
Unit 3

Cultural Patterns and Processes



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UNIT 3 – CULTURAL PATTERNS AND PROCESSES

PART 1: CONCEPTS OF CULTURE AND DIFFUSION

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING (3.A)

- By the end of this section, you will *understand* that **concepts of culture frame the shared behaviors of a society.**



ENDURING UNDERSTANDING (3.A)

■ Essential Question

- How do folk and popular cultures differ in the ways they help form a society's overall culture?



LEARNING OBJECTIVE (3.A.1)

- By the end of this section, you will *be able to* **explain the concept of culture and identify cultural traits**
 - a. Culture is comprised of the shared practices, technologies, attitudes, and behaviors transmitted by a society.
 - b. Cultural traits are individual elements of culture and include such things as food preferences, architecture, and land use.

CONCEPTS OF CULTURE AND DIFFUSION

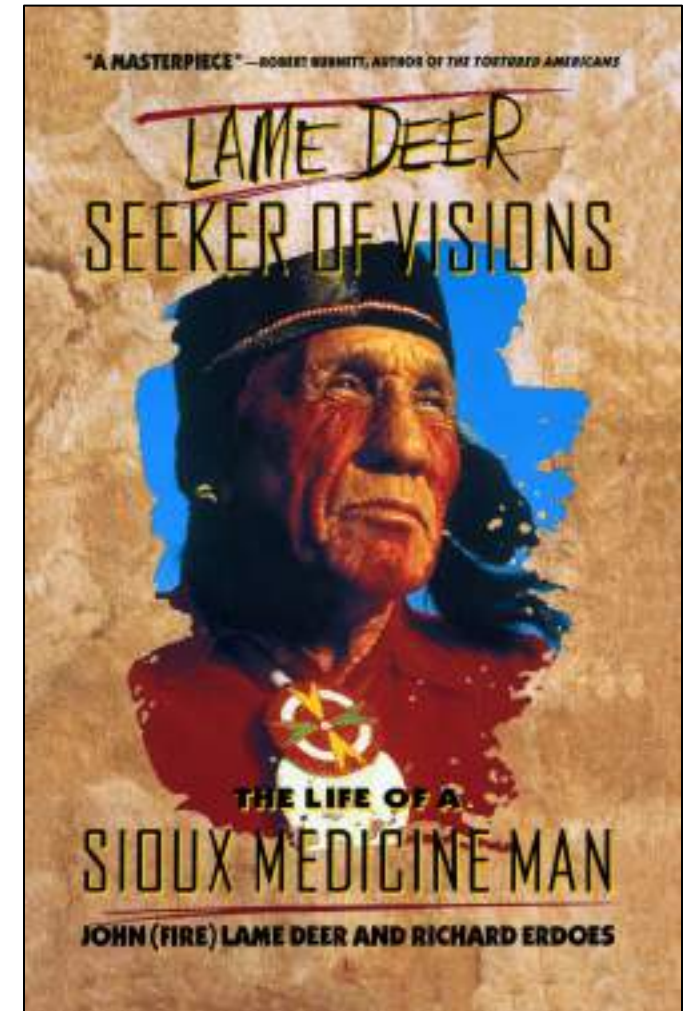
“The Buffalo was part of us, his flesh and blood being absorbed by us until it became our own flesh and blood. Our clothing, our tipis, everything we needed for life came from the buffalo’s body. It was hard to say where the animals ended and the human began.”

– John (Fire) Lame Deer, *Lame Deer, Seeker of Visions*, 1972



CONCEPTS OF CULTURE AND DIFFUSION

- To the Lakota and other indigenous people on North America's Great Plains, the bison was an essential part of their *culture*
- Provided meat for nutrition, a hide for clothing and shelter, bones for tools, and fat for soap
- Central to their religious beliefs
- When European settlers hunted the bison, Lakota culture suffered



