



# Geography by Design

VOLUME 6

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY AND GLOBALIZATION

**Geography by Design:**  
**Political Geography and Globalization**

**Volume 6**



Region 4 Education Service Center supports student achievement by providing educational products and services that focus on excellence in service for children.

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SAMPLE

**Lesson 9: Problems of Cultural Convergence**

**TEKS in the Lesson:**

- 7D** Examine benefits and challenges of globalization, including connectivity, standard of living, pandemics, and loss of local culture
- 14C** Analyze the human and physical factors that influence the power to control territory and resources, create conflict/war, and impact international political relations of sovereign nations such as China, the United States, Japan, and Russia and organized nation groups such as the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU)
- 15A** Identify and give examples of different points of view that influence the development of public policies and decision-making processes on local, state, national, and international levels
- 18D** Evaluate the spread of cultural traits to find examples of cultural convergence and divergence such as the spread of democratic ideas, U.S.-based fast-food franchises, the English language, technology, or global sports
- 21A** Analyze and evaluate the validity and utility of multiple sources of geographic information such as primary and secondary sources, aerial photographs, and maps
- 21B** Locate places of contemporary geopolitical significance on a map
- 22C** Use geographic terminology correctly

**Essential Questions:**

- How does globalization lead to a sense of placelessness?
- What are the different points of view on the conflicts listed in this lesson?

**Materials:**

- For teacher
- IR-41: display copy
  - IR-44: display copy
- For each student
- IR-41 (optional)
  - IR-42
  - IR-43
  - IR-44 (optional)
  - geographer’s journal

**Map Items:**

- United States
- Saudi Arabia
- Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- Idaho
- Waco, Texas
- Northern Ireland
- United Kingdom
- Sri Lanka
- India
- Pakistan
- China
- Tibet
- West Bank
- Lebanon
- Israel

**Vocabulary Focus:**

- placelessness
- fundamentalism
- terrorism
- al-Qaeda
- jihad
- Irish Republican Army (IRA)
- Dalai Lama
- intifada

**Expected Time for Lesson:** 2–3 45-minute days

**Step 1: Preparing to Learn**

1. Conduct a whole-class discussion using the following facilitation questions:
  - A. Is violence ever a justified action? *Answers will vary based on students' individual beliefs.*
  - B. Are there any exceptions to your belief about violence? *Answers will vary and may include justification for self-defense or preemptive first strike.*

**Step 2: Guided Practice**

1. Display or distribute IR-41.
2. Conduct a whole-class discussion using the following facilitation questions:
  - A. What do the images have in common? *Terrorism*
  - B. How did you feel as you viewed the images? *Answers will depend on students' individual perceptions.*
  - C. Why is it important to learn about these people and events? *Answers will vary and may include the following: so that we are aware of our surroundings, so that we can develop a plan of action in case of emergency, so that we can work to end terrorism and terroristic acts.*
  - D. What change is now needed to end terrorism? *Answers will depend on students' individual perceptions.*



**Step 3: Reading to Learn**

1. Students should work individually.
2. Distribute IR-42 and IR-43.
3. Instruct students to complete IR-42 as they read IR-43.
4. Conduct a whole-class discussion using student responses on IR-42. Encourage students to justify their responses.

**IR-42: Problems of Cultural Convergence Table—Reading to Learn**

Use the graphic organizer below to define the key terms of the lesson, identify points of view, and determine the impact of terrorism.

