

## TOPIC 1.9

# Why Does Culture Change?

What is an example of a cultural change during your lifetime?

What elements of culture in your community would you fight to preserve?

## Introduction

Culture is always evolving. There are few cultures today that have not experienced significant changes over the last 100 years. Many changes have been due to the influence of ideas and innovations that have spread across the globe through communication and transportation systems. As

technologies improve, and the speed of communication and transportation systems increases, a phenomenon known as **time-space compression** occurs. When this happens, interactions between cultures occur more often and change happens more frequently than ever before.

1.70







**1.71 Fishers hauling nets, Flower's Island, Bonavista Bay, 1939**

There are three general ways to describe how culture changes: innovation, diffusion, and large-scale interactions.

**1. Innovation:** This type of change, unlike the other two types of change noted above, originates inside a culture. Innovation refers to the emergence of new ideas, objects, or techniques. Sometimes innovation involves a new way of using an existing object. In other instances, it represents the creation of something entirely new. Typically, innovation occurs in response to a need or a want. The term cultural hearth is used to describe a location where an innovation first occurs before it spreads to other areas.

*The cod net is an example of an innovation that impacted culture in Newfoundland and Labrador. One "haul" of a fleet of cod nets could yield as much fish as a single fisher without nets might harvest in an entire season. (A modern deep-sea trawler can catch as much as 20 tons in one haul, every 20 minutes or so.)*

## Experiencing The Arts

In this assignment you will use photography to explore how artifacts can change people's way of life. As you make these photographs, use as many different perspectives as possible. Experiment with how light sources can affect your theme and subject.

Identify 10 artifacts that have influenced the way of life in your community in the last 100 years. Explore each artifact using photography. Select one

image for each artifact and arrange these images on a storyboard to produce an animated viewbook. Introduce your animation with a quotation. Your presentation should be no more than 45 seconds.





**1.72 A negative example of diffusion is the spread of the Spanish flu that occurred in 1918-19.**

This disease, which killed more than 600 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in less than five months, was brought here from Europe when a steamer carrying three infected crewmen docked in St. John's. The effects were particularly devastating in Labrador, where the disease killed close to one-third of the Inuit population and forced some communities out of existence. Death rates were especially high in the Inuit villages of Okak, where 204 of its 263 residents died from the flu, and Hebron, where 86 of its 100 residents died. Shown here is Okak, Labrador, c. 1884 to 1902.

**2. Diffusion:** This type of change occurs when an idea, object, or technique is introduced to a culture from an external source. This can happen when a person travels to a different area and returns with an innovation, or when someone with a different cultural background moves into an area. This term also describes the process of an innovation spreading within a particular culture. Pizza is an example of this. It is thought that flat bread may have first originated within Greece and eventually spread to Italy, where a tomato topping became popular. Somewhere along the way pizza made its way to North America, where it has become a popular food.

**3. Large-Scale Interactions:** When two cultures interact, their respective cultures will be altered. The degree of change, however, may vary. **Acculturation** describes the experience of one culture dominating another culture. This represents a radical alteration in the culture of one group normally due to the overwhelming size or technical capacity of the dominant culture. When two cultures interact and there is a relatively equal change in both groups it is termed **transculturation**.

**1.73 Example of Acculturation**

In 1928, a government official predicted Canada could end its "Indian problem" within two generations by sending Aboriginal children to church-run, government-funded residential schools for native children to assimilate them into "white society." In many cases, children in these schools were victims of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. Shown here is a 1929 photograph from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development collection depicting Mi'kmaw girls in a sewing class at the Roman Catholic-run Shubenacadie Indian Residential School in Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia as an example of a "success" story.





**1.74 A question often debated in the media is whether the cultural exchange between Canada and the United States is one of transculturation or acculturation.**

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) regulates both radio and television broadcasting in Canada to ensure that a certain percentage of programming is Canadian. Why is this considered important? To what degree is your life influenced by American media?