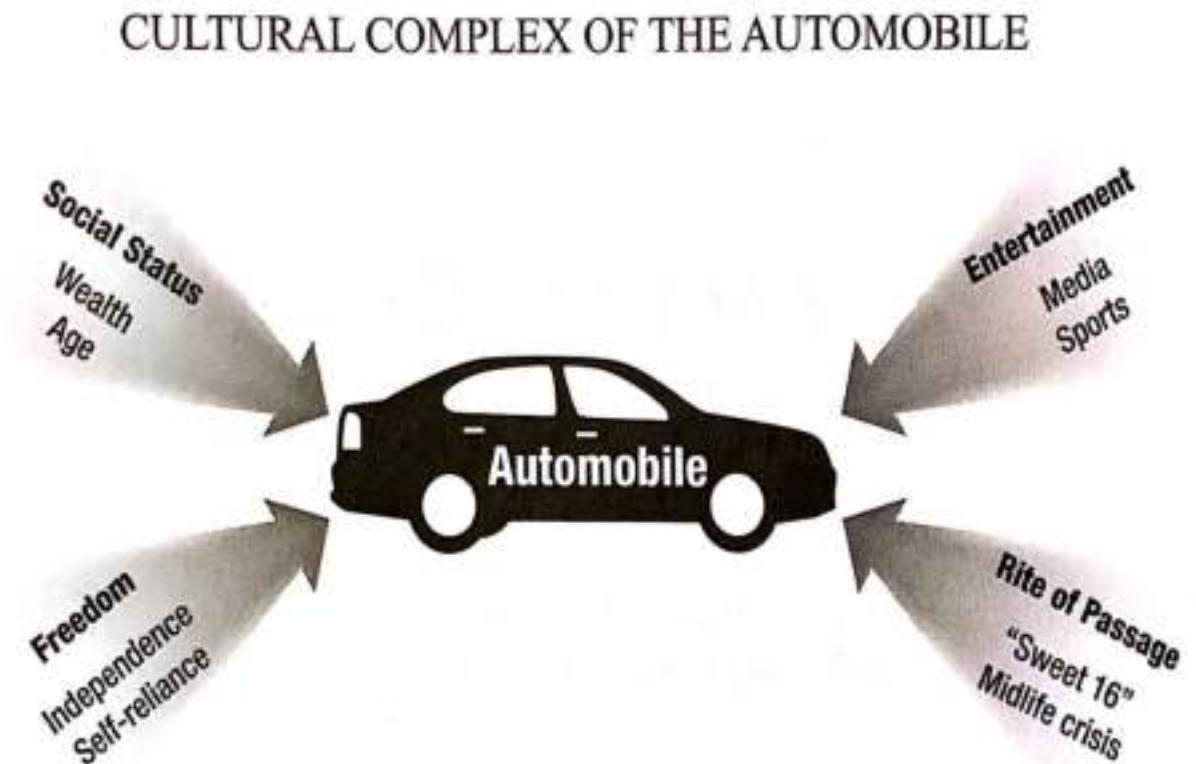
ANALYZING CULTURE

- **Culture** includes all of a group's learned behaviors, actions, beliefs, and objects
- Visible force seen in a group's actions, possessions, and influence on the landscape
- Example: in a large city you can see people working in offices, factories, and stores, and living in high-rise apartments or suburban homes. You might observe them attending movies, concerts, or sports events



ANALYZING CULTURE

- **Culture** is also an invisible force guiding people through shared belief systems, customs, and traditions
- Visible + Invisible = **cultural traits**
- Example: a single cultural artifact, such as an automobile, may represent many different values
- These interrelated traits make up a **cultural complex**

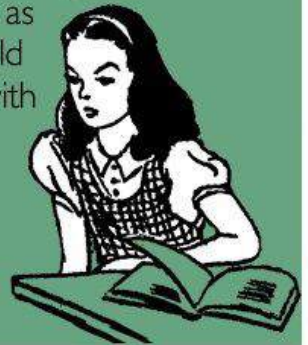


ANALYZING CULTURE

- One generation passes its culture to the next in many ways
- Children learn in three basic ways
 - Imitation: language – repeating sounds
 - Informal instruction: a parent reminds a child to say please
 - Formal instruction: a school teaches history



No, thank you for letting me watch you constantly text as we hang out. I would hate to bore you with my company.



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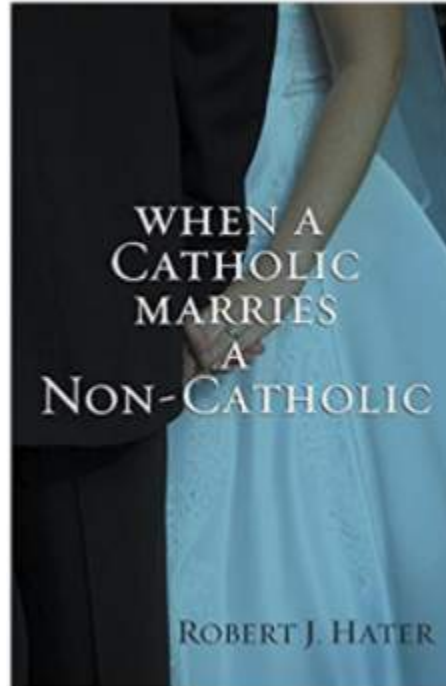


ORIGINS OF CULTURE

- **Cultural hearth** is the area in which a unique culture or a specific trait develops
- Examples
 - Classical Greece for democracy more than 2,000 years ago
 - New York City for rap music in the 1970s
- Geographers study how cultures develop in hearths and diffuse



ORIGINS OF CULTURE



- **Taboos** are behaviors heavily discouraged by a culture
- Examples
 - Eating certain foods (pork or insects)
- Change over time – in the U.S., it was once taboo for Protestants to marry Catholics but is not widely opposed now

ORIGINS OF CULTURE

- **Folk Cultures**
 - Small, homogenous groups of people
 - Often live in rural areas
 - Relatively isolated
 - Slow to change



ORIGINS OF CULTURE

■ Folk Cultures

- Demonstrate the diverse ways people have adapted to a physical environment
- Example: making shelter out of available resources (snow, mud bricks, wood, etc.)
- However, people use similar resources like wood differently
 - Scandinavia – use entire logs to build cabins
 - American Midwest – processed trees into boards, built a frame, and attached boards to it



ORIGINS OF CULTURE



■ Folk Cultures

- Sometimes, people independently develop similar responses to similar environments
- Mongols in Central Asia and Plains Indians in North America
 - Flat open land
 - Extreme weather
 - Portable, round shelters made of frames and animal skins

LEARNING OBJECTIVE (3.A.2)

- By the end of this section, you will *be able to* **explain how geographers assess the spatial and place dimensions of cultural groups in the past and present.**
 - Geographers use maps and the spatial perspective to analyze and assess language, religion, ethnicity, and gender.

SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE

- **Cultural regions** are broad areas where groups share similar but not identical cultural traits
- **Wilbur Zelinsky** divided the U.S. into 12 major cultural regions but people still consider themselves part of a larger American culture

