

# Cultural geography

[Economics](#), [Globalization](#)



The articles written by Linda McDowell and James Duncan discussed what cultural geography really is and its transformation through time. Linda McDowell's article was entitled "The Transformation of Cultural Geography" while James Duncan's article was entitled "The Superorganic in American Cultural Geography." I find the article of Maxwell more interesting and well-explained than Duncan's article. The scope of McDowell's article is more extensive while Duncan's article is focused on his main argument.

McDowell's article touched more fields that are related and made it easy to comprehend the idea of cultural geography. For example, it conceptualized the link between local and global forces that varies the relationships between identity, meaning and place to analyze cultural geography. The Transformation of Cultural Geography article reiterated the meaning of culture first before discussing what cultural geography is. It argued culture as socially constructed and a set of spatially rooted practices. Culture is not a totality but a process of reinforcing accepted cultural norms and standards. The question of whether is it the culture that shapes the spatial area? Or the spatial area has something to do with the community's culture were visible on the article. The article also pointed out the social relations of power into different ideas of space. It also showed that people can adapt to different cultures. The article showed how the scope of cultural geography has transformed through time. It became broader discussing how Sauer focused on Pre-European America before. He did not perceive the changes on culture through changing spatial relations. It is now transformed through looking on the social, economic and political structures of society. The article pointed out the significant relationship of social relations on identity, meaning and

place. An example is the youth culture. Youth culture can be defined through same style of clothing but they need not to be on the same geographic location. Youth culture is socially constructed and is not place-specific so does identity. Places become significant because of what people did in there or what we call cultural significance for that matter. The author justified these arguments by supporting it with studies of well-known geographers with expertise on their field. For his definition of culture, he first gave Sauer's definition then gave his own to limit the scope of his article. The article, *Superorganic in American Cultural Geography*, tells us that it is culture that takes super position over individuals. It reduced the definition of culture to as simply an interaction between people. The separation of individual and society was still a question on this article, " Does the individual affect society or society affect the individual? ". He had his references according to other geographers like Carl Sauer, Leslie White, Kroeber, Zelinsky etc. to support his arguments. It was Zelinsky who theorized culture as superorganic. The assumptions of the superorganic: culture as external to individuals, internalization of culture, homogeneity assumption and habituation. a.) Culture as External to Individuals- This assumption tells us that it is culture that have power over the individuals and needs individuals to do the work. b.) Internalization of Culture- Everyone has an internalized culture that contributes to the culture as a whole. c.) Homogeneity Assumption- Assumes commonness within a culture. d.) Habituation Assumption- associated with Pavlovian conditioning that is operated by mechanical psychology. " Man was viewed not as deliberative actor but as being moved by " affect states. "

While reading the two articles, I also found myself asking what does culture

means. The definition of culture can be really subjective. And in the case of cultural geography, I am also triggered by the question who affects who? According to Landscape school theory, culture acts as the agent and natural landscape as the medium that result to cultural landscape. I think both factors affect each other. Culture is influenced by its environment while environment is determined by its culture. The two articles met on asking this question. I think they are interrelated. With the assumptions that Duncan gave and McDowell's arguments, they met at some point in discussing culture. The role of culture over individuals was the focus of the super organic in Cultural Geography while the focus of the other article is on the social relations and connection among identity, meaning and place. McDowell's article showed variety of approaches on cultural geography by taking a look on the politics and economics of everyday culture. Studying these arguments, it made me realize that in doing cultural geography we must first have our definite meaning of culture. From there, we can based our studies and apply wider scope like looking through social, economic and political side of one's culture. The arguments raised on these articles may be useful in developing cultural geographic studies in the Philippines. Our country has a rich culture and I think it would be interesting to study our own culture.