



# Unit 3: Cultural Patterns & Processes



Class

Human Geography

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## 3.1 — Introduction to Culture

Culture is central to a society and its people.

- **Culture** → all of a group's learned behaviors, actions, beliefs, and objects
  - Seen in a group's actions, possessions, and influence on landscape (*visible force*)
  - Guides people through shared belief systems, customs, and traditions (*invisible force*)

Culture is transferred through **experiences**, not **genetics**.

- **Cultural Traits:** elements of a culture (*visible* and *invisible*)
  - **Cultural Complex:** a series of interrelated cultural traits
  - **Cultural Artifact:** representation of values, beliefs, behaviors, and traditions that make up a culture

## Origins of Culture

**Culture Hearth:** the area in which a unique culture or a specific trait develops

- **Diffusion:** spread of culture from a hearth to different places
- **Taboos:** behaviors heavily discouraged by a culture

## Traditional, Folk & Indigenous Cultures

Industrial Revolution → more connectivity → *cultural mixing*

- **Traditional Culture** → encompasses all three cultural designations (traditional, folk, indigenous)
  - A dynamic value system of learned elements, assumptions, beliefs, and customs that define the way of life of a particular ethnic group or community
- **Folk Culture** → beliefs and practices of small, homogeneous groups of people (often living in *rural areas*)
  - Relatively-isolated
  - Slow to change
- **Indigenous Culture** → members of an ethnic group reside in their ancestral lands and possess unique cultural traits

## Globalization and Popular Culture

Time-space compression → *globalization*

- **Globalization:** increased integration of the world economy since the 1970s

**Popular Culture** → when cultural traits spread over a large area and are adopted by various people

- Diffuses through globalization (become part of *global culture*)
  - **Global Culture:** worldwide adoption of particular elements of society
- **Cultural Landscape / Built Environment:** modification of the environment by a group (*visible* reflection of the group's values)

## Traditional vs. Popular Culture

**Cultural Norms:** the shared standards and patterns that guide the behavior of a group of people

- Uphold traditions and keep them from changing

Popular culture focuses on **WHAT IS NEW**, not what is traditional.

Traditional Culture → *horizontal diversity*

- Each traditional culture has its own customs and language
- People in each group are similar

Popular Culture → *vertical diversity*

- More differences within society
- Numerous multiethnic neighborhoods
- Popular cultures are similar globally

	TRADITIONAL CULTURE	POPULAR CULTURE
<b>SOCIETY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rural and isolated</li> <li>- Homogeneous and indigenous population</li> <li>- Most people speak an indigenous / ethnic local language</li> <li>- Horizontal diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Urban and connected</li> <li>- Diverse and multiethnic population</li> <li>- Speak global languages</li> <li>- Vertical diversity</li> </ul>
<b>SOCIAL STRUCTURE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community and conformity</li> <li>- Families live close to each other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individualism and making choices</li> <li>- Dispersed families</li> </ul>
<b>DIFFUSION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Slow and limited</li> <li>- Relocation</li> <li>- Oral traditions &amp; stories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rapid and extensive</li> <li>- Hierarchical</li> <li>- Social &amp; mass media</li> </ul>
<b>BUILDINGS AND HOUSING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local materials</li> <li>- Built by communities or owners</li> <li>- Similar styles</li> <li>- Differences between cultures</li> <li>- Traditional architecture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Materials produced in distant factories</li> <li>- Built by businesses</li> <li>- Variety of architectural styles</li> <li>- Similarities between cities</li> <li>- Postmodern / contemporary architecture</li> </ul>
<b>FOOD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Locally-produced</li> <li>- Choices limited by tradition</li> <li>- Prepared by family / community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Imported (<i>usually</i>)</li> <li>- Wide range of choice</li> <li>- Purchased in restaurants</li> </ul>
<b>SPATIAL FOCUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local and regional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National and global</li> </ul>

## Artifacts, Mentifacts & Sociofacts

**Artifacts** comprise *material culture*. (ex. ability to understand English)

- **Material Culture:** tangible things that can be experienced by the senses

**Mentifacts** comprise *nonmaterial culture*. (ex. belief in god)

- **Nonmaterial Culture:** intangible concepts without a physical presence
- Can be unique or shared

**Sociofacts:** the ways people organize their society and relate to one another

- May be unique or similar to other societies

**Families** are the foundation of most societies.

- What constitutes a family is different in different societies
  - **Nuclear Family:** family and children
  - **Extended Family:** several generations and other family members

## 3.2 — Cultural Landscapes

**Physical Landscape:** every feature of the natural environment visible to the eye

- Great variation across space

There are similarities in physical locations.

**Placelessness:** many modern cultural landscapes exhibit a great deal of homogeneity

- Similarities between places
- Not unique to a single area

## Cultural Landscapes

**Cultural Landscape:** boundaries of a region that reflect the human imprint on the environment

- Visible reflection of a culture
- Also called the *built environment*

**Identity:** how humans make sense of themselves

## Examples of Cultural Landscapes

ELEMENT	AREA	SIGNIFICANCE
<b>Protected Wilderness Area</b>	United States	- Land set aside from development - Preservation of unique environments
<b>Signage</b>	Quebec	- Language that reflects heritage of people
<b>Schools</b>	Pakistan	- Gender-segregated schools reflect attitude
<b>Office Buildings</b>	Shanghai	- Skyscrapers reflect economic power & desire