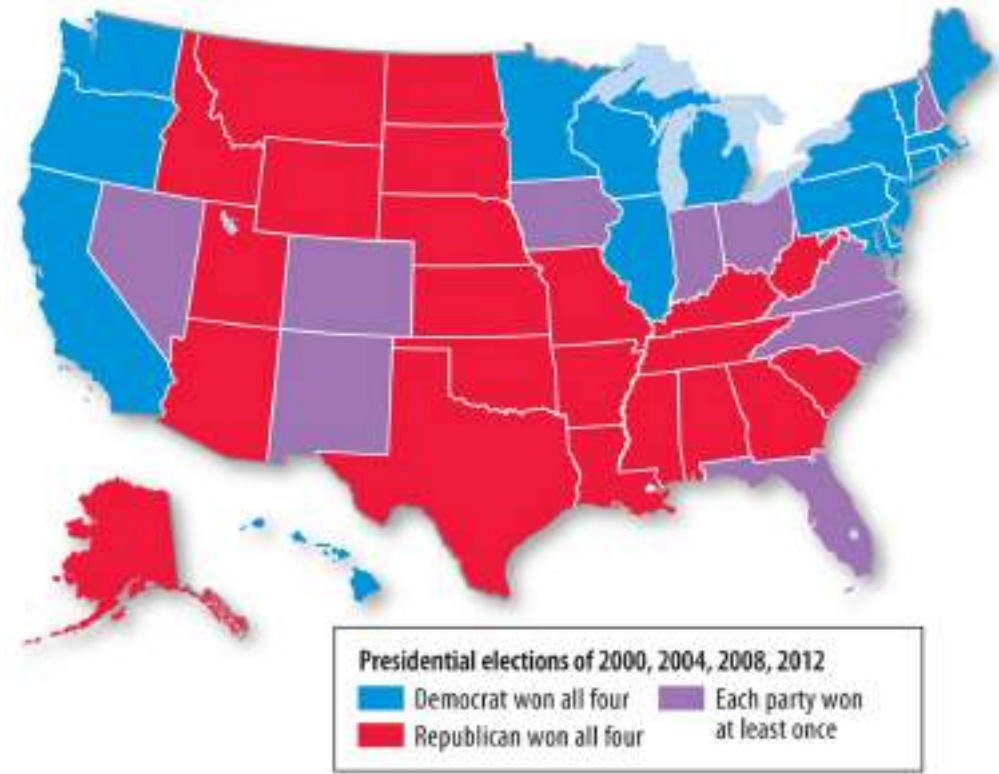


SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE

■ Three types of regions

■ Formal (Uniform)

- An area within which everyone shares in common one or more distinctive characteristic
- Share features like language, economic activity (agriculture), or environmental property (climate)
- Example: Montana or US (party preferences)

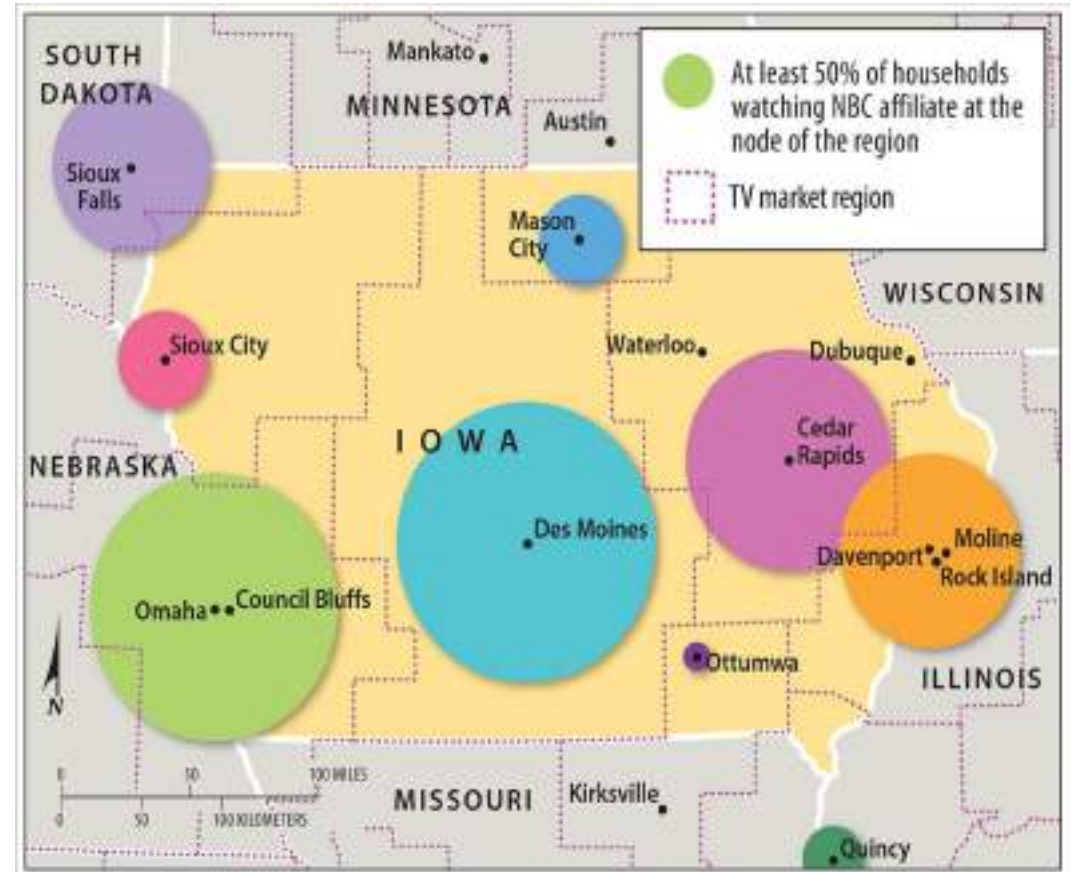


SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE

- **Three types of regions**

- **Functional (Nodal)**

- An area organized around a node or focal point
 - Characteristic dominates at a central focus (or node)
 - Example: TV stations