<b>Part 1: My Definition of Terrorism</b>	<b>Part 2: My Partner's Definition of Terrorism</b>	<b>Part 3: Revise My Definition of Terrorism</b>
<b>Part 4: Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden's Point of View</b>	<b>Part 5: United States Government's Point of View</b>	<b>Part 6: Islamic People's Point of View</b>
<b>Part 7: Global Impact</b>	<b>Part 8: Your Opinion</b>	<b>Part 9: Possible Solutions</b>

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**IR-43: Problems of Cultural Convergence**

**Problems of Cultural Convergence**

The process of globalization has resulted in significant ramifications of cultural convergence. One such consequence is the loss of cultural uniqueness or local identity. In the 1970s, Canadian geographer Edward Relph coined the term, **placelessness** in order to describe the homogenization of places. In other words, multi-and-gig stores cannot compete with the volume of business or the discounts in price that major retail stores, restaurants, and hotels can offer. Another consequence of the loss of cultural uniqueness of places can lead to growth in fundamentalism as the national identity of people is questioned or marginalized. In this sense, **fundamentalism** can be described as a movement strictly adhering to a set of basic principles. Some people choose to conduct commerce with small-business owners whom they know rather than big-box companies or corporate agglomerations. When local businesses start to disappear, people sometimes experience social stress, gaps in wealth, or a sense that their culture is being threatened.

Taken to the extreme, this fundamentalism can sometimes manifest itself in anger and resentment toward the people or companies who took over the small local businesses. Occasionally, this backlash can even lead to **terrorism**, or the systematic use of violent or destructive acts in order to intimidate other people. One difficulty in defining terrorism is that not everyone agrees on just what constitutes a terrorist threat. To understand this idea, it is important to consider point of view. One example of global terrorism in recent years was the al-Qaeda attack on targets in the United States on September 11, 2001. **Al-Qaeda** is an international terrorist organization led by Osama bin Laden. In 1990, bin Laden was angered that his home country of Saudi Arabia allowed the military of the United States to establish bases in Saudi Arabia as it prepared for the war in Iraq. From bin Laden's point of view, the United States never should have been allowed to establish military posts in the land that is considered by most religious leaders to be the birthplace of Islam. Bin Laden was unsuccessful in trying to dissuade the Saudi government to reverse its decision.

As a result of being so outspoken against the political and military agreements between Saudi Arabia and the United States, bin Laden eventually was expelled from his home country in 1991. By 1996, he declared war on the United States. Using his considerable personal wealth, bin Laden helped organize other Islamic extremist groups and pay for their military training and equipment. In 1988, bin Laden organized other terrorist groups under the official name of the International Islamic Front for Jihad against Jews and Crusaders. Bin Laden's anger, passionate religious belief, and leadership eventually led to a coordinated air assault designed to persuade the government of the United States to withdraw its troops deployed in Islamic countries.

From the point of view of the government of the United States, Osama bin Laden coordinated, financed, and oversaw the training of Islamic extremists with the sole purpose of attacking the United States of America. Al-Qaeda carried out these blatant attacks on unarmed civilian targets on September 11, 2001. This

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**Step 4: Analyze**

1. Students should continue working individually.
2. Instruct students to respond in writing to the following prompt:  
Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper outlining and providing evidence to support your opinion on whether the United States government is justified in using violent force on any issue other than a foreign invasion.

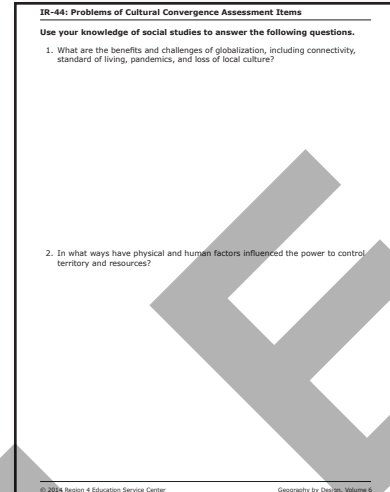
### Step 5: Evaluate

Display or distribute IR-44. Instruct students to individually complete IR-44.

