CHAPTER

3

PERSPECTIVES ON ETHNICITY
AND GLOBAL DIVERSITY

“Nunavut is an outdated idea, one of the last applications of the postwar ideal of national self-determination.”
—GURSTON DACKS, 1986 (QUOTED IN PURICH 1992, 79)

“Nunavut is not just an important achievement for Inuit. It will be an important inspiration for other Aboriginals in other parts of the world.”
—JOHN AMAGOALIK, 1993 (QUOTED IN PELLY 1993, 29)

Two reasonable people can look at the same situation and come to very different conclusions. They can use the same data and interview the same people. They can use the same standards of reason and be of equal intelligence. Still they may come to different, perhaps opposite, opinions and be absolutely convinced that those who disagree with them are wrong. Such informed, yet conflicting, opinions are based upon the fact that people deeply hold different sets of complex, value-laden ideas about the nature of the world and the human condition: the way that things are supposed to be.

People use these fundamental notions to interpret all new situations that arise. Academics talk about paradigms and theoretical interpretations, and scholars are taught to be aware of their influence on the construction of new theories. This same situation is true of all interpreters, but most people remain unaware of the force of these paradigms on our daily opinions of world events. Since ethnicity, class, religion, and region influence the learning of values and manners of thinking, it is not surprising that similar perspectives are held by otherwise similar people.

In this book, these differing sets of interpretive ideas are called alternative perspectives, and we shall examine the most prominent perspectives for each major issue described in Chapters 2 through 9: cultural diversity, economics, ecology, and peace and war. The point should not be to debate which is the right perspective and which is wrong, but how and why various sensible people approach each issue differently. For the current issue, cultural diversity, we explore three such alternative perspectives: Global Primacy, State Primacy, and Cultural Primacy.
GLOBAL PRIMACY

Individuals and groups who believe in the concept of Global Primacy assert, as the term suggests, that the division of the world into specific political or economic entities is outmoded. They see the globalization of the world, not only as the main trend of this time, but as the increasing reality of the future. They perceive the contemporary world as one in which all peoples are joined in complex interactions and one in which all economies are tied to a true world community. It is just as easy to purchase a Coca-Cola in South Africa as it is in Hong Kong or Chicago. Americans wear clothes made in Mexico and India, while Mexicans and Indians watch American television programs and listen to American music. Development projects in Brazil and Indonesia affect the world’s climate. Inventions and disasters in one part of the world are quickly felt in others. In these circumstances, according to those who believe in Global Primacy, the only logical course is to encourage further social integration of the world’s people. Denying the social and political implications of this growing reality can lead to chaos while a world community with similar goals and values should prosper and live in peace. Along with this goes the hope that, in an integrated system, all people will be able to share in the individual human rights promised by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The question is—how to further this unification? There are two common responses to this question. First: It is already happening, as the preceding examples suggest. There are specific cultures that are becoming universally understood. They are the leaders who set the standards in global affairs. More isolated cultures are less significant, and the individuals who identify with them must change or continue to be insignificant in world affairs. An extreme result of such a policy would be a world governed by the “superior” cultures and populated by people who culturally resemble their most successful inhabitants. The extreme statement of this response echoes the Social Darwinism of earlier generations. Second: The new world will be a combination of the best of all societies as globalization allows people to learn more about the diversity of human societies. This response perceives unification where no one existing culture dictates to the rest of the world. This new world culture would include all the best traits of the existing cultures and would eliminate those that threaten the rights of individuals. In either response, this perspective places a major value on individuals rather than on groups of people or systems of government. Even if specific cultures become extinct, the descendents of people who identified with those cultures will change and prosper.

Change is obviously a key concept in this perspective. An emphasis on external changes, and sometimes involuntary ones, that give priority to this new world culture is fundamental to this perspective. Societies, or ethnicities, based on gathering and hunting, tribal, or primitive state organization are outdated. They cannot share in the wealth of the world as long as they remain in their current lifestyles. Unfortunately, they do not know enough of the world to recognize this situation. Efforts focused on improving the lot of such people without changing their lifestyle to fit into the world system could be deleterious to them. By viewing isolated cultures through the Global Primacy perspective, as evolutionary anachronisms, one would consider any encouragement of their continuation as they are now as going against historical logic and condemning individuals to primitive, difficult lives. Inherently, this belief is a modern version of the theory of Social
Darwinism, which was influential on American and European thought a century ago. Social Darwinism evoked the concept of the “survival of the fittest” and applied it to cultural evolution. Those cultures that were more complex had proven themselves the fittest. This logic was used to justify colonialism by arguing that the colonial powers were bringing civilization to the less fortunate. This new use of the concept, then, states that the contemporary world powers with a vision of universal rights are best suited to lead us toward a new stage in human evolution, a successful world civilization.

Assimilation and Acculturation

Some advocates of Global Primacy believe that the more backward cultures will disappear when individuals recognize the benefits of the more advanced cultures and voluntarily change their ways. This belief has formed the social policies of many colonial states. Called assimilation, it holds that, over time, all people will give up the customs of their inferior cultures to become full members of the superior ones.

Many social policies are built on the awareness that the road to assimilation goes through education, especially of a culture’s youth. Those who do not support assimilationist policies, however, are particularly opposed to this aspect of them. Many indigenous people complain that the national educational policies of the dominant culture are a form of ethnocide—the destruction of a culture. The aboriginal people of Australia, for example, have been very vocal on this issue. Thousands of aboriginal children were removed from their families at very early ages and were sent to boarding schools where they were punished for speaking their own languages or practicing their own religions. The curriculum, created for Anglo-Australians, was based upon the understandings of European heritage. When the “educated” children were allowed to return home, they were strangers to their families and their cultures.

In a strange way, there is a liberal idea at the core of the assimilationist agenda. It assumes that the more “primitive” people of the world are capable of being educated and becoming part of the modern world. Their backwardness is based on their limited knowledge rather than on any innate limitations. This basic idea has existed throughout the history of the United States, not only in its Native American policy, but in its immigration theory as well. The concept of the American “melting pot,” even if it is not reality, is assimilationist in nature. It promotes the United States as welcoming people from all nations, though immigrants are expected to give up their previous ways in order to become Americans.