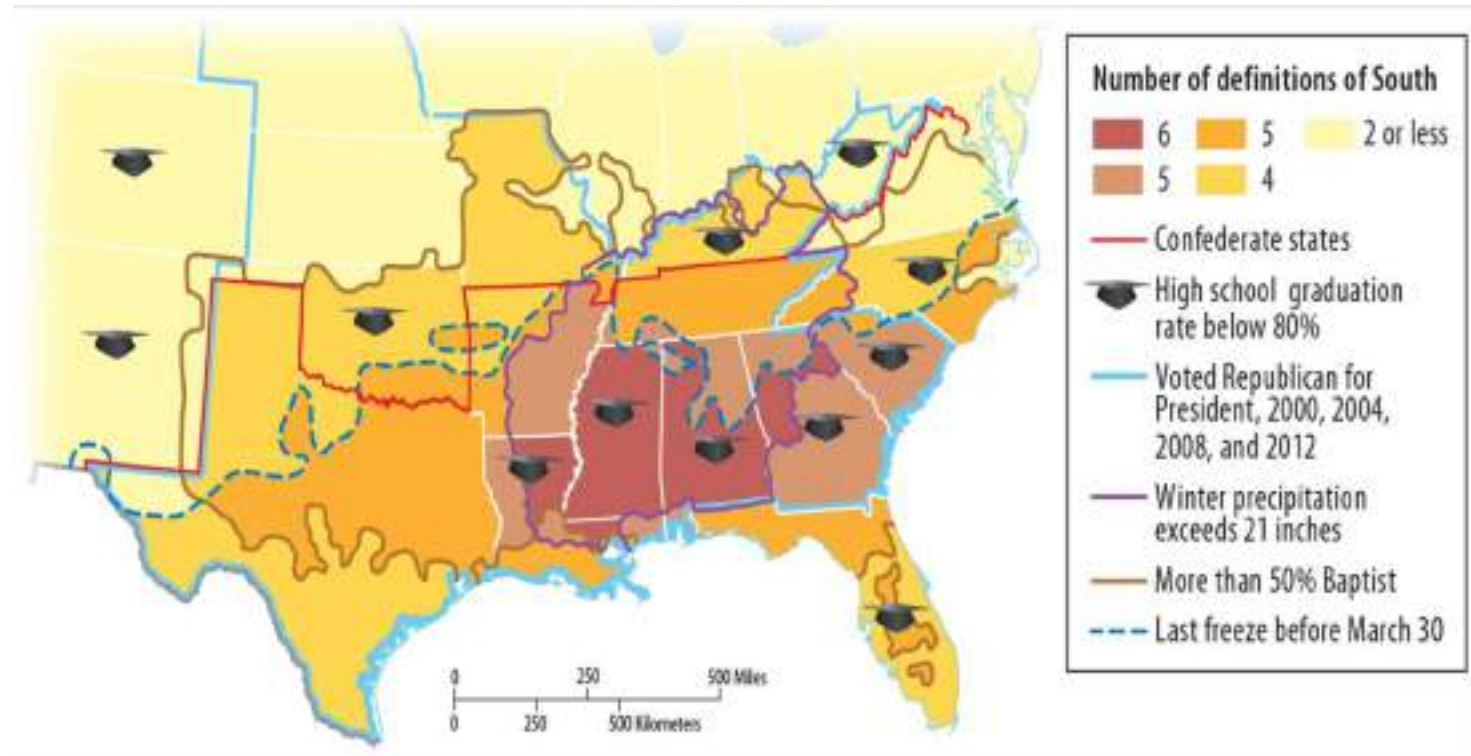


SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE

■ Three types of regions

■ Perceptual (vernacular)

- Based on how people think about a particular area
- Boundaries are often blurred
- Example: The “South”

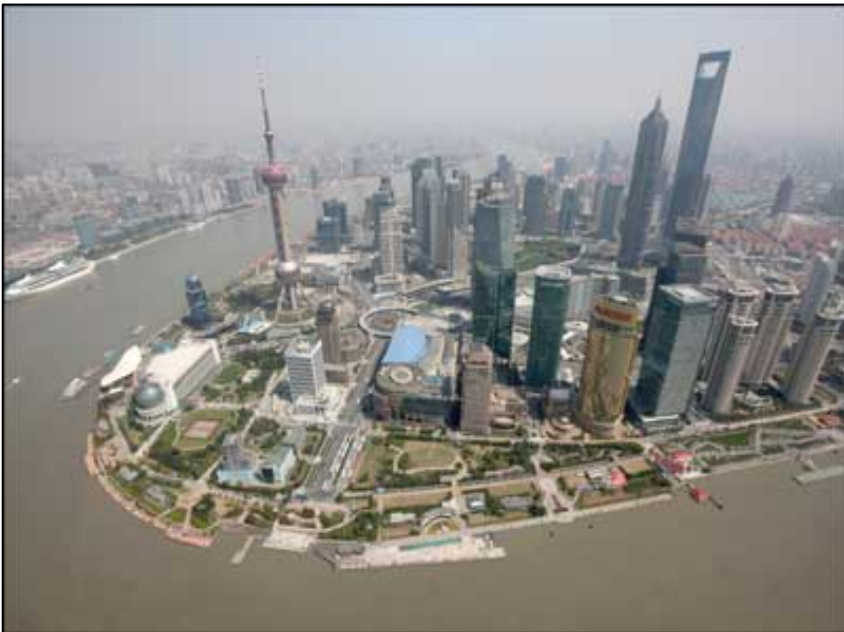


SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE

■ Cultural Landscapes

- The **cultural landscape** of a region is the visible reflection of its culture
- Examples
 - National Park (United States) – land set aside from development reflects the desire to preserve unique environments
 - Signage (Quebec) – Bilingual signs in French and English reflect the desire of French Canadians to retain their heritage
 - Schools (Pakistan) – Gender-segregated schools reflect attitudes toward male and female roles
 - Office buildings (Shanghai) – massive skyscrapers reflect economic power and a desire to have businesses in a central, well-known location

SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE



SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE

■ Ethnic Enclaves

- **Ethnic enclaves** are clusters of people of the same culture, but surrounded by people of a culture that is dominant in the region
- Sometimes reflect the desire to stay apart from the larger society and other times may reflect the dominant culture's desire to segregate them
- Often contain stores, religious institutions, signs and architecture that reflect the culture
- Sometime provide a buffer from discrimination

SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE

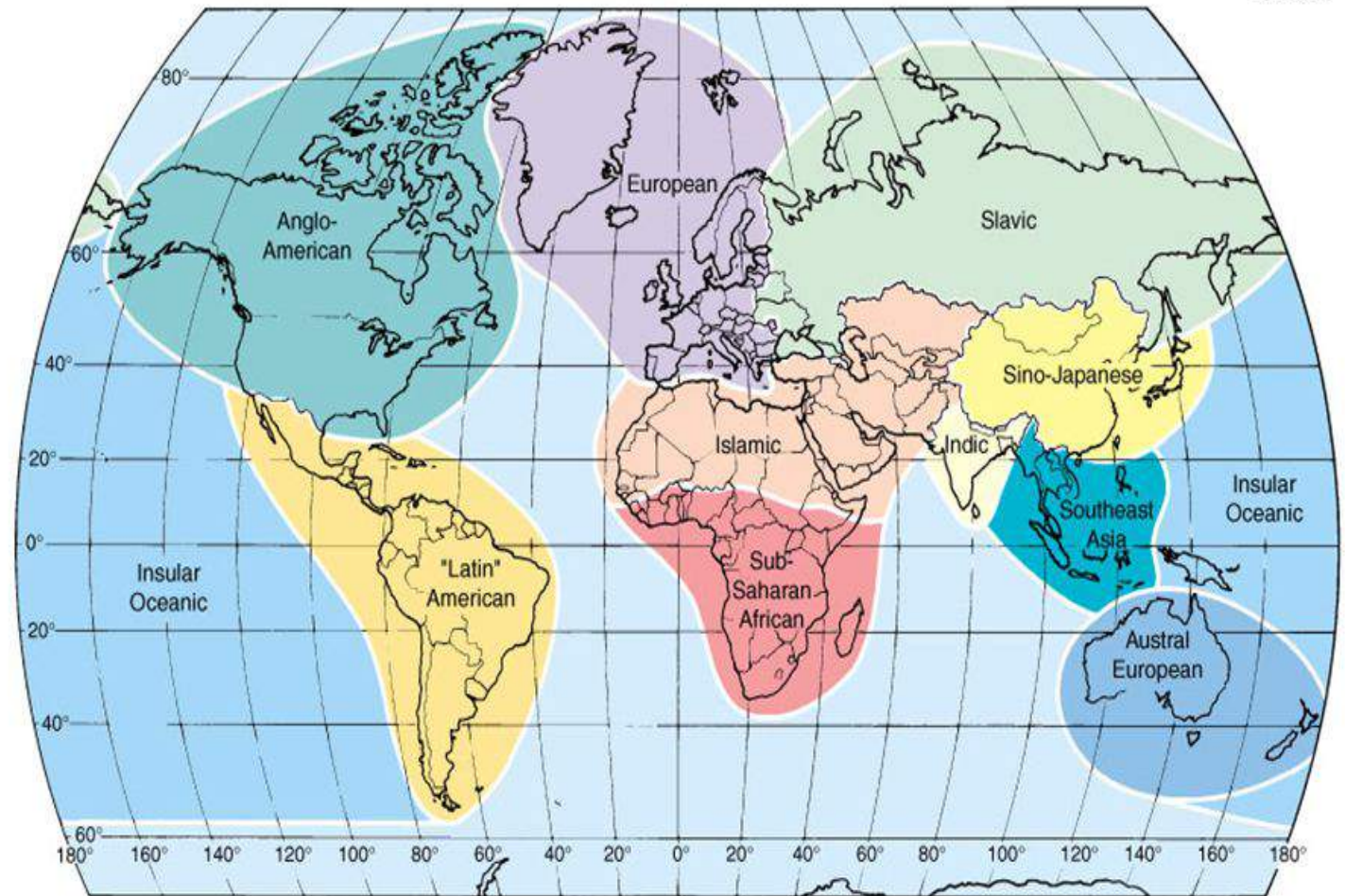
- **Borders and Barriers**
 - Sometimes identifying cultural borders can be hard
 - Often contain transition zones where cultures mix and exhibit traits of both
 - Example: El Paso, Texas (between United States and Mexico)



SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE

■ Realms

- **Cultural realms** are larger areas that include several regions
- Cultures within these realms have a few traits they all share, such as language families, religious traditions, food preferences, architecture, or a shared history



LEARNING OBJECTIVE (3.A.3)

- By the end of this section, you will *be able to* **explain how globalization is influencing cultural interactions and change.**
 - a. Communication technologies (e.g., the Internet) are reshaping and accelerating interactions among people and places and changing cultural practices (e.g., use of English, loss of indigenous languages).

GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURAL CHANGE

- As a result of the *Industrial Revolution*, improvements in transportation and communication have shortened the time required for movement, trade, or other forms of interaction between two places.
- **Space-time compression** has accelerated culture change around the world, including the spread of English
- **Example**
 - 1817: freight shipment from Cincinnati to New York City took 52 days
 - 1850: canals and railroads cut that time in half
 - 1852: took 7 days
 - Today: by airplane (a few hours) and digital information (seconds or less)

GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURAL CHANGE

■ Globalization and Popular Culture

- **Globalization** is the process of intensified interaction among people, governments, and companies of different countries around the globe
- **Popular culture** consists of cultural traits (clothing, music, movies, businesses) that spread quickly across over a large area and are adopted by various groups
 - Usually spreads via media, specifically internet
 - Examples: European soccer, Indian Bollywood movies, Japanese *anime*
 - Often promote uniformity in beliefs, values, and the cultural landscape across many cultures

LEARNING OBJECTIVE (3.B.5)

- By the end of this section, you will *be able to* **compare and contrast popular and folk culture and the geographic patterns associated with each.**
 - a. Folk culture origins are usually anonymous and rooted in tradition and are often found in rural or isolated indigenous communities
 - b. Popular culture origins are often urban, changeable, and influenced by media

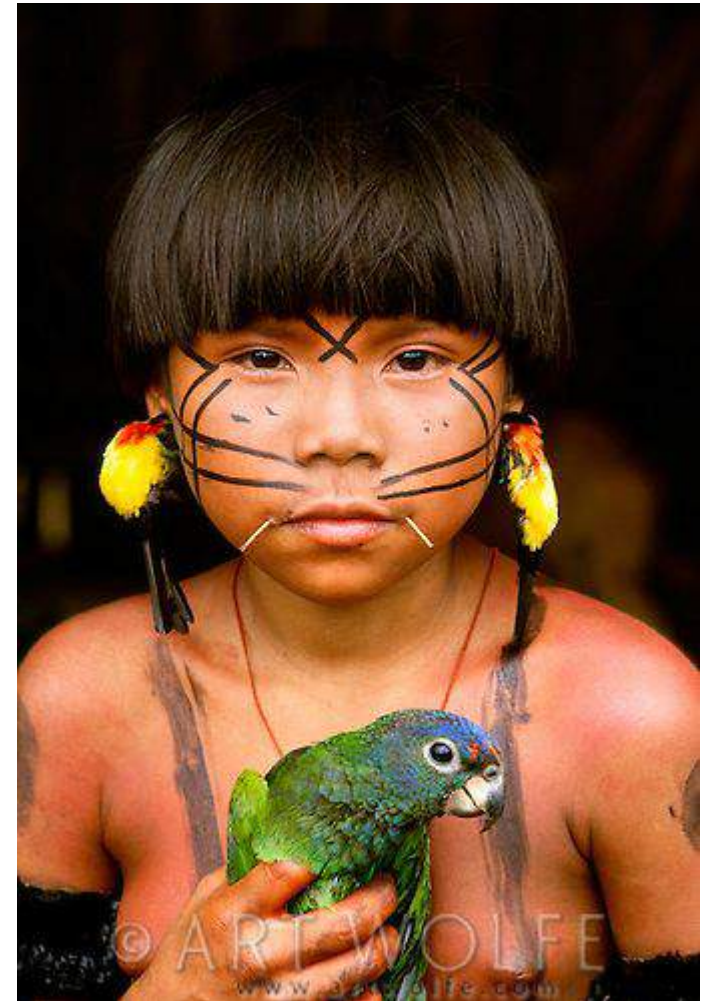
GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURAL CHANGE