#### IR-44 Answer Key

- 1. The benefits of globalization include increased connectivity with places that might not have had a reason to be connected and potentially an increased standard of living. Cultural groups that create new connections can learn from each other, share technology, and possibly even develop a common infrastructure. It has been said that countries that trade and interact consistently with each other are less likely to fall into conflict with each other because they develop shared economic and/or political goals, so they work hard to continue a positive working relationship. Also, as transnational corporations grow, new jobs typically are created, allowing more people to be employed. Sometimes people will move internationally with a transnational corporation in what might become a mutually beneficial economic relationship for the person as well as the corporation.*

*Some of the challenges of globalization may include a loss of local identity, stress and loss of local income, poor working conditions and lower wages, and exposure to diseases and illnesses from increased international travel and trade. When transnational or big-box companies move into a local area, they may threaten the livelihood of the smaller mom-and-pop stores. If local small businesses cannot compete with the bulk purchasing power and lower price structures of the major corporations, the small businesses may be forced to close. This will lower the income levels of the locals as well as create stress for people who have lost their jobs. Going to the extreme, people may become resentful of globalization and new ideas that are introduced as a result of economic or social expansion. Acts of terrorism (9/11; the Oklahoma City bombing; conflicts in Tibet, Kashmir, and Northern Ireland) may result from cultural convergence that takes place when people do not understand or try to understand different cultural traditions and expectations.*





- Physical boundaries tend to be more generally accepted, but they are not without conflict. The Himalaya Mountains are tall enough that there have been very few and only extremely minor conflicts between India and China. But the countries in South America that share the Andes Mountains as a border have not always agreed with exactly where the boundary falls. Similarly, rivers may change their course over time, changing the amount of land that countries possess or resources that they control.*

*As far as human boundaries, examples may include the Berlin Conference, the partitioning of India, and the use of the 38th Parallel to divide North Korea and South Korea. The boundaries drawn by the European powers to divide and colonize Africa were established without regard to the Africans or their previously recognized boundaries. The Europeans simply were looking for opportunities to access the natural resources available in African countries. The partitioning of India by the British accomplished the exact opposite of its intended purpose. Despite efforts by the British to reduce border disputes between Hindus and Muslims, border disputes continue between Hindus in India and Muslims in Pakistan. One example of a somewhat successful artificial boundary created by humans has been the use of the 38th Parallel as the boundary between North Korea and South Korea. Although there are still periodic skirmishes across the boundary, there has not been a massive military offensive between the two countries since the early 1950s.*