Conceptually related to assimilation, acculturation holds that individuals will modify their cultural upbringing by adapting to a new culture. They will not give up their original culture entirely, as in assimilation, but they will adjust it to fit new circumstances. Assuming the desirability of a global culture, it would follow that people would wish to take on many of the superior traits they find in people of other cultures. Education plays a role, but it need not be forced and it need not replace the original culture completely. Minority groups, First Nations, and nonindustrial nations should be “allowed” to learn the political and economic systems of the successful states and the ideals that support them. Family organizations, art, religion, dress, and other cultural elements, which do not (in theory) impede modernization, need not be changed for acculturation to succeed.
Syncretism

The mixing of cultural ideas from different sources in order to create a new reality goes under the name *syncretism*. Those who regard Global Primacy as the creation of a wholly new world culture favor syncretism as the major mechanism that will form the new world culture. An example of how this has happened with religion involves the adoption of Catholicism by indigenous groups in Latin America. The religions of rural Latin America that merge the identities of traditional local gods with those of Roman Catholic saints are such examples. The processonals in celebration of saint days in Mayan towns echo ancient religious practices as much as Christian ones.

However, syncretism is not always acceptable to those who champion acculturation in other forms. The late Pope John Paul II preached vehemently against this modification of the teachings of the Catholic Church but supported the use of local languages in church services. Advocates of Global Primacy recognize a difficult challenge. They look to a bright future in which all people will share in the wealth and rights possessed by only some today. The cultural difficulty is how to achieve this end without harming the rights of people to choose their own futures. The most optimistic assume that all people will share their views of the good life. Others realize that cultural differences run deep and that different people value different beliefs and customs, often more than prosperity and peace. Most advocates of this perspective recognize that the creation of a new global reality in which all share in a mutually satisfying culture is an extraordinarily difficult challenge—one that must be done carefully so as not to sacrifice the ways of life of some for those of others. They believe that this difficult challenge must be undertaken because the end point is so worthwhile.

State Primacy

While the State Primacy perspective of the world does not define the superiority of types of cultures, it does privilege a specific type of political organization. The state is viewed as the most important unit for both national and international interaction. According to those who hold a State Primacy perspective, the most important primary political identity for all groups and individuals should be as citizens of the state of their birth or naturalization. The State Primacy perspective does not argue for universal similarity in cultures or centralized power between states. In fact, it gives states a tremendous amount of autonomy in deciding the nature of their own realms. Its vision of the ideal world, then, includes many different states, each of which determines the ethnic policies of its own residents.

Patriotism

From the State Primacy perspective, there is no inherent evil in the multiethnic state as long as the state identity takes priority over ethnic identities. *Patriotism*, the placing of one’s primary loyalty in the state, is the real key. As long as individuals function first as Brazilians, Indonesians, or Russians, especially in issues of state interest, the interests of State Primacy prevail. During World War II, for example, Native Americans volunteered for military service in the United States at a far greater rate than other
Americans. Their loyalties to their own First Nations did not inhibit their American patriotism. In fact, the United States benefited in many ways from their cultural skills. The history of the Navajo “code talkers” of that war illustrates this brilliantly. Navajo soldiers assigned to communications sent classified messages to one another in the Navajo (Dené) language. German code breakers were never able to decipher these communications because they were not true codes, and the Germans did not recognize them as a language. Because they were Navajo, these soldiers performed unique patriotic duties as citizens of the United States.

While advocates of the State Primacy point of view would likely accept and applaud examples like that of the Navajo code talkers, they maintain a deep distrust of the power of ethnicity, viewing it as weakening patriotism and creating rifts in the state system. Numerous cases can be cited to support this concern. Civil wars based on ethnicity have been recently fought in countries from Bosnia to Liberia; ethnic violence, such as terrorist incidents of the Tamils of Sri Lanka or the Irish Republican Army, and political crises, such as the threat of the Quebecois to break up Canada, have redefined their states. All these situations threaten the primacy of the state.

The solutions to these problems lie with the states themselves according to this perspective. The state has the right, and perhaps duty, to defend itself from internal and external threats. Issues concerning the distribution of rights and privileges between types of people within the state must be decided within the state. Given the nature of the state, the power to decide such issues resides in an elite group, which controls governmental offices. The fact that the elite group is often composed of individuals from similar ethnic backgrounds is sometimes considered unfortunate, but it is unimportant compared to the need for state security. It is also asserted that the situation is best understood from the local perspective and that outsiders cannot understand the real circumstances.

**Paternalism**

Those advocating any of the solutions suggested for ensuring the unification of world cultures often run into accusations of **paternalism**, which literally means “acting as a father.” More broadly, it means taking a superior position over others and trying to control their actions. Such control is done “for their own good” because the superior figure “knows better.” The protected individuals or groups are treated like children. Outlawing the handling of snakes in the rituals of the Holiness churches of the American Southeast can be considered paternalism. The larger society, which does not accept the biblical interpretation of handling snakes, dictates that adults who do find snake handling an important religious act are wrong; they are endangering themselves and must be stopped for their own protection. Paternalism, itself, is illegal nowhere, but it is rarely welcomed by those treated as inferiors.

**Critiques from the Global Primacy Perspective**

Advocates of Global Primacy reject the State Primacy perspective on two grounds: first, because states are artificial constructs based on historical accident rather than natural groupings; and second, because most world problems are global in scope rather than
pertinent only to the local interests of states. Cooperation is thus negotiated rather than mandated in this perspective.

A particularly troublesome issue that reappears around the world is the position of those groups or cultures that straddle state boundaries. In the State Primacy perspective, the state contends that the interests of these ethnic minorities are secondary in importance to those of the state. Members of the same ethnicity in other states are regarded as different people with different citizenship. The Inuit, as noted below, live in a contiguous circumpolar land that covers four states. They have a national identity as Inuit and political identities as Russian, American, Canadian, and Danish (or now, Greenlander). In the latter identities, they have clear administrative rights and privileges but in the former they do not. General Inuit issues have been championed by newly formed circumpolar and First Nation organizations. The welcoming of these organizations by international agencies, including the United Nations (UN), as new cultural organizations with observer status and the extensive press coverage given to international meetings concern state primacy because they regard them as threats to the important primacy of the state system.

Global Primacy advocates see a daunting problem in state primacy advocates putting their faith in the rectitude of nation-states. They do not always seem worthy. There is no mechanism, in this view, to deal with the states that harm groups of people within their borders. There is no way to deal with the issue of human rights in states that do not come up to international standards. If a state defines slavery, murder, or active discrimination of a particular group as acceptable, can outsiders legitimately help the victims? The twentieth century case of the former practice of apartheid in South Africa provides a clear example. Here, a numerical majority of inhabitants in the state, with cultures different than the elite, were legally defined as inferior, and all aspects of their lives were severely circumscribed. Nearly universal condemnation (supplemented by boycotts) was directed at South Africa; however, because of the nature of the state system, direct action was not immediately effective. If State Primacy were absolute, even the boycotts were inappropriate. Many nations, including the former Soviet Union and China, have made just such assertions when other nations have condemned their internal actions. The example of South Africa can be used to justify the stand of State Primacy as well. It was largely the internal changes made by South Africans themselves that overthrew the internationally despised practice of apartheid.