- **Popular Culture vs. Folk Culture**
 - Pop culture emphasizes the **new** rather than preserving **tradition**
 - Those who follow a folk culture often resist this change by preserving traditional languages, religions, values, and foods
 - They may slow down the transition but rarely stop the traditional culture from changing, especially among the younger people



GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURAL CHANGE

- **Popular Culture vs. Folk Culture**
 - **Example: Brazil**
 - As the population expands to the interior of the rain forest, many indigenous people are being exposed to outside groups
 - Many young people continue to integrate into the larger Brazilian society which threatens the existence of their folk culture



GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURAL CHANGE

COMPARING FOLK AND POPULAR CULTURE		
Trait	Folk Culture	Popular Culture
Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rural and isolated location• Homogeneous and indigenous population• Most people speak an indigenous or ethnic local language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Urban and connected location• Diverse and multiethnic population• Many people speak a global language such as English or Arabic

GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURAL CHANGE

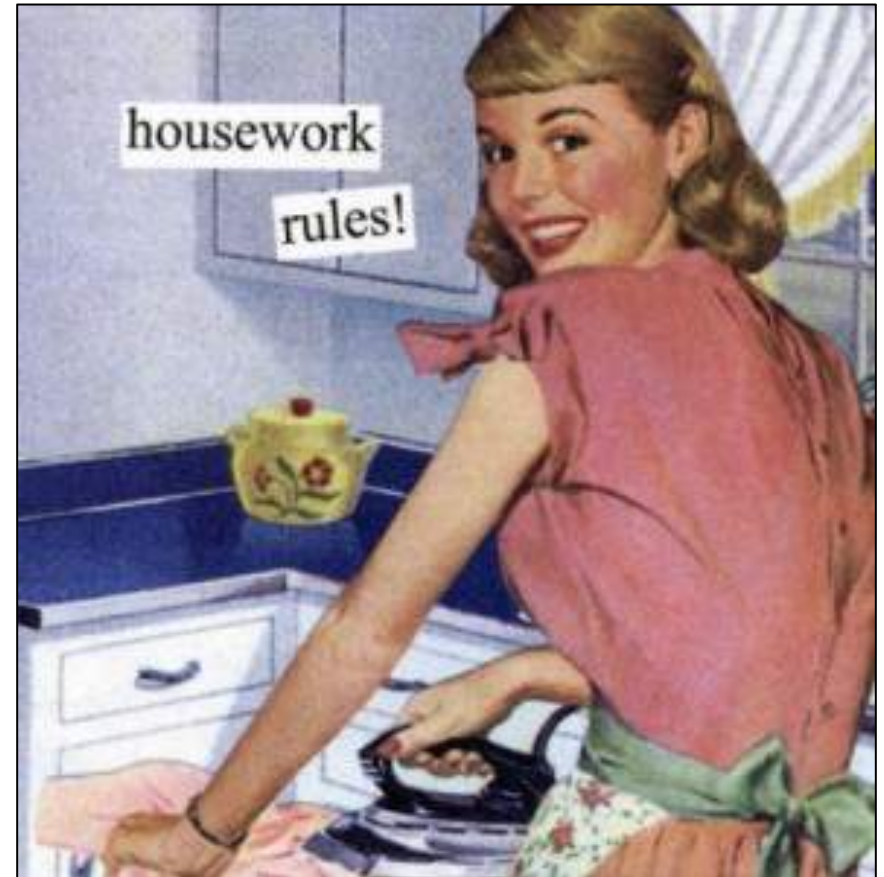
Social Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasis on community and conformity• Families live close to each other• Well-defined gender roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasis on individualism and making choices• Dispersed families• Weakly defined gender roles
Diffusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relatively slow and limited• Primarily through relocation• Oral traditions and stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relatively rapid and extensive• Often hierarchical• Social media and mass media

GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURAL CHANGE

Buildings and Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Materials produced locally, such as stone or grass• Built by community or owner• Similar style for community• Different between cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Materials produced in distant factories, such as steel or glass• Built by a business• Variety of architectural styles• Similar between cities
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Locally produced• Choices limited by tradition• Prepared by the family or community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Often imported• Wide diversity of choice• Purchased in restaurants
Spatial Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local and regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National and global

GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURAL CHANGE

- **Geography of Gender**
 - In folk cultures, people often have clearly defined gender-specific roles
 - Women – work in the household
 - Men - work outside the house to earn money and serve as religious and political leaders



GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURAL CHANGE

- **Geography of Gender**
 - In popular culture, gender-specific roles are diminishing
 - Women – have more access to economic resources, more opportunity to work outside the home, and more chances to serve as leaders



GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURAL CHANGE

■ Geography of Gender

- Throughout history, in many cultures, certain behaviors have been acceptable for only one gender, and often only in certain places
- Men have operated more freely than women in public spaces while certain private spaces have been reserved for women



GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURAL CHANGE

■ Resistance to Globalization

- The spreading of popular culture has created tension between *globalization* and *local diversity*.
- Some cultures with strict gender roles often resent the gender equality often seen in Hollywood movies
- Workers in the U.S. resist the transfer of their jobs to overseas locations
- Speakers of endangered languages resist the spread of English

