

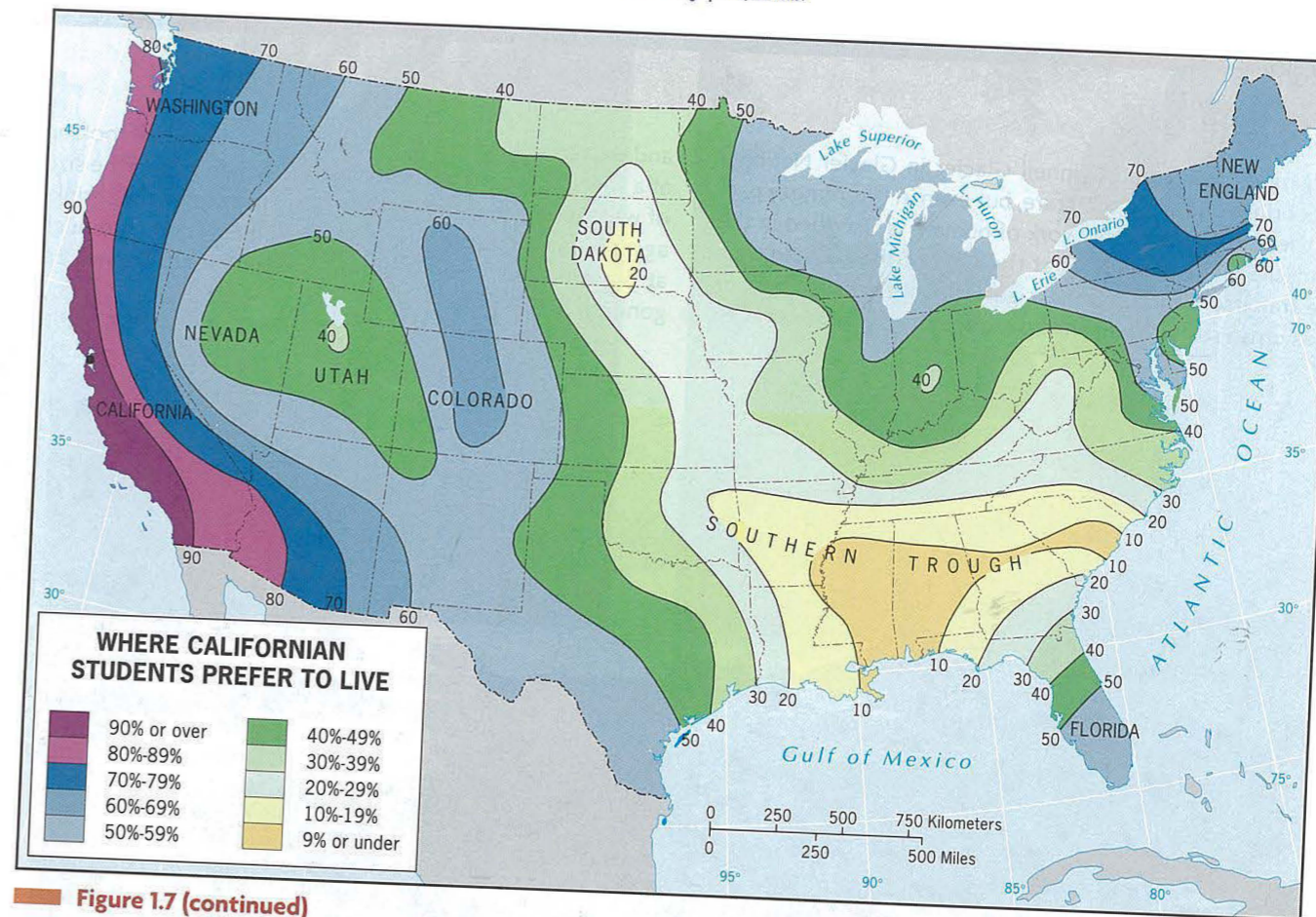
**Figure 1.7**  
**Desirable Places to Live.** Where Pennsylvanian and Californian college students would prefer to live, based on questionnaires completed by college students. Reprinted by permission of: P. R. Gould and R. White, *Mental Maps*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986, pp. 55 and 58.

built (downtown or in a suburb), given the characteristics of existing neighborhoods and new developments, the median income of people, the locations of other shopping areas, and the existing and future road system. Similarly, a geographer could determine the best location for a wildlife refuge, given existing wildlife habitats and migration patterns, human settlement patterns, and road networks.

A spatial perspective invites consideration of the relationship among phenomena in individual places—including the relationship between humans and the physical world. Thus, the second of the five themes concerns **human-environment** interactions. Why did the Army Corps of Engineers alter Florida's physical environment so drastically when it drained part of the Everglades? Have the changes in Florida's environment created an easier path of destruction for hurricanes? Why is the Army Corps of Engineers again changing the course of the Kissimmee River, and what does that mean for farmers around the river and residential developments in the south of Florida? Asking locational questions often means looking at the reciprocal relationship between humans and environments.

The third theme of geography is the **region**. Phenomena are not evenly distributed on Earth's surface. Instead, features tend to be concentrated in particular areas, which we call regions. Geographers use fieldwork and both quantitative and qualitative methods to develop insightful descriptions of different regions of the world. Novelist James Michener once wrote that whenever he started writing a new book, he first prepared himself by turning to books written by regional geographers about the area where the action was to occur. Understanding the regional geography of a place allows us to make sense of much of the information we have about places and digest new place-based information as well.

The fourth theme is represented by the seemingly simple word **place**. All places on the surface of Earth have unique human and physical characteristics, and one of the purposes of geography is to study the special character and meaning of places. People develop a **sense of place** by infusing a place with meaning and emotion, by remembering important events that occurred in a place, or by labeling a place with a certain character. Because we



**Figure 1.7 (continued)**

experience and give meaning to places, we can have a feeling of "home" when we are in a certain place.

We also develop **perceptions of places** where we have never been through books, movies, stories, and pictures. Geographers Peter Gould and Rodney White asked college students in California and Pennsylvania: "If you could move to any place of your choice, without any of the usual financial and other obstacles, where would you like to live?" Their responses showed a strong bias for their home region and revealed that students from both regions had negative perceptions of the South, Appalachia, the Great Plains, and Utah (Fig. 1.7). What we know shapes our perceptions of places.

The fifth theme, **movement**, refers to the mobility of people, goods, and ideas across the surface of the planet. Movement is an expression of the interconnectedness of places. **Spatial interaction** between places depends on the **distances** (the measured physical space between two places) among places, the **accessibility** (the ease of reaching one location from another) of places, and the transportation and communication **connectivity** (the degree of linkage between locations in a network) among places. Interactions of many kinds shape Earth's human geography, and understanding these interactions is an important aspect of the global spatial order.

### Cultural Landscape

In addition to the five themes, location, human-environment, region, place, and movement, **landscape** is a core element of geography. Geographers use the term *landscape* to refer to the material character of a place, the complex of natural features, human structures, and other tangible objects that give a place a particular form. Human geographers are particularly concerned with the **cultural landscape**, the visible imprint of human activity on the landscape. The geographer whose name is most closely identified with this concept is former University of California at Berkeley professor Carl Sauer. In Sauer's words, cultural landscapes are comprised of the "forms superimposed on the physical landscape" by human activity.

No place on Earth is in a "pristine" condition; humans have made an imprint on every place on the planet (Fig. 1.8). The cultural landscape is the visible imprint of human activity and culture on the landscape. We can see the cultural landscape in the layers of buildings, roads, memorials, churches, fields, and homes that human activities over time have stamped on the landscape.