**CULTURAL PRIMACY**

Advocates of Global Primacy prioritize a united world; advocates of State Primacy prioritize the state; and the advocates of Cultural Primacy prioritize the autonomous rights of individual cultures, regardless of their power. In this view, nations, cultures, ethnic groups, and indigenous peoples are the units of interest. Proponents argue that people identify with these groups, and, if one believes in human equality, then these groups too must be equal. All recognize, of course, that such equality does not exist in political or economic terms. Rather than seeing continued ethnic diversity as a validation of evolutionary failure, as do
the followers of Social Darwinism, cultural primacy proponents see this as the result of a particular peoples’ history which is set in a world of institutionalized inequality. They argue that the existence of a privileging of some cultures over others should not give the system ethical authority.

**Tolerance** Cultural Primacy mandates tolerance of cultural differences without ethnocentric judgment. The fact that people are different is acceptable. People whose cultures are similar are no better or worse than those whose cultures are far different. All cultures must be granted respect and their people, human rights. To tolerate some custom or belief is not necessarily to like it or to adopt it. A Jew can tolerate the practice of Christianity in the community without converting to that faith and vice versa. People of any faith can believe in the superiority of their own religion, but they can also tolerate others believing differently. A more difficult question might be raised when the basic values of the religions are inherently in conflict. Can a Christian tolerate the practice of Satanism in the community? In the United States, the legal answer is still yes, but the emotional response of individuals in such a situation is often a strong no.

One question of tolerance, of course, is at what point it stops. As with the argument about cultural relativism, tolerance of the intolerable cannot be moral. Two areas of contention inevitably arise for advocates of Cultural Primacy. One issue arises frequently when the rights of one culture limit the rights of another. When the Hopi and Navajo in the United States or Jews, Arabs, and Christians in Jerusalem claim religious rights over the same lands, what is the culturally diverse solution? Outsiders might believe that a compromise that dictates sharing would be fair, but the participants in the dispute might violently disagree and complain that the presence of the others corrupts the sacred area.

The other issue is equally difficult. People ask what moral truths transcend tolerance. In fact, few ideals beyond the highly abstract value of human life appear in all cultures, and even this value is interpreted in different ways. Morality is an aspect of cultural learning; therefore, any definition of what should be accepted as universal morality is inherently ethnocentric. However, to reject the idea of universal standards of morality is to accept anything as proper as long as it is done in other societies that approve of it. It would be a rejection of the idea of human rights. Neither stance in the extreme is reasonable. Fortunately for advocates of this perspective, most cases do not exist at the extremes.

**Diversity Within States**

Individuals who hold a Cultural Primacy perspective tend to advocate the acceptance of diversity both within each state and between states. In the former, they come into conflict with advocates of both other perspectives. Those interpreting the world through the lens of the Global Primacy perspective hold that the superior cultures of any state and the world should dictate to, and change, inferior cultures. Those viewing it through State Primacy, on the other hand, hold that diversity within a state is the business of that state. The view of cultural diversity on this issue is that states must accommodate the cultural differences within their borders. State autonomy is not sacrosanct when human
lives are at stake. Mistreatment of ethnic minorities is a human rights issue and must be addressed in the domestic, as well as the international, arenas. Actions from boycotts, trade sanctions, and invasions are acceptable in order to protect cultural groups. The use of United Nations Peacekeeping Forces in Somalia and Bosnia is an acceptable breach of state sovereignty owing to the severity of the situation for innocent inhabitants. The lack of international action to protect the victims of the genocides in Nazi Germany and Rwanda is often cited as incidents incurring international shame that must never be repeated. However, mass killings like those in the Sudan at the turn of the twenty-first century continue to occur with little effective international intervention.

Advocates of cultural primacy perspectives strongly support the rights of indigenous peoples to establish legal rights including autonomy, self-governance over their own affairs, and even semi-sovereignty. They advocate new forms of organizations that vary radically from those of historic reservations or homelands that were assigned to indigenous people in many countries in the Americas, Australia, and Africa.

On reservations, the power of administration was held strongly in the hands of individuals appointed by and accountable to the dominant state, and, in some cases, the movement of the residents was restricted outside of the reserve. The new vision of homelands, however, clearly challenges the sovereignty of the state itself by giving internal power to those with distinct national identities. Advocates claim, however, that this form of recognition of indigenous status actually strengthens the state by negating the threat of internal discord.

**Diversity Between States**

Diversity between states is also celebrated in the Cultural Primacy perspective. The fact that different states have different cultures allows for a richer variety of opportunities for all people. The opposite—a world assimilated into one culture—would be dull and relatively colorless, given the loss of the vast spectrum of arts, languages, dress, and architecture. Even scientific discovery, long assumed to reside solely in Western education, is enlivened with local knowledge drawn from traditional cultures. Searches for “new” animals in Asia and drugs from “new” plants in the Amazon are led, in part, by holders of indigenous knowledge who have long known of these animals and plants. In fact, a new legal question of ethnic intellectual property rights, or the right to this knowledge, has arisen since these discoveries have led to large industrial profits for those far from the site. Protection of such diversity of knowledge can be vital for the solution of future global problems. All states, then, should be encouraged to support fully all the cultures within their borders. International agencies should provide money for this purpose if the state is too poor to do so itself. Further communication between states that broadens knowledge of these cultures should be encouraged.

Relationships between states need also accommodate any cultural differences that might arise. Acknowledgment of differences as well as similarities is encouraged. Problems that arise from clashing differences must be mediated or resolved. Gender differences, for example, can create embarrassing problems. When Salote, the queen of Tonga, arrived for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, she was featured in newspapers around the world (*The New York Times* May 1953). Not only was she the
sole female ruling monarch attending as part of commonwealth royalty, she was also physically quite imposing. The six-foot, three-inch queen did not seem comfortable in the fashion shows and luncheons attended by other queens. As a woman, however, she was not fully welcomed at the political meetings that were otherwise male affairs. She simply did not fit the gender expectations in 1950s England. The ideal of acceptance of cultural differences between states can conflict with internal cultural beliefs.