	6:30	7:00	7:30
PBS 02	Antiques Roadshow	NOVA	News
CBC 03	Here & Now	Jeopardy	The Simpsons
NTV 05	NTV Evening News Hour		House
HIST 06	All Quiet on the Western Front (BW)		

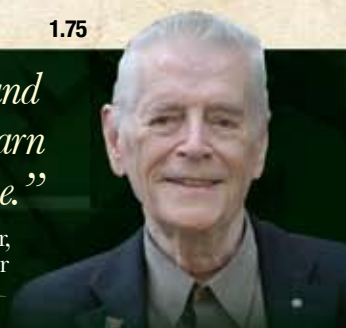
1.75

## ((( DIMENSIONS OF THINKING )))

### CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE

*“By knowing who and what we were, we learn who we have become.”*

– Paul O'Neill, writer, actor, community activist, teacher



*Events, new ideas, and emerging trends unfold around us each day. Historians study the causes and consequences of these changes so that we can learn from them and make better plans for the future.*

A consequence of an event may be obvious and immediate or it may only become observable in the long term. Likewise, some consequences can be anticipated, while others may be unexpected. For example, when Newfoundland and Labrador decided to participate in the First World War in 1914, it was expected that

there would be some loss of life among the soldiers sent overseas, as well as financial implications. Yet it is doubtful that anyone would have predicted that over 1300 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians would die in the conflict. Nor is it likely that anyone foresaw that by 1932, one third of the colony's debt (over \$30 million) would be a direct consequence of its involvement in the war – and that this debt would contribute to the collapse of responsible government.

## Question:

Think of a current event. What might be an unanticipated consequence of that event?

## Questions:

- Change is not necessarily good or bad. In some instances change simply means that something is different. Identify an example of change that is taking place today in your community, or the province as a whole, that is:
  - Positive
  - Negative
  - Neutral
- Research a current trend or innovation and describe how your community's way of life may change (or has changed) if the trend becomes (or has become) widespread. Possible topics include:
  - Communication
  - Transportation
  - Health and nutrition
  - Employment
- In a chart, identify three examples of how aspects of culture in Newfoundland and Labrador have changed through each of the ways described – innovation, diffusion, and large-scale interactions. These examples may come from what you have read in this chapter or from your own personal knowledge.



# CASE STUDY

## Inventions and Culture

**1809-10** *Canning process for food developed. (France and UK)*

In the decades that followed, the portability of canned food had an impact on both warfare and exploration.

**1876** *Bell patents the telephone. (USA)*

The first transatlantic telephone cable became operational in 1956. The European terminus was Oban, Scotland and the North American terminus was Clarenville, Newfoundland and Labrador.

**1885** *First practical, petroleum-powered motorcycle built by Daimler and Maybach. (Germany) Modern automobile developed by Benz. (Germany)*

It is expected that by 2020 there will be over one billion cars and light trucks on the road worldwide.

**1895** *First "medical" X-ray taken by Röntgen. (Germany)*

X-rays are now commonly used not only to see the skeleton but also soft tissue like the lungs.

**1903** *Wright brothers make first powered flight. (USA)*

In 1919, the first non-stop transatlantic flight was accomplished by Alcock and Brown between St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador and Clifden, Ireland. Today, about 900 airlines – using 22 000 aircraft – transport over two billion passengers annually.

**1959** *Introduction of the modern snowmobile by Bombardier. (Canada)*

As of 2009, snowmobilers in Canada and the United States are spending over \$28 billion on snowmobiling each year.

**1970** *First modern, all terrain vehicle (ATV) enters market. (Japan)*

Produced by Honda, the model had only a seven horse power engine. Earlier American versions were typically amphibious and had six wheels.

**1973** *First practical hand-held mobile phones are sold. (USA)*

Once a luxury, cell phones are now so widespread that their use is sometimes banned in schools, theatres, and moving automobiles.

**1977** *Personal computers popularized with the introduction of the mass-produced Apple II by Apple Computers. (USA)*

Since 1977, well over a billion personal computers have been produced worldwide.

**1983** *Global networks connected to create the Internet.*

In 2009, it was estimated that one-quarter of the world's population has used the Internet.



# How has each of the following developments affected our culture? Which of these innovations were the most significant?

**1906** *First radio program broadcast. (USA)*

Some expected the arrival of television to eliminate radio as a mass medium. While this has not occurred, the arrival of other media, such as the Internet, has seriously impacted shortwave radio.

**1911** *First commercially made refrigerators become available. (USA)*

The refrigerator allows people to consume more fresh foods without having to own a garden or a farm. This has allowed people to eat a more varied diet.

**1929** *First regular television broadcasts. (Germany)*

In 2004, Statistics Canada reported that the average Canadian watches about 21.4 hours of television each week.

**1947** *First microwave oven made by Raytheon Company (USA)*

Increasing popularity of home models by the 1970s accelerated the growth of the frozen dinner industry and the switch to non-metallic trays.



Fig. 1.76

## Question:

Identify a household appliance, tool, or other innovation that you cannot imagine living without. Research the innovation. Write one or two

paragraphs about the innovation, including a discussion of what life was like “before and after” the innovation was widely used.