. How do popular culture and local culture influence your lifestyle? Give specific examples.
2. Is your lifestyle influenced at all by traditions of your parents and grandparents? Explain.

What Shapes Culture?

How does the media shape your culture?

How do you think families who fished for generations reacted to the cod moratorium of 1992?

1.12



Introduction

Culture is strongly influenced by a number of factors or forces. In this section, and throughout this text, we will explore four forces in particular: economic factors, geographical factors, historical factors, and political factors. These factors are mostly cultural in character. Thus, cultural factors affect culture in various ways. How can this be?

Economic Factors

The way people make a living – the jobs performed, the occupations and professions pursued, the products produced, and services provided – represent an important cultural component of their existence. Big economic events always seem to make headlines because they can influence what we do for a living, how we spend our money, and even where we live. The following are examples of the types of topics that often catch our attention. Do you think these topics would affect your lifestyle? Your community? How?

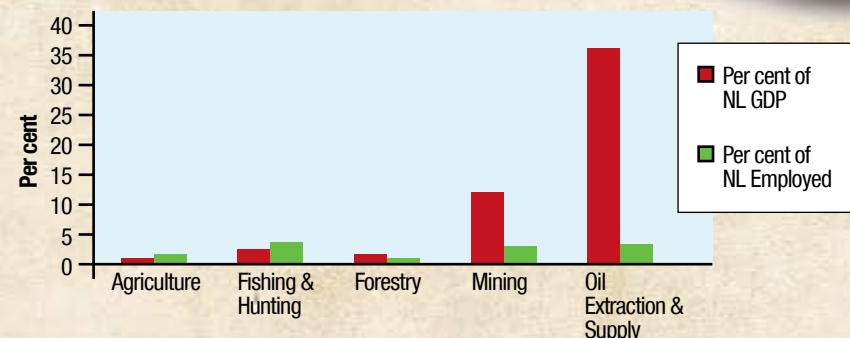
- The price of oil
- Interest rates
- Unemployment
- Exchange rate for the Canadian dollar
- New businesses opening
- An industry in decline

Geographical Factors

While not always obvious, factors such as the natural environment, the locations where we live, and the resources accessible can influence the way we make a living and many other aspects of our lives (e.g., sports and recreation, foods we eat, clothing we wear). How have the following factors influenced the development of cultural traits and patterns in our province?

- Marine resources
- Water resources
- Oil
- Forests
- Minerals
- Soil

1.13 2007-08 Gross Domestic Product and Employment



1.14 A geographic feature may have a positive and negative effect.

Other than contributing to tourism, can you think of another way that people in our province have benefited from ice?

Province Calls on Federal Government to Implement Ice Compensation Measures

News Releases

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador - Canada

Government Home Search Stamp Contact Us

Fisheries and Aquaculture May 22, 2008

Province Calls on Federal Government to Implement Ice Compensation Measures

The Honourable Tom Ridout, Minister of Economic and Aboriginal Initiatives called from the province's representative in the Federal Cabinet, compensation measures are implemented in Newfoundland and Labrador.

"Some small boat fish harvesters have said Minister Ridout. "These individuals are at the time of year, and Employment Insurance."

Minister Ridout added that it is important to have compensation measures in place to address the situation with appropriate compensation and representation from fish harvesters.

"I am particularly concerned by the negative impact that the ice has on the fish harvesters and the Assembly directly to seek assistance from the Federal Government in this issue fall to the wayside."

"This is clearly unacceptable, and I immediately."

Minister Ridout noted that harvesters are not the only ones affected by the ice. However, it is still very much a negative impact on those people. This issue is not new.

"The Federal Government provided compensation measures in 2005, but it was unreasonable to expect that they would be the same scale," continued Minister Ridout.



1.15 Pieces of our history

(top) Certificate of Canadian citizenship granting all Newfoundland British subjects Canadian citizenship after Confederation; (top right) a photograph showing a man gutting cod fish on St. John's waterfront, 1939; (right) a camping kettle, mid-1900s

Historical Factors

History relates to our everyday lives. Think about the many customs passed on to us from the past, such as holiday observances, recreational activities, and even sports traditions. History has influenced what country we belong to and what language(s) we speak. Take a few moments and create a list of artifacts, sociofacts, and mentifacts that have been a part of your culture for 100 years or more.

Political Factors

Political issues are frequently a focus of news reports. Have you ever wondered why? The decisions made by municipal, provincial, and federal governments directly impact our lives and, therefore, shape our culture. How might the following political decisions influence your way of life? How might these decisions influence our culture?