Those who hold a Cultural Primacy position to its extreme often are opposed to the state as an institution. Since the nature of the state is inherently hierarchical, they argue, if equality is a goal, the state itself is part of the problem. The natural unit of human society, they might continue, is the culture and not the state. Therefore, a world made up of smaller, autonomous cultures might be the next logical stage of cultural evolution. This view does not address the success of large, stable states, such as the United States, where citizens share a national, American identity but differ in individual ethnic identities. In some areas where state nationalities have not strongly developed, however, this goal of ethnic division appears to be happening. The breakdown of the Soviet Union and parts of eastern Europe into smaller states roughly along previously held national lines caught many, who thought the state unit secure, by surprise. The mixture of ethnicities in states of Africa, whose borders were created during the era of colonialism for the benefit of Europeans rather than Africans, causes tensions which are likely to produce future state divisions.

One other possibility in this world of Cultural Primacy is that members of the same culture, isolated in different states, may join together into a new state. The Jewish state of Israel is an extreme example, where members of the same religion created a homeland in an area of their ancient heritage but largely not their current residence. The problems of relationships with the existing residents of the area hardly make this an ideal example of putting the cultural diversity perspective into effect. Areas of the world, such as Amazon, the Arctic, and Kurdistan, where the majority of the people in each region have cultural unity (although intersected by state borders), seem more conducive to such a creation of new states. Even at their most idealistic, current states are unlikely to be eager to give up the lands in these potentially mineral-rich regions to ethnic groups that appear to be economically weaker and unable to protect themselves with military strength. The ideal of cultural pluralists, which has not yet been reached, is a world where people do not attack others for land or economic gain.

**Critiques from the Global Primacy and State Primacy Perspectives**

Advocates of Global Primacy regard the Cultural Primacy perspective as being virtually the opposite of their own. In their view, global problems are universal and should be solved in a unified world. This perspective breaks the world into thousands of groups of people who all have unique interests. The possibilities for disputes are large, with no mechanism for solving them. This perspective also values all cultures as equal. Global Primacy proponents assert that some ways of life are more efficient or moral than others, and those should be preserved while others should be absorbed.
The State Primacy view would also reject the cultural tolerance perspective. It asserts that a world of thousands of small interest groups is unworkable. The system of the state, it contends, is necessary to resolve problems in a fair and peaceful way. In the state, all cultural groups know the rules, and between states, governments are rational advocates in international debates. Disagreements between ethnic groups, without state intervention, can only lead to turmoil. The state is the defender of weak ethnic groups.

Synthesis

While the three perspectives in this chapter are presented as if they are isolated and exclusive, individuals can, to some extent, maintain ideas drawn from all of them. Synthesis is possible and, perhaps, sensible. Some people believe in the importance of human equality and personal choice but, at the same time, reason that strong state systems are necessary and can grant group rights in the real world. Others believe that the future will bring some form of political administration that will unify the peoples of the world. Global Primacy theorists can hold radically different views on human cultural diversity, however. Some may picture a unified world where the superior culture has prevailed and displaced all variations of the inferior type. Others picture quite the opposite: a world composed of small, independent, and equal cultural units that work together for a common good through a cooperative administration model. Basically, however, the three perspectives presented are common ways used by modern scholars and other thoughtful individuals to organize their views of human diversity.

CASE STUDY  Nunavut

The case chosen for discussion in this section is that of Canada’s evolving policies toward one group of indigenous people—the Inuit of the territory called Nunavut. While any one of hundreds of cases could be used, this one is particularly compelling. Canada has now established a form of semi-autonomy for ethnic minorities that, if successful, will create a form of governance that allows for indigenous peoples to live their own ways of life while at the same time remaining a vital part of the larger state. Nunavut may prove a model for future agreements around the world.

The Inuit of Nunavut are an indigenous people who developed a gathering-and-hunting type of culture in the Arctic, one of the most environmentally challenging areas of the world. They have maintained many of their traditions but have felt threatened by contemporary Canadian and territorial governmental policies. In a very short time, they have demanded and received Canadian approval for and aid in establishing a new Inuit-controlled, Inuit-designed territory: Nunavut. The Canadian government and the Inuit of Nunavut have embarked on a bold experiment in cooperative cultural living which is being carefully watched by many countries.

Most Americans are familiar with the name Eskimo and have a popularized image of people living in igloos, hunting Arctic animals, using dog sleds, and rubbing noses. Many greeting card stores will sell cards with pictures of darling, round-faced, smiling children wearing fur ruffs and clutching husky puppies. What most Americans do not
realize is that the Inuit, as most are called today, meaning “people” in their own lan-
guage, are modern First Nation people, no more or less adorable than others, and that 
those who live in the eastern part of the Northwest Territories recently became the mas-
ters of a new Canadian Territory: Nunavut, meaning “Our Land.”

The Inuit are one of the few cultures that spread over three continents and are citi-
zens of four states. Inuit live in Asia (Russia), North America (United States and 
Canada), and Europe (Greenland, a part of Denmark). This discussion focuses on the 
Canadian Inuit of Nunavut, but it is important to note that while cultural variations exist 
regionally, there is a remarkable consistency of language, cultural skills, and values 
throughout gathering-and-hunting adaptations in Arctic environments.

**Foraging Cultures**

The Inuit’s adaptation to Arctic life is one of the wonders of human history. The Arctic 
is a dry, cold area with little permanent vegetation and extreme seasonal shifts in the 
amount of daylight. Summers are light, bountiful, and short. Individuals not encultu-
rated in an Inuit society simply could not exist there. The Inuit, however, invented tools 
and skills that made them the masters of this environment. They also focused on the 
mammals of the region as their major economic resources making hunting, rather than 
the seasonal gathering of vegetation, central to their survival.

Coastal resources including species of seals, whales, and walrus and inland sources 
of caribou were augmented by fish, polar bears, and musk oxen. Season and local envi-
ronment dictated the focus of the hunt. Special tools for these hunts included kayaks, 
harpoons, stone oil lamps, dog sleds, intricately designed parkas, and snowhouses in 
winter. The hunting group, usually composed of family members during difficult times, 
was dependent on the skill of the men, the hunters, and the abundance of natural 
resources. Too often, families perished in severe seasons. (Balikci 1984, 424; Damas 
1984, 392).

While the hardship of the region would not be denied, it is clear that many Inuit 
loved the Arctic and prided themselves in the accomplishment of living successfully 
there. They were part of the land physically and spiritually and knew the value of 
human cooperation. Canadians of European and Inuit heritages might agree on the 
details of traditional Arctic lifestyle but disagree wildly on their evaluation of its worth.