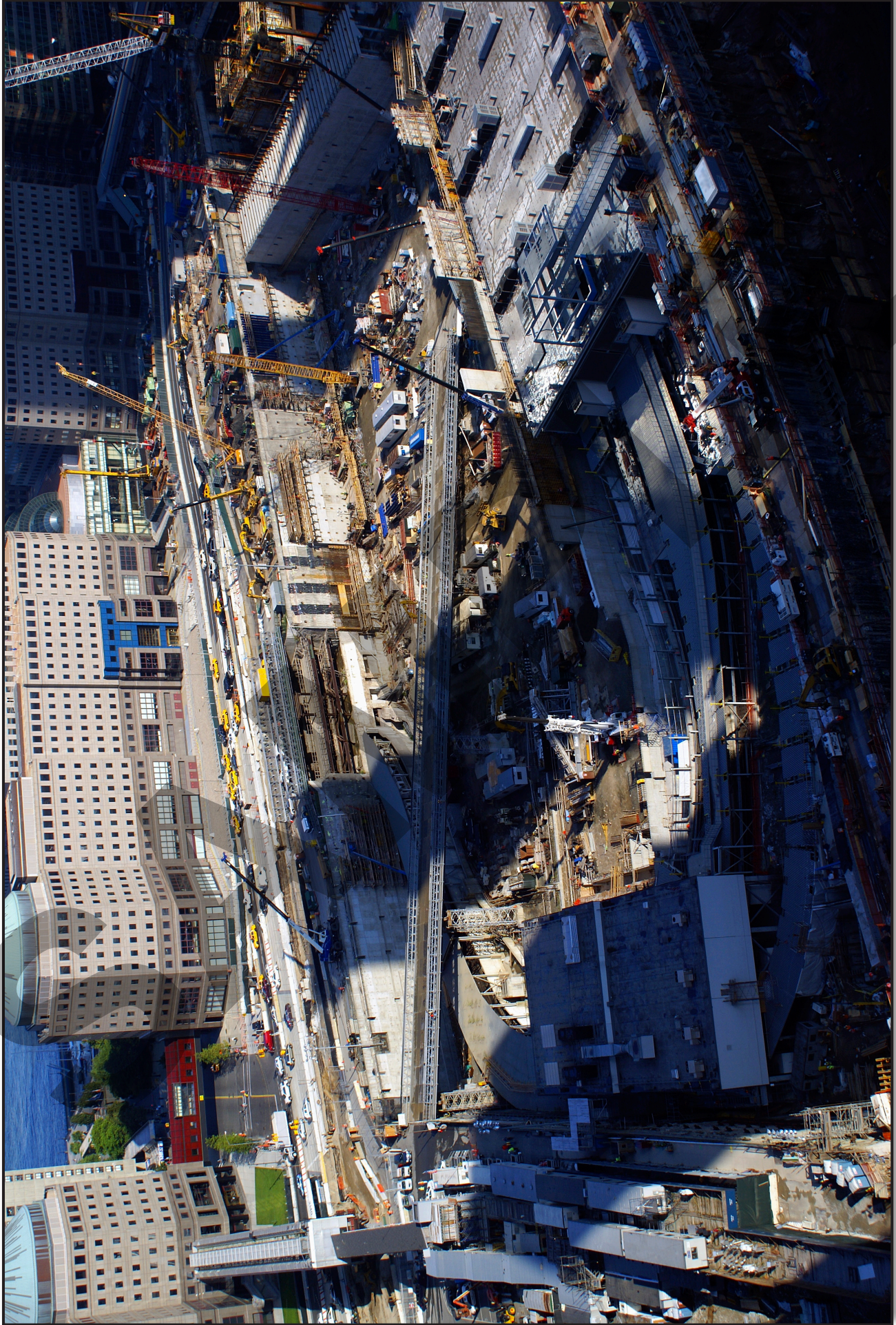
SAMPLE

**IR-41: Images of Terrorism**





**IR-41: Images of Terrorism**









**IR-41: Images of Terrorism**





**IR-41: Images of Terrorism**





**IR-41: Images of Terrorism**



## IR-42: Problems of Cultural Convergence Table—Reading to Learn

Use the graphic organizer below to define the key terms of the lesson, identify points of view, and determine the impact of terrorism.

<b>Part 1: My Definition of Terrorism</b>	<b>Part 2: My Partner's Definition of Terrorism</b>	<b>Part 3: Revise My Definition of Terrorism</b>
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<p><b>Oklahoma City: Timothy McVeigh</b> <i>Answers will depend on students' individual perceptions and group consensus.</i></p>	<p><b>Northern Ireland: Irish Republican Army (IRA)</b> <i>Answers will depend on students' individual perceptions and group consensus.</i></p>
<p><b>Sri Lanka: Tamil and Sinhalese</b> <i>Answers will depend on students' individual perceptions and group consensus.</i></p>	<p><b>India and Pakistan: Kashmir</b> <i>Answers will depend on students' individual perceptions and group consensus.</i></p>
<p><b>China: Tibet</b> <i>Answers will depend on students' individual perceptions and group consensus.</i></p>	<p><b>Middle East: Hezbollah and Hamas</b> <i>Answers will depend on students' individual perceptions and group consensus.</i></p>



## **Problems of Cultural Convergence**

The process of globalization has resulted in significant ramifications of cultural convergence. One such consequence is the loss of cultural uniqueness or local identity. In the 1970s, Canadian geographer Edward Relph coined the term **placelessness** in order to describe the homogenization of places. In other words, mom-and-pop stores cannot compete with the volume of business or the discounts in price that major retail stores, restaurants, and hotels can offer. Another consequence of the loss of cultural uniqueness of places can lead to growth in fundamentalism as the national identity of people is questioned or marginalized. In this sense, **fundamentalism** can be described as a movement strictly adhering to a set of basic principles. Some people choose to conduct commerce with small-business owners whom they know rather than big-box companies or corporate agglomerations. When local businesses start to disappear, people sometimes experience social stress, gaps in wealth, or a sense that their culture is being threatened.