1.16 From *The Telegram*, March 27, 2009

Student loan interest eliminated Tuition freeze continues

By PETER WARD
THE TELEGRAM

The province is spending \$5 million dollars to eliminate the interest on Newfoundland and Labrador student loans and raise personal grants from \$70 to \$80.

Finance Minister Jerome Kennedy said the move is expected to help 49,000 students who use provincial loans and 8,400 students who receive grants — making the system "the best student aid package in the country," according to Kennedy. Federal student loans are not affected by the new policy.

Student organizations had lobbied for the change and now hope the interest forgiveness will become permanent policy.

The break applies to all existing student loans, no matter how far they date back. Now, payments will be on the principal of the loan only.

"We are extremely excited," said Daniel Smith, chairman of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Students. Smith was

smiling broadly and laughing at times during an interview he was so pleased with the announcement.

"With this economic downturn, we weren't sure if we were going to get it. It's a very progressive move. It sets a precedent of the country to keep up with our post-secondary system. The government has a long-term vision for post-secondary education. These people really understand that if we want to keep people in the province and train them to work in the mega-projects, then they need an affordable education and not going to have to pay for, for the rest of their lives."

Currently, Memorial University has the second-lowest tuition in Canada. Quebec residents pay the lowest.

Meanwhile, the tuition freeze at Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic (CNA) will continue. So will the province's commitment to make Corner Brook's Sir Wilfrid Laurier College autonomous from Memorial University in St. John's.

Grenfell will build a new academic building for its part of a \$34 million infrastructure fund.

The same is true for the rest of the province.

- Taxes are raised or lowered
- A new law is passed
- The delivery of government services changes

Question: *Questions*

Give examples from your community/area or from the province to show how economic factors, geographical factors, historical factors, and political factors affect your culture today.

DIMENSIONS OF THINKING

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

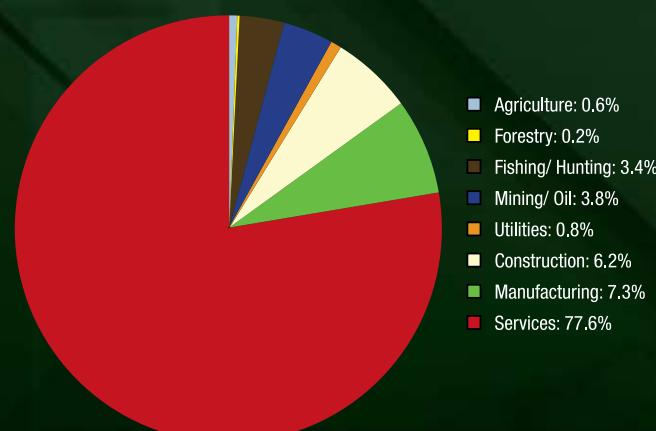
Consider the main sources of modern and past employment in the province (see Figures 1.17 and 1.18). Clearly, over time the percentage of people employed in these areas has changed drastically.



Understanding change is a key idea in the study of culture. To do this, the social scientist needs data from different time periods. This information could then be analyzed to identify possible trends, explore contributing factors, and consider the consequences of the change.

Equally important is being able to identify constancy over time. For example, understanding that the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador has been a primary source of employment for almost 500 years helps us to better appreciate how deeply rooted the culture of “this place” is.

1.18 Per cent of total Newfoundland and Labrador employment by industry 2007



Questions:

1. What area(s) of employment have changed the most?
2. Have new activities been established and become more important?

CASE STUDY

In 1992, the federal government announced a temporary closure of the cod fishery. The announcement raised many questions. What created this situation? What were the consequences of this action? How has/will it affect the culture of Newfoundland and Labrador?

In order to examine a complex issue like this, it is useful to consider it from various perspectives. That is where the various disciplines in the social studies come in. An economist, geographer, historian, and political scientist would each have valuable insights, which together would help create a comprehensive analysis of the situation.

1.19 *The Evening Telegram*,
July 2, 1992



Political Scientist: What does the government need to do to meet the needs of the displaced workers in the short term? What changes in fisheries management policies are needed? What actions are necessary to ensure that the needs and interests of displaced fishers are addressed in the long term?

Geographer: What has happened to this resource? Will this create a new set of pull-push factors that will affect population distribution?

Economist: What will be the immediate economic impact of 30 000 workers being displaced? How will this affect other businesses? What will it cost in terms of social programs?

Historian: What happened in the fishery in the past that brought us to this point? How significant will this event be? Is it a tipping point or a turning point?





TOPIC 1.4

Economics and Culture

If someone gave you \$1000, how would you spend it?