**Changes**

The development of Inuit culture was largely internal until quite recently. Areas where 
traditional cultural life was the norm continued to exist into the mid-twentieth century. 
Surely internal changes in the forms of technical and social inventions by the Inuit over 
the centuries allowed for an unsurpassed adaptation to the Arctic. While it is not known 
when Inuit ancestors first reached the Arctic, it is clear that small physical changes 
developed that were conducive to life there. The shape of facial features and the short, 
broad-chested body shape common among Inuit are well adapted to protecting the 
internal organs from extreme cold.

Their contact with other cultures predated their very early introduction to Europeans. In fact, the discarded term Eskimo is said to have derived from the
denunciation of an unfriendly Indian Nation to the south. They were part of the first known meeting of Europeans and North Americans when the Vikings arrived in the far north. Despite this early introduction, major external changes and the beginnings of adaptation to Western ways have come late. The early interactions with foreign whalers and explorers were infrequent but produced new trade goods, especially metals, which were eagerly and voluntarily adopted as improvements to the traditional tool chest. On the negative side, however, these contacts brought new diseases.

In most areas, more intense external changes did not occur until the fur-trading era of the early twentieth century. A debt-driven relationship with fur companies developed in many areas. The fur companies were soon joined by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, with Canadian law, and missions preaching Christian messages. Both launched campaigns against community disorder, traditional religion, and especially the Inuit religious practitioners. As communities were adapting to the new economy and losing the skills of the old, the 1930s Great Depression came and wiped out the market for furs. Many of the people who had adapted to the new ways suffered greatly in comparison with those in the hinterland who had not changed. Many of the more acculturated migrated to larger, more southern communities and became dependent; others starved.

World War II brought military bases to the Arctic and with them came previously unknown wealth. New technologies, especially airplanes, brought access to the north into the realm of the common people and allowed trade to expand dramatically. Similarly, snowmobiles replaced dogs but increased the need for cash to pay for fuel. Wage labor became available, and new health facilities were built, introducing Western medicine for the first time. Unfortunately, this close meeting with a new population also brought new diseases which caused epidemics among the Inuit who had no immunity.

After the war, the Canadian government heightened its civilian presence with monetary allowances, health care, and compulsory schools. That these all led to dependency is clear, but what are not as obvious are the particular problems of schooling. Canada viewed the compulsory schools as services to allow Inuit children to join in the opportunities enjoyed by all Canadians. Racism, however, meant that even individuals well educated in Euro-Canadian scholarship were not offered employment equal to others. In some places, this was far more extreme for men than women. Women acculturated at a more rapid rate than men, and they were accorded higher status in Canadian society. This caused a deep gender schism in some communities (McElroy 1976).

Even if education had allowed immediate access to a Canadian middle-class existence, there would still have been deep-rooted problems. First, the blanket assumption that this new way of life was better is ethnocentric and aimed at destroying Inuit culture. Education was conducted in English, with a southern, Canadian-based curriculum. Traditional Inuit skills were either denigrated or ignored. Children spending their hours in these classes lost the opportunity to learn the extremely technical skills needed to survive in the traditional way. Second, the regulation that children attend schools in permanent communities for much of the year placed their parents in a quandary. They had to move into these towns or leave their children with others for months together each year. Most chose to keep their families together in towns, and the adults took whatever
employment existed there. Art provided an income to many; however, town jobs generally do not provide the satisfaction or prestige, at least for men, they had experienced in the traditional lifestyle (McElroy 1976; Graburn and Lee 1990). As a result, problems connected with alcohol abuse grew rapidly among the Inuit. There was an approximately 30 percent increase in alcohol-related problems from the 1960s to early 1980s (Vallee, Smith, and Cooper 1984, 674).

**Inuit Nationalism**

One of the unexpected outcomes of the Canadian education was the emergence of a group of young, educated Inuit who used the system to demand their rights as First Nation people within Canada. It was only in 1960 that the Native people of the Northwest Territories were given the right to vote in Canadian elections. In the next decade, the Committee for Original Peoples Entitlement (COPE) was established to assert the land and political interests of Inuit and other northern First Nations. Following that, an action group, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC), was formed to pursue land claims and political rights of Inuit, in particular. During the 1970s, these First Nation people developed a plan for a separate territory to be carved out of the Northwest Territories north of the tree line. This largely Inuit-populated territory was to be called Nunavut and was to be developed in the future into a fully Inuit-controlled province. Not all Canadian Inuit are enfranchised within Nunavut, however. Inuit in Quebec, Labrador, and the western Northwest Territories (or Denendeh, in First Nations terminology) are not included. Initially, the government strongly opposed a plan which treats the Inuit people as a nation, rather than as individual Canadian citizens. A 1982 plebiscite of all voters in the Northwest Territories resulted in 58 percent supporting it, and this strong support from many non-Inuit helped further the cause in Ottawa, the Canadian capital.

External forces also intervened. The strategic and mineral value of this region is important to Canada. When, in 1985, the United States sent a ship, *USCGC Polar Sea*, through Arctic waters without asking for Canadian permission, it was considered an initial act in a potential claim over “uninhabited land.” This challenge to Canadian sovereignty over these waters was answered in part by recognizing the claims of the Inuit who have longstanding international recognition to residence in the area. Nunavut, as a populated and organized territory of Canada, appeared an unassailable assertion of possession. In 2007, however, the dispute has reappeared in a new form due to the increasing warming of the arctic relating to global warming, discussed in Chapter 6, which has opened areas to ship passage that had not been available in modern human history. It also promises to allow mineral exploitation in areas that had previously been too expensive to explore. Issues of sovereignty and ownership of valuable resources make this previously marginal area internationally important.

For the Inuit, like many other Canadian First Nations, a growing awareness of the lack of aboriginal rights in the Canadian constitution pushed them to action. Additionally, the fact that the unique cultural rights of French speakers in Quebec were being taken more seriously than the claims of the First Nation worried many First Nation leaders and forced them to take action.
The Territory of Nunavut

On April 1, 1999, Canada began a new chapter in its relationship with its indigenous people. On that day, the Northwest Territories split into two territories, and the Territory of Nunavut with Iqaluit as its governmental capital became a reality. All three territories (Yukon is the third) are in the north. In the Canadian system, territories are more dependent on the federal government than the provinces are. Provinces have more power relative to the federal government than states do in the United States. The government has indicated a goal for the Northern Territories is to become provinces, but this is far in the future. The new territory, Nunavut, comprises 770,000 square miles, and is one-fifth the size of Canada, larger than any other territory or province. In this vast land lives a population of less than 30,000 people, about 80 percent of them Inuit (Nunavut Implementation Commission 1995). At the same time, the Inuit Federation became “the largest private landholder in North America” (Dickason 1992, 416), owning outright 18 percent of Nunavut.