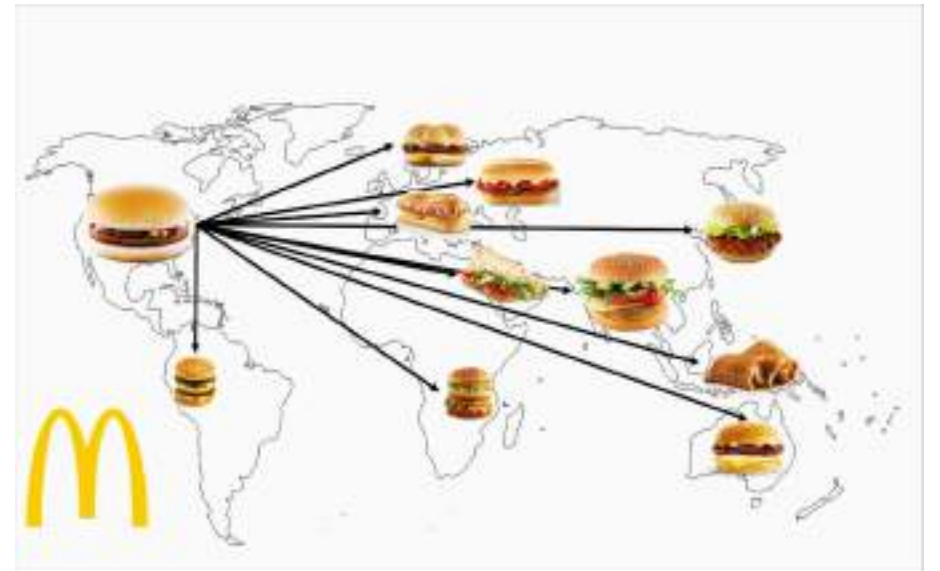


LEARNING OBJECTIVE (3.B.2.A)

- By the end of this section, you will *be able to* **explain the diffusion of culture and cultural traits through time and space.**
 - Types of diffusion include expansion and relocation

DIFFUSION OF CULTURE

- **Cultural hearths** are the original sources of culture yet many cultures have spread beyond their hearths
- The spreading of information, ideas, behaviors, and other aspects of culture over wider areas is known as **diffusion**
- The two major forms of cultural diffusion come through cultural exchanges by *migration* and by more indirect means



DIFFUSION OF CULTURE - RELOCATION

- **Relocation diffusion** is the spread of a cultural trait by people who migrate and carry their cultural traits with them.
 - Small scale example: pizza (brought to the U.S. by Italian immigrants in the late 1800s)
 - Large scale example: European culture (spread around the world starting in the 1500s)



DIFFUSION OF CULTURE - RELOCATION

- Sometimes, the areas where migrants settle continue a trait even after it has lost its influence in its hearth.
 - Example: Disco music evolved in the U.S. in the 1970s but remained popular in Egypt long after it faded in the U.S.
 - Example: Most people who pronounce English most like Shakespeare live, not in England, but in Appalachia.

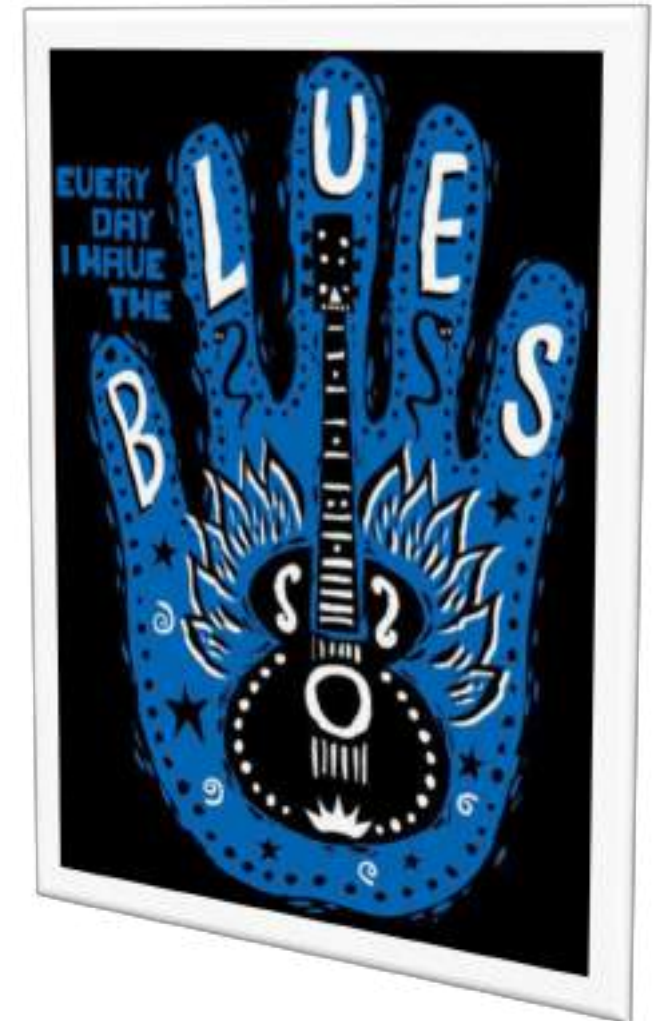


DIFFUSION OF CULTURE - EXPANSION

- **Expansion Diffusion** is the spread of cultural traits through direct or indirect exchange *without migration*.
 - Contagious
 - Hierarchical
 - Reverse hierarchical
 - Stimulus

DIFFUSION OF CULTURE - CONTAGIOUS

- **Contagious Diffusion** occurs when a cultural trait spreads continuously outward from its hearth through contact among people
- Example: Blues music
 - Hearth – southern United States
 - As musicians outside the hearth heard the music, they began to play it themselves
 - Slowly spread northward and eventually reached major cities such as St. Louis, Chicago, and New York



DIFFUSION OF CULTURE - HIERARCHICAL

- **Hierarchical Diffusion** is the spread of culture outward from the most interconnected places or from centers of wealth and importance.
- First from one important person, city, or powerful class to another important person, city, or social class.
- Eventually, the trait is shared with other people, smaller cities, social classes, or less developed countries.
- *Unlike contagious diffusion*, hierarchical diffusion may skip some places while moving on to others.
- Most popular culture (music, fashion, fads) follows this path.