How do you think the Newfoundland and Labrador economy meets your needs? Your wants?

Introduction

Economic activities refer to the different ways we make a living to meet our basic needs and to satisfy our wants for comfort, recreation, entertainment, and pleasure. Throughout most of human history, people used most of their time and energy exploiting natural resources available to them for food, clothing, and shelter, with little time or opportunity for other pursuits. Economic activities are fundamental components of all cultures.

When people produce and consume products themselves, it is often referred to as a **subsistence economy**. Examples include cutting and burning firewood, picking berries to make jams or pies, and growing vegetables. Often, over time, a subsistence economy will change as populations increase and people begin to live closer together. This allows more opportunity for people to trade and, as a consequence, areas of specialization begin to emerge. That is, people find it

more efficient to focus on producing one kind of good or service to trade for other items instead of trying to produce or do everything themselves. If goods are traded for other goods, this constitutes a **barter economy**. The use of currency often evolves as a means of exchange in this kind of system, so that people can more easily trade their goods or services.

An economy in which everyone uses currency and the prices of goods are “set” by the marketplace is known as a **market economy**. A fundamental principle in a market economy is consumer choice and competition. Prices of goods are based on the law of supply and demand. Together, these ideas encourage producers to use resources in a way that best satisfies consumer demand – thus maximizing efficiency. Consumers benefit by getting a balance of lower priced and higher quality goods and services.



1.21 An example of a marketplace

A shopping centre is an example of a marketplace. A marketplace exists wherever buyers and sellers have a chance to come together.

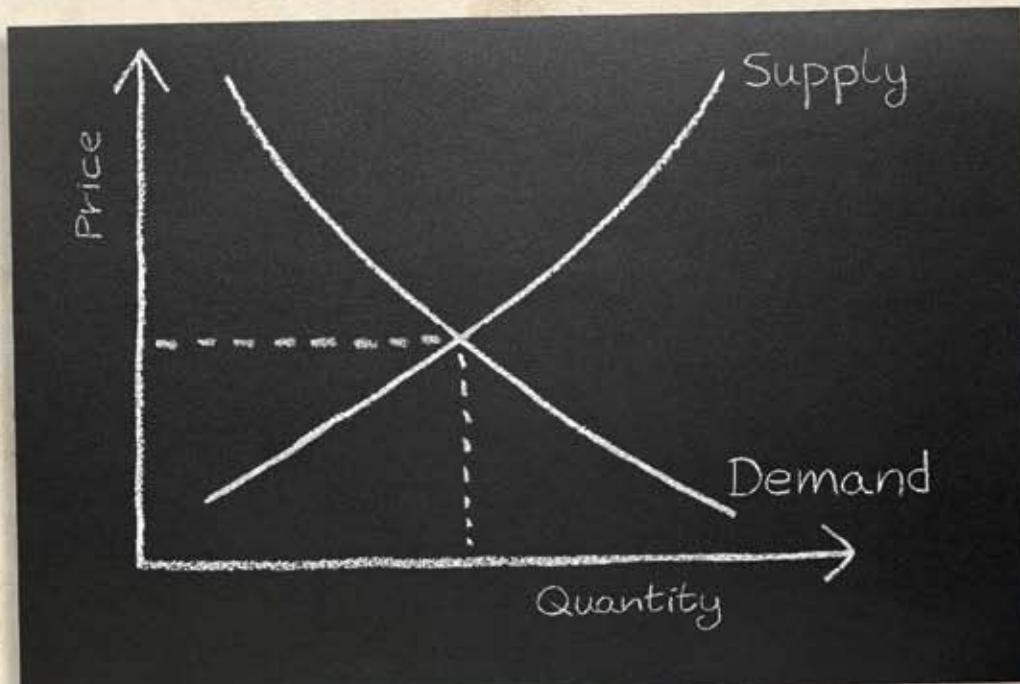
Economic Activity and Lifestyle

From time to time we all probably wonder what it would be like to be wealthy. Some individuals might choose to live in a bigger house, wear more designer clothing, drive luxurious automobiles, or give more money to family or charity. Many people might decide to change jobs or not work at all. All of these lifestyle changes would be linked to economics.

Our ability to purchase consumer goods is affected by the amount of money we have available to spend and the cost of living. Regardless of our level of income, we sometimes find that we do not have enough money to meet all of our needs and wants. In economics this is referred to as scarcity. As a result, we are constantly forced to choose between alternatives. For example, given a limited budget, if you choose to buy a new cell phone this month, you probably would have to forego purchasing new sneakers. Economists call this **opportunity cost**.