The Nunavut Implementation Commission was formed to determine the final government organization. This government has the same powers as those in other territories. All citizens of Nunavut, Inuit and non-Inuit, are equally eligible for office, but the vast majority of the population is Inuit, and a working language of the government is Inuktitut, along with English and French. The challenge of the commission was to create a government form compatible with Inuit ideals. The outcome largely reflected a Canadian model with characteristically Inuit factors.

The government is set upon a statement of principles of Pinasuaqtavut (meaning, “that which we’ve set out to do”), which includes as goals healthy communities, simplicity and unity, self-reliance, and continuing learning. In a government paper entitled Our Commitment to Building Nunavut’s Future (Nunavut Government 2004) reviewing the first five years and setting goals for 2004–2009, the government of Nunavut reaffirmed the goals and at the end of the first decade continued the themes in a document, Tamapta: Building Our Future Together (2009). Future objectives for healthy communities include improving local health care, elder care, suicide prevention, housing availability, and environmental quality. In the goal of simplicity and unity, recommendations focused on increasing the use of Inuktitut as the working language of the territory, implementing the newly enacted Human Rights Act, and generally improving the efficiency and accountability of government. In the area of self-reliance, objectives focus on development, and employment and recruitment of local people for new opportunities. Finally, the goal of continuing learning calls for continuing emphasis on language and culture training as well as increased local education for professions and trades. Focus on the needs of the elders and the youth remains paramount. In Tamapta, the themes of working together in community and reaching out to the international world also rang clear. Impacts from global warming, improved Internet communications, and a better life for Nunavummiut are all concerns for the future.

The government section of the Nunavut webpage (www.gov.nu.ca) concludes: “The government is committed to Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit as a guiding principle of public government. IQ embodies Inuit traditional knowledge and values, and guides the government in framing decisions, policies and laws that reflect the key philosophies,
attitudes and practices of Nunavut’s Inuit majority. Applying this principle in the day-
to-day governance of Nunavut represents a considerable challenge; but the practice of
IQ is a goal to which the GN remains deeply committed.” While members of the govern-
ment do not have to be Inuit, they do have to support the concept of IQ and they do have
to work in the language.

The legislative assembly is composed of nineteen members, each elected every five
years. There are also ten departments which cover issues from public works to justice,
to sustainable development, to culture. The challenge they continue to face is daunting.
Social problems including alcoholism and violence, so common in northern communi-
ties, have been made a priority. Education, likewise, has been addressed early. Nunavut
Arctic College has three campuses and twenty-four community learning centers. It
works with other universities, and students have access to online courses in some fields.
This gives flexibility and opportunities that their location otherwise limits. In 2001, the
Akitsiraq Law School cooperated with the University of Victoria, in British Columbia,
to educate a group of Inuit lawyers who were much needed in the territory. Eleven stu-
dents graduated in June 2005, raising the number of Inuit lawyers in the territory from
one to twelve. The next class of students is expected to be enrolled in June 2010 in
cooperation with the University of Ottawa. Likewise, twenty-one students graduated in
2009 in a Masters of Education program run in cooperation with the University of
Prince Edward Island and a nursing program is available through Dalhousie University
in Nova Scotia. There is focus on the three campuses and in cooperative programs to
train the people of Nunavut skills needed in the territory. General education is also
added by communication beyond Nunavut. In 2001, the Bill and Melinda Gates
Foundation awarded nearly US$500,000 to establish computer and Internet services in
the libraries of the territory. The utilization of new techniques to solve old problems and
support old strengths appears to be the goal of the immediate future.

Tina Minor, in a study of the political participation of women in Nunavut in 2002,
describes the success of Inuit women in wage labor with leadership in business and pro-
fessions. Despite this, only one of the nineteen legislators is a woman. She is, however,
the premier. Eva Aariak became the second premier of the territory in November 2008.
She is also the minister responsible for the status of women. Women’s responsibilities
in their jobs and families are cited as reasons for their relative lack of interest in elected
office. Women, however, are active in bureaucratic offices, and there is little discrimina-
tion against women in political offices. Officially, the Qulliit Nunavut Status of Women
Council is a governmental entity that is mandated to “work for the equality of all
women in Nunavut through advice to government, research public education and advo-
cacy” (Nunavut Government 2006).

Land ownership remains in the hands of territorial residents, unlike in other territo-
ries. Only Inuit are recognized in the land claim settlement administered by the
Tungavik Federation of Nunavut. In this settlement, they own 353,610 square kilome-
ters (136,530 square miles). They also have claim to the subsurface mineral rights on
36,257 square kilometers of that land. The remaining 82 percent of the land continues to
be Crown land. Inuit also have the right to hunt and fish on Crown land and to receive a
percentage of mineral development that might occur there. The Inuit also claim one-half
of the seats on territorial management boards with the federal representatives holding
the other half. The federal government will also pay these Inuit US$1.15 billion over fourteen years. The major concession from the Inuit of this territory, and it is a deeply controversial one, is that they give up all future claims to land and water in Canada.

Analysis

The development of Nunavut, “our land” in Inuktitut, changes the nature of Canada itself. Nunavut has a cultural and linguistic identity that is rivaled only by the French Province of Quebec. In this, it affirms the multicultural nature of Canada. The Inuit, who have been seen as a racial group and treated with racism and ethnocentrism through most of Canadian history, are now addressed as equals. The transition from gathering and hunting has been rapid.

Nunavut addresses cultural diversity in a new way by giving local power while retaining national unity and sovereignty. The growth of Nunavut can follow the road of internal and voluntary external change at the same time. The Inuit nation can be recognized while patriotism for Canada remains secure. It is a territory that recognizes the rights of all Canadians but privileges those whose language and culture fit the north. For example, the concept of gender equality in political power is seen as important and is being addressed in the development of territorial government. In the short period of its existence, many issues have been addressed and structures of government have been established. It remains, however, a region of severe problems with suicide rates, unemployment numbers, and housing statistics remaining among the worst in Canada. Nunavut is a huge social, political, and economic experiment for Canada which will serve as an example, either good or bad, for the treatment of less-powerful ethnic groups internationally.

