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Title

Geographies of religious conversion

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Abstract

Geographical research concerned with the expansion or contraction of religious groups has tended to adopt the “Berkeley tradition” of cultural geography—examining how religious groups spread their influence; the factors aiding the growth of particular religious groups; and the resulting cultural, behavioral, and environmental changes that occur. This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section analyzes how such spatial change can be mapped. The second and third sections describe the processes underpinning the spatial distribution of religions, including resettlement processes, and the conversion practices of proselytizing and non-proselytizing religions. The fourth section analyzes the multitude of factors that facilitate religious conversion, including the efficacy of personal interaction, the accessibility of technology, the use of a common language, and the support of social and governmental structures. Finally, the fifth section examines how processes of migration and conversion impact upon societies in numerous ways, both positive and negative.

Keywords

religious conversion, expansion, contraction, migration, spatial distribution, resettlement, proselytizing, technology

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