When people want to have more money or resources, they often look for alternative ways to get what they need or want. For example, using firewood is sometimes a lower cost alternative than electric or oil heating. These choices shape our lifestyle. The same can be said historically. For instance, during the 1800s, when the fishery was the main economic activity, most households engaged in subsistence activities to supplement their income. People grew crops, kept or hunted animals, cut firewood, and built their own homes. Collectively, these activities became a way of life for many families and communities.

Today, in many areas of our province, people still pursue some activities associated with subsistence living, such as recreational fishing, berry picking, and moose or caribou hunting. The difference, however, is that most people engage in these activities because they have become part of their culture – rather than because they have no other way to meet their basic needs.



1.22 Supply and demand

The idea behind the law of supply and demand is that the price of a product is based on a balance between supply (how much the producers are willing to produce when receiving a certain price) and demand (how much buyers are willing to purchase at a certain price).

WHAT IS WEALTH?

“You aren’t wealthy until you have something money can’t buy.”

– Garth Brooks, American country singer

“I have about concluded that wealth is a state of mind, and that anyone can acquire a wealthy state of mind by thinking rich thoughts.”

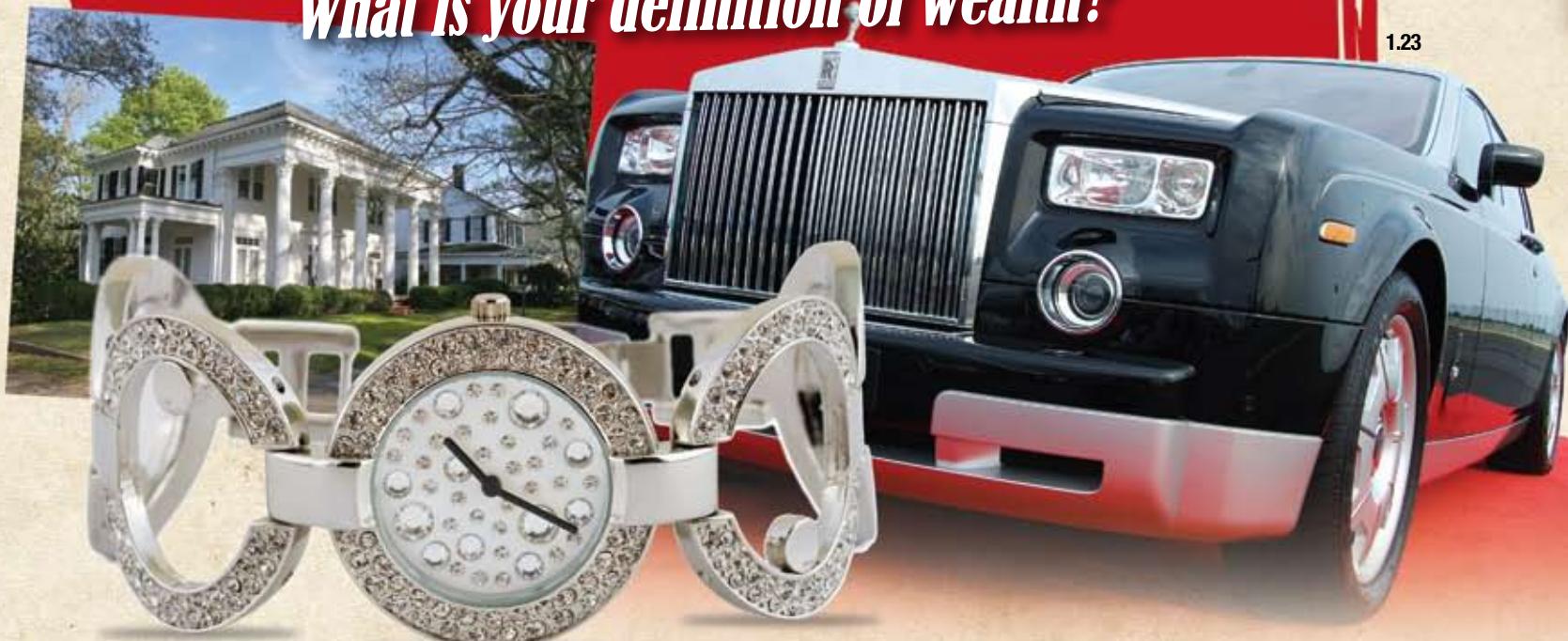
– Andrew Young, civil rights activist

“The real source of wealth and capital in this new era is not material things . . . it is the human mind, the human spirit, the human imagination, and our faith in the future.”

– Steve Forbes, president and CEO of Forbes and editor-in-chief of *Forbes Magazine*

What is your definition of wealth?