In a study of politics in Denendeh and Nunavut, author Peter Kulchyski (2005, 95) argues for the uniqueness of Nunavut. “Only the Inuit were in a position to use the creation of a public government, the Nunavut territory, as a vehicle for their self-government aspirations, so the model cannot be generalized.” While the specifics of the Nunavut case may be unique, it is clear that there are generalizations and inspiration for other areas. Greenland may be the closest and most recent example of Inuit semisovereignty becoming a reality. In 2008, 76 percent of the voters in Greenland supported self-rule, separated from Denmark. On June 21, 2009 in the words of Sarah Lyall for the New York Times, “Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, wearing a traditional Inuit costume with shorts made of seal fur and a short, beaded shawl, solemnly handed over the official self-government document to the chairman of Greenland’s Parliament.” The language of Greenland is officially Kalaallisut, the Inuit dialect, and Greenland takes control of its courts and coast guard among other responsibilities. It also has the economic and social problems that face Nunavut and the mineral wealth that is available now and more with global warming. Denmark will grant Greenland US$637 million annually until full independence is reached. Both countries equally share the mineral wealth, and Greenland will use its share to reduce the grant. However, when Greenland has enough income to fully cover the Danish funding, the bid for full independence will be at hand. The Times article (Lyall 2009) pointed out that Norwegian Sami were present for the event and they noted that this “gives hope to the Sami people.” Unique differences are real but the momentum for more independence for the First Nations of the north is clear.
PERSPECTIVES APPLIED TO NUNAVUT

Matrix 3.1 summarizes the main points discussed in this chapter.

The development of Nunavut is a major shift in the map and organization of Canada, and it stands as an experiment in designing a new state model for the twenty-first century. Nunavut is a contiguous part of a troubled state, and its success is important to the long-term success of Canada. Nunavut will, therefore, be part of the international news for years to come.

In a volume brought out by the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs on Nunavut (Dahl, Hicks, and Jull 2000, 12), the editors summarized the variety of perspectives they found in Canada.

Right-wing politicians oppose all indigenous right and self-determination, and pretend that Nunavut is a threat to the unity of Canada. Some other indigenous groups fear that Inuit have not claimed or won strong enough constitutional recognition or legal guarantees to protect their future vis-à-vis the white man. Some otherwise tolerant and progressive Canadians fear that a political entity built on an ethnically-exclusive land (and sea) claims agreement may be a bad example in a multi-cultural world where building bridges rather than distinction between races and peoples and cultures is needed.

As we see, different perspectives will result in different analyses of the same situation.

A View from the Global Primacy Perspective

Clearly, this experiment is rash and unwise. It further differentiates people, rather than bringing them together into a global culture. It privileges people who are different rather than the mainstream

Matrix 3.1
CULTURAL DIVERSITY PERSPECTIVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Global Primacy</th>
<th>State Primacy</th>
<th>Cultural Primacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal</strong></td>
<td>Unified world system</td>
<td>State Sovereignty</td>
<td>Cultural Autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concepts</strong></td>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>Patriotism</td>
<td>Tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Political Integration</td>
<td>Strengthen the Present System</td>
<td>Increase the Power of Ethnic Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See States as</td>
<td>Artificial Constructs</td>
<td>Important for World Peace</td>
<td>Artificial Constructs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See the Current System as:</td>
<td>OverlyDifferentiated</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>OverlyCentralized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
culture. Also, rather than encouraging the Inuit to progress, it rewards them for their backwardness.

While few in this era of polite talk would speak as directly as the polemic above, the underlying attitude is widespread. The Inuit, especially those who are continuing to engage in traditional subsistence work, are often regarded as quaintly primitive. They cause little trouble so there is no great campaign against them, but they do not seem fully members of the modern world. Their language, Inuktitut, is considered, like classical Latin, a historic language that no longer has a purpose on the international scene. The Nunavut plan to use Inuktitut as an official governmental language would be interpreted as a crude method to keep the uninitiated on the sidelines. English, or perhaps French, depending upon the inclination of the analyst, would be the only logical language of Canada. Encouraging hunting and fishing by ensuring Inuit free access to all animal habitats will only delay Inuit entry into industrial employment.

Acculturation is slow and selective in this situation, and assimilation discouraged. Certainly, leaders of the new territory will need to learn to be effective in dealing with both government paperwork and non-Inuit residing elsewhere in Canada, and a good deal of Western training is envisioned as part of the transition. Others, however, should have less pressure to change. Additionally, and not to the liking of those holding this perspective, some acculturation of Euro-Canadians to Inuit culture seems likely in Nunavut. Those at the extreme of the Global Primacy perspective, who look favorably on subjugation, of course, would find this whole situation unacceptable—an unnecessary experiment in government which is apt to be used as a precedent for still more changes empowering “inferior” people.

The problems that created Nunavut are not regarded as problems from this perspective. Nunavut is, in the old cliché, fixing something that is not broken. The troubles that individual Inuit legitimately face can best be solved with education for increased acculturation. Inuktitut language and culture study should be discouraged, and governmental aid should be limited to those who live in towns and send their children to school. The goals set by the government are largely the opposite of what is needed. When enough Inuit obtain the proper skills and goals, there will be no reason why an Inuk cannot lead the territory or province. This leader, of course, would work for his or her people by promoting the same interests that any good leader of Euro-Canadian heritage would advocate.

A View from the State Primacy Perspective

Clearly, this experiment is extreme and more than a bit dangerous. It decentralizes power from the traditional government elite to the periphery, but, at least, it does so in a manner that is established within the existing framework of the state. In the short run, it may help maintain the integrity of the state of Canada.

The Canadian form of government is far more decentralized than that of the United States. In Canada, the provinces have far more power relative to the central government than do U.S. states. Danger to the sovereignty of the state, then, is found in the lessening of the power of Ottawa over the provinces and, perhaps, the territories. This is being seen in Nunavut. Canadian authorities have allotted Inuit representatives half the seats
on a number of administrative boards generally controlled by federal officials. Also a
good part of the land was removed from Crown control, and all Crown land has been
open to various uses by Inuit. Control over mineral development is somewhat circumscribed by the claims of the Inuit.

A second concern, particularly acute in Canada, is the privileging of cultural
groups. Given the history of French–English disputation in this nation and the increasing pressure for autonomy for Quebec, such a public recognition of another culture, Inuit, as worthy of a special status seems likely to affect Quebec’s demands for autonomy. Their recognition as a nation is clearly a bad step in that direction. Certainly, Ottawa would argue that Nunavut as a territory is given no more cultural privilege than other areas. Land claim settlements are separate from the territorial organization, and they are based in prior First Nation claims. Nunavut territory is open to all Canadians just as the Yukon and Quebec are. Language use, as in Quebec, recognizes majority use. Many Quebecois advocates, however, believe their issue is primary and due for first settlement.