DIFFUSION OF CULTURE

- Example: cell phone technology
- 1980s – expensive and mostly owned by wealthy people in large cities in more developed countries (MDCs)
- As cell phone networks grew and cell phones became more mass produced, they eventually spread to a wider market
- Today, cell phones have diffused throughout the world



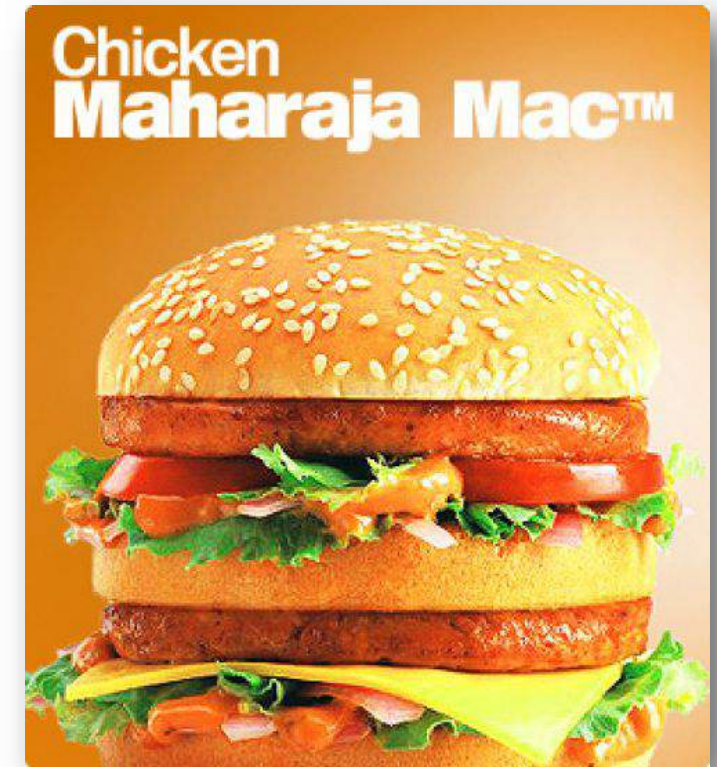
DIFFUSION OF CULTURE – REVERSE HIERARCHICAL

- **Reverse Hierarchical Diffusion** is the processes in which a trait diffuses from a lower class to a higher class.
- **Example: tattoos**
 - 1940-1960, tattoos were a symbol of low social status and were associated with three types of places: seaport towns (dockworkers and sailors), military bases, and prisons.
 - 1970s – the custom has diffused throughout many segments of society and geographic areas
- **Example: Walmart** – from rural Arkansas to nearly every U.S. city



DIFFUSION OF CULTURE - STIMULUS

- **Stimulus Diffusion** occurs when people in a culture adopt an underlying idea or process from another culture, but *modify* it because they reject one trait of it.
- Example: Hindus in India adopted the practice of eating fast food but rejected eating beef because it would violate their Hindu beliefs. They adapted by making vegetarian and other non-beef burgers.
- Example: Europeans adopted the use of lightweight, beautiful porcelain dishes from China but rejected the high cost of importing them. So when Germans found the right type of clay to make their own, they modified the process of obtaining porcelain by making it in Europe.



LEARNING OBJECTIVE (3.B.2.D)

- By the end of this section, you will *be able to* **explain the diffusion of culture and cultural traits through time and space.**
 - Acculturation, assimilation, and multiculturalism are shaped by the diffusion of culture.

CONTACT BETWEEN CULTURES

- Diffusion describes the ways cultures spread.
- As they spread, they come into contact with other cultures.
- This interaction is one of the driving forces in human history and it can have several types of results:
 - Acculturation
 - Assimilation
 - Multiculturalism
 - Nativism

CONTACT BETWEEN CULTURES

- **Acculturation** occurs when an ethnic or immigrant group moving to a new area *adopts* the values and practices of the larger group that has received them, while *still maintaining* major elements of their own culture.
- Example: In the 1880's, a family migrated from Denmark to a Danish enclave in Iowa. They gave most of their 10 children traditional Danish names, such as Inger and Niels and ate Danish foods. Within three generations, their descendants still ate Danish foods but had names common in U.S. culture, such as Susan, Dave, and Jim.



CONTACT BETWEEN CULTURES

- **Assimilation** happens when an ethnic group can no longer be distinguished from the receiving group.
- The ethnic groups become more affluent and leave their ethnic areas.
- However, complete assimilation is rare as at least one trait usually persists – most commonly religion
- Example: the grandchildren of immigrants from India might no longer speak Hindi or eat traditional Indian food daily, but they might still practice their Hindi faith. Often, third or fourth generations will display a resurgence of pride and organize festivals, learn the ethnic language, and revitalize ethnic neighborhoods.



CONTACT BETWEEN CULTURES

- **Multiculturalism** is the coexistence of several cultures in one society, with the ideal of all cultures being valued and worthy of study.
- It is believed that the interaction of cultures enriches the lives of all.
- Can bring conflicts, as people and groups with different values, beliefs, and customs often clash.
- Minority groups face prejudice and discrimination – Syrian refugees fleeing civil war in 2011 faced opposition from some Americans who feared that some refugees could be terrorists.



CONTACT BETWEEN CULTURES

- Some conflicts between two cultures become harsh
- **Nativist**, or anti-immigrant, attitudes may form among the cultural majority, sometimes bringing violence or government actions against the immigrant or minority group
- Can be toward one particular group or a general dislike of people from other countries (xenophobia)
- Examples: opposition in the U.S. to Roman Catholic immigrants in the 1800s and early 1900s.



GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES

■ **The Diffusion of Deadly Diseases**

■ 1918 Influenza Epidemic (contagious diffusion)

- Immediately after World War I and killed three times more people than the war itself
- Source of outbreak is unclear – Kansas, Great Britain, or France
- East coast American cities quickly became hubs for diffusion as soldiers returning home carried the virus or contracted it at the port. Then, traveling home by train, spread it throughout the country

■ Recent Epidemics

- Ebola in West Africa (2013)
- Zika virus in South America (2015)