1.23



Questions:

1. Think about the economic activity that takes place around you. Provide an example that illustrates each of the following:
 - a. A subsistence activity
 - b. An example of scarcity and opportunity cost
2. What lifestyle do you imagine yourself enjoying as an adult? For example, what might be some of your needs and wants when you are 30 years old? How will you plan on meeting them?
3. Estimate the required income it will take to sustain the way of life you envision.
4. In the 1800s, the economic life of many families in Newfoundland and Labrador was tied to subsistence activities. Today, most of our economic activities are tied to the marketplace. What do you think are some of the consequences of this change in terms of culture? Which consequence might be the most significant?

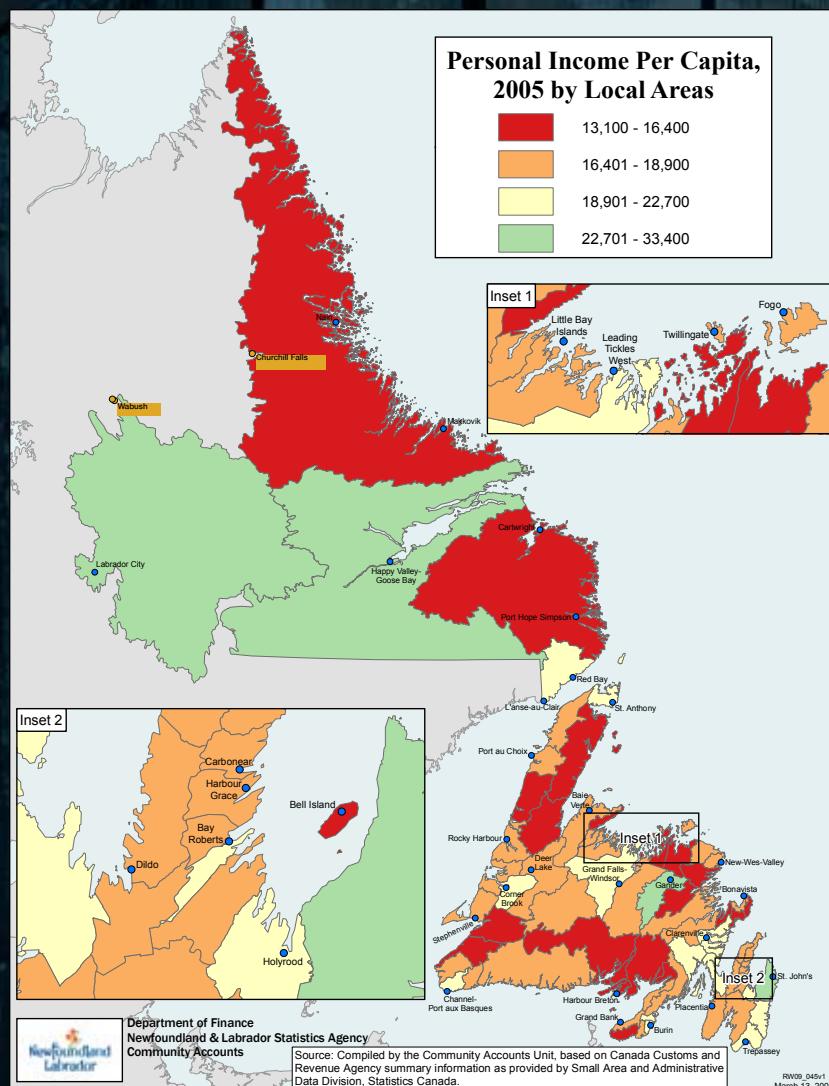
Experiencing The Arts
Read and view more about the
Newfoundland and Labrador
women who hooked mats
to earn extra money
for the family (page 646).

CASE STUDY

Measuring Income

One way that economists examine the flow of money is to calculate the income per capita of an area.

1.24



INCOME PER CAPITA IS

how much each individual would receive if the yearly income generated in a particular area was divided equally among all of the people living there. This calculation is often used as a measure of wealth, particularly when comparing areas.

There are two main problems with using income per capita in this way:

1. Economic activities that do not result in income – such as subsistence activities, voluntary labour, and barter – are usually not counted.
2. Income per capita does not indicate the distribution of wealth within an area. For example, an area might have a small number of individuals who have a very high level of income. This would result in a higher income per capita for the population as a whole. To explore wealth distribution, economists often look at the median income of an area instead.

Questions:

1. What pattern do you notice about the distribution of income within the province? What might account for this?
2. Are there any exceptions to the pattern noted in the previous question? What might account for this?