State nationalists would applaud several aspects of the Nunavut plan. First, of course, it is built on the existing state structure. It creates a new territory, not a new form of organization. That this territory looks different than the others is true, but at its heart, it is Canadian. It is open to all Canadians for residence and citizenship. In this way it does not mandate a permanent dominance by Inuit residents. While the population remains so heavily Inuit, it stands to reason that they will dominate; if that changes in the future, then so will the power base. A contrast with the demands of Quebec is clear in this and might be suggested by state nationalists as a new model.

Nunavut allows Inuit to be Inuit while also recognizing the nationality of other Canadians. It does, however, divide the Inuit of Nunavut from the Inuit of other provinces. Settlements for the Inuit in Quebec, Labrador, and the western Northwest Territories are legally separate from those for the Nunavut Inuit. Likewise, the Inuit of Greenland and Alaska have agreements of their own. The likelihood of a circumpolar nation or even an Inuit nation as a political reality seems dimmer after Nunavut than before. Nunavut might be different, but it demonstrates a loyalty to the state.

From the state sovereignty position, the solution to the problems that led to Nunavut can be found within the Canadian system. The territory must be run as other territories are today. The nature of the population may flavor the society, but the law should not privilege any particular group of citizens. Rather than the Inuit language, English, the major language of Canada, should prevail in Nunavut, although French, Inuktitut, and other languages should be allowed as second languages. Canada firmly retains control over Nunavut, like all territories, and the Inuit, as citizens of Canada, should prosper. With these corrections, this solution should stand as a model throughout Canada.

**A View from the Cultural Primacy Perspective**

Nunavut is an exciting experiment and long overdue. Recognition of the special status of First Nations should be pursued throughout the Americas. It is only unfortunate that clearer, permanent sovereignty is not vested in the Inuit and that other Inuit cannot join in a broadly Inuit national political entity.
At the heart of Nunavut is the recognition of the importance of Inuit culture to the Inuit. Nunavut recognizes the right of the Inuit to pursue culturally meaningful subsistence activities and to adapt whatever Western customs they find meaningful. In other words, it values the traditional culture but does not confine the people in an unchanging system.

The Inuit were active in creating Nunavut politically. The fight for the establishment of the new territory and the land claims settlement took two decades of work and compromise. While in the end they did not receive all they asked for, their willingness to negotiate a final agreement led to the creation of the new settlement. A belief in Cultural Primacy includes a trust that the members of the culture desire what is appropriate for them. Paternalism should have no place in the analysis, and therefore, Nunavut must be defended as an Inuit creation.

While advocates of Cultural Primacy will defend Nunavut, they may privately hold some concerns. Nunavut may benefit the Inuit of the territory, but can it be harmful to other First Nation people in Canada? In fact, since the Nunavut settlement, other First Nations have also signed agreements. In fact, the Nisga’a of British Columbia in 1999 and the Dogrib of Denendeh (Tli’cho) in 2003 have finalized agreements that assure constitutionally protected self-government (Kulchyski 2005, 233). The question of the future of the First Nations in the current Northwest Territories is not yet clear. Before the division of the territory, First Nation voters held a majority and many key Northwest Territory ministers have been from First Nations; now First Nation voters hold about half of the votes. While land settlements can be finalized, political power in the West remains problematic. Dené, Metis, and Inuit remain important populations there, but even combined, they do not now have a solid majority of votes. Nunavut caused a “rebalancing of power in Denendeh” (Kulchyski 2005, 11). The future of Inuit in Quebec (Nunavik) is also being addressed, but in late 2006, the Quebec Inuit voted to accept a land claim agreement that granted them 80 percent of the islands in the north with a share of royalties from offshore resource. It also included C$86,000,000 over a period of nine years. An agreement in principle for a Nunavik regional self-government in Quebec is expected to lead to such an Inuit government in 2013. Clearly the Inuit of Canada are pressing forward.

Finally, there are concerns about the future of Nunavut itself. There is no guarantee of Inuit hegemony and no clear mechanism at hand to ensure it. Rules for leadership including clauses for length of residency and language restrictions may well discourage outsiders who might try to take over this mineral-rich region. The will of the Inuit people to maintain leadership in the government structure may well be crucial to the success of Nunavut.

The solutions to Inuit problems should rest in the hands of the Inuit, with the support of friends on the outside. Nunavut must be supported, and help must be forthcoming to the other First Nations of the north. The successes and failures of Nunavut should be widely known far beyond the borders so that other First Nations around the globe can benefit from this experience. Nunavut is a culturally defined territory existing in a complex nation-state and it must be nurtured.

As in all things, history will record the benefits of Nunavut for Inuit and all Canadians. The future of the territory is yet to be told, but that it will be analyzed from a variety of perspectives is inevitable.
Visual Analysis 3.1

Contemporary Life in Nunavut

Look

This photo, taken in Resolute on Cornwallis Island, Nunavut, in March 2005 shows the complexity of contemporary life in Nunavut. A bear pelt is drying in the sun while sled dogs rest under the disabled truck. Nearby are modern Euro-Canadian style houses.

Interpret

1. Describe the lives of the people who live in this house. Imagine what their skills and needs might be. What does it mean to be Inuit in Resolute today?
2. Polar bears are said to be one of the most dangerous animals to hunt. Consequently, a successful hunter is highly esteemed. Do you admire the hunter or pity the animal? Why?
3. Modernity meets tradition in surprising ways. What looks like more reliable transportation here: truck or dog sled?
4. Which perspective in this chapter best describes your own, as illustrated in your responses to the first three questions?
TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Acculturation
Alternative perspectives
Apartheid
Assimilation
Ethnocide

Paternalism
Patriotism
Syncretism
Tolerance

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Review the quotes about Nunavut at the beginning of this chapter. What perspectives do they best represent? What might be a third response?
2. Could the model of an indigenous territory work in the contiguous United States? Why or why not? In what other places might it work?
3. Do any of the perspectives fit your view for the future of the world’s cultures? If so, which and why? If not, what is your unique perspective?
4. Can you think of any examples of syncretism in your daily life? What about acculturation or assimilation? How similar is your way of life to that of your great-grandparents?
5. Can excessive patriotism be a problem in a state? Why or why not? Examples?

INTERNET RESOURCES

Cultural Survival: www.cultural Survival.org/home This nongovernmental organization focuses on the problems of indigenous peoples and oppressed ethnic groups.

Native web: www.nativeweb.org This is a primary resource center for Native American issues.

Government of Nunavut homepage: www.gov.nu.ca

A newspaper for Nunavut: www.nunatsiaq.com This site supplies updates on issues of importance to the Inuit of Nunavut.