Taken to the extreme, this fundamentalism can sometimes manifest itself in anger and resentment toward the people or companies who took over the small local businesses. Occasionally, this backlash can even lead to **terrorism**, or the systematic use of violent or destructive acts in order to intimidate other people. One difficulty in defining terrorism is that not everyone agrees on just what constitutes a terrorist threat. To understand this idea, it is important to consider point of view. One example of global terrorism in recent years was the al-Qaeda attack on targets in the United States on September 11, 2001. **Al-Qaeda** is an international terrorist organization led by Osama bin Laden. In 1990, bin Laden was angered that his home country of Saudi Arabia allowed the military of the United States to establish bases in Saudi Arabia as it prepared for the war in Iraq. From bin Laden's point of view, the United States never should have been allowed to establish military posts in the land that is considered by most religious leaders to be the birthplace of Islam. Bin Laden was unsuccessful in trying to dissuade the Saudi government to reverse its decision.

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## IR-43: Problems of Cultural Convergence

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premeditated act of violence was politically motivated and was intended to attack American culture and to undermine the financial stability of the United States. President George W. Bush framed the response from the United States to focus on “the extremists who have hijacked an otherwise peaceful and God-fearing religion.” In other words, the United States’ response was not against peaceful people or governments. Rather, the government and the military of the United States would focus its time and effort on bringing to justice those individuals responsible for perpetrating acts of terrorism on the United States. Bin Laden was killed by US forces on May 2, 2011.

From the point of view of most Islamic people throughout the world<sup>1</sup>, the basic teachings of Islam were incorrectly interpreted by bin Laden. The Qur’an does not teach the idea of **jihad**, or holy war or extreme struggle, in the way that bin Laden used it. Religious scholars from a variety of religious backgrounds interpret jihad as a defensive action. However, the actions of al-Qaeda on September 11, 2001, were viewed internationally as an offensive assault, not a defensive measure. Muslims worldwide were not influenced by al-Qaeda’s actions or bin Laden’s leadership to unite in acts of violence against the United States. The majority of Muslims in the world continued to focus on pursuing peaceful relationships and resisting acts of violence.

The events that occurred on September 11, 2001, have had repercussions throughout the world. International political relationships have been affected, troops have been deployed in war zones, and civilians throughout the world have felt the impact of war. Certainly, there are different points of view about the actions of al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden and the responses of the United States and President Bush.

Terrorism usually is seen more on a regional scale than on an international scale. Terrorists come from different ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds, and they can be found in most regions of the world. Terrorists are funded by different means, and the methods by which they carry out their terrorist acts vary. The element that most terrorists have in common, however, is that they believe their group has been wronged in some way. Terrorist groups try to gain attention to their cause in the hope that regional or international attention will help usher changes to correct perceived wrongs against their group.

### **Oklahoma City: Timothy McVeigh**

Timothy McVeigh was a US Army sergeant who received an honorable discharge from the military in 1991 after deciding not to pursue his goal to become a Green Beret. McVeigh began to drift across the country, holding short-term jobs and sharpening his anti-government views on issues that included the direction of US foreign policy and gun control. McVeigh’s political views became even more extreme as a result of the Ruby Ridge incident in Idaho in 1992 and the Branch Davidian standoff near Waco, Texas, in 1993, in which he believed the government misused its authority. McVeigh subsequently planned and delivered a bomb that exploded outside the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in April 1995, killing 168 innocent people. Asked during the planning stages about the potential

## **IR-44: Problems of Cultural Convergence Assessment Items**

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**Use your knowledge of social studies to answer the following questions.**

1. What are the benefits and challenges of globalization, including connectivity, standard of living, pandemics, and loss of local culture?

2. In what ways have physical and human factors influenced the power to control territory and resources?