## The Built Environment

Environment → nature

**Built Environment:** the physical artifacts that humans have created and form part of the landscape

- Anything built by humans

## Sense of Place

**Sense of Place:** memories and emotions connected to a geographic location

- **Placemaking:** a community-driven process in which people collaborate to create a place where they can perform their daily functions
  - Adapts landscape to human needs

**Third Place:** a communal space separate from home (the first place) or work (the second place) for one to develop a sense of self

## Styles of Architecture

**Traditional Architecture** → a local culture's history, beliefs, values, and community adaptations to the environment

- Typically uses locally-available materials
- People and community are the main focus

**Postmodern Architecture** → high-rise structures made from glass and steel

- Away from boxy, concrete and brick structures

**Contemporary Architecture** → extension of postmodern architecture

- More dramatic

## Ethnic Enclaves

**Ethnicity:** membership within a group of people who have common experiences and share similar characteristics (ex. ancestry, language, customs, history)

- **Ethnic Enclaves:** clusters of people with the same culture
  - Show people's desire to remain apart from larger society

## The Geography of Gender

Traditional gender-specific roles have been challenged.

- Women have more opportunities

**Gendered Landscapes:** places designated for a specific gender (ex. men-only parking lots)

- Also called *gendered spaces*



**Gender Identity:** one's innermost concept of self (what gender one perceives themselves to be)

- Can be different from the gender at birth

The *LGBTQIA+ group* supports gender identity inclusivity.

- **Safe Spaces:** spaces of acceptance for people (ex. safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ people)

**Gentrification:** renovations and improvements conforming to middle-class preferences

- Driven up housing demand and living cost
- Makes it more difficult for LGBTQIA+ populations to live there

## Cultural Regions

**Cultural Regions** → based on characteristics such as religion, language, and ethnicity

- *Usually* have a transition zone (unless regions are clearly defined)

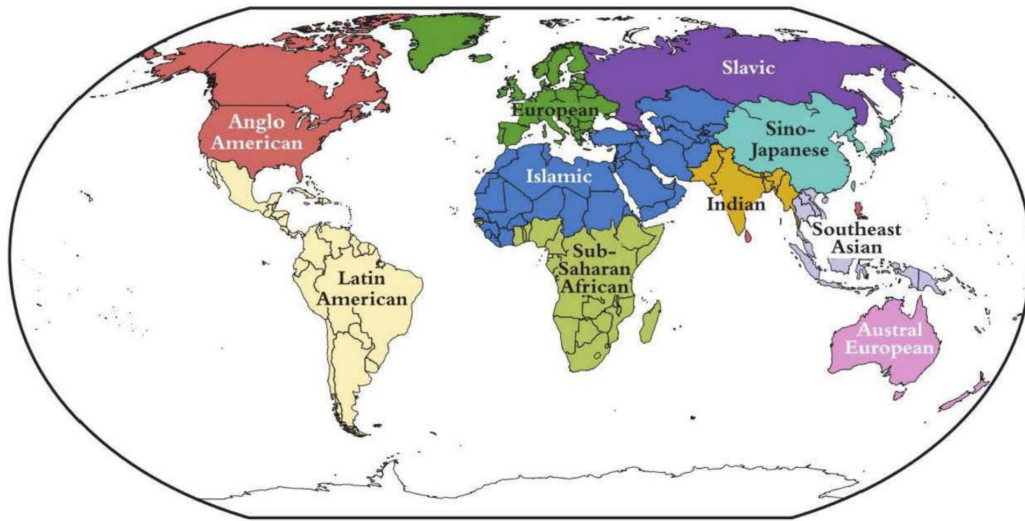
**Transition Zone:** mix of two cultures where people exhibit traits of both

## Culture Realms

**Culture Realms** → include several regions

- Traits shared by all regions included

## TEN MAJOR CULTURE REALMS



## Religion and the Landscape

Religion influences the organization and use of space (natural features and built environment).

### Sacred Spaces

**Sacred Places:** specific places or natural features that have religious significance

- Also called *sacred sites*

### Religious Cultural Landscapes

**Christianity** → churches with a tall steeple & cross

- Dome-shaped roofs resembling Roman architecture

**Hinduism** → elaborate exteriors with depictions of deities

- Many sites are located near rivers or streams

**Buddhism** → stupas and pagodas

- *Five Aspects of Nature:* earth, water, fire, air, space

**Judaism** → synagogues / temples

- **Diaspora** → one group of people is dispersed to various locations

**Islam** → mosques

**Shinto** → torii (gateway)

## Language

**Language:** the carrier of human thoughts and cultural identities

- **Toponyms:** names of places (define what is unique about a place)

**Dialects:** variations of a standard language specific to a general area

## How Religion & Ethnicity Shape Spaces

**Charter Group:** the first group to establish cultural and religious customs in a space

### Ethnic Landscape

Ethnic groups that arrive after a charter group can make their distinctive spaces.

- Urban Areas → **Ethnic Neighborhoods**
- Rural Areas → **Ethnic Islands**
  - Housing and agriculture that reflects their heritage

**Ethnic Neighborhoods:** cultural landscapes within communities of people outside their areas of origin

Discrimination may limit housing choices for certain groups of people.

### New Cultural Influences

**Sequent Occupancy** → ethnic groups move in and out of neighborhoods and create new cultural imprints on the landscape

- New residents can be received positively or negatively

As certain traditions begin to erode over time, some people can respond with **neolocalism**

- **Neolocalism:** the process of re-embracing the uniqueness and authenticity of a place

## 3.3 — Cultural Patterns

- Related sets of cultural traits and complexes that create similar behaviors across space

### Religious Patterns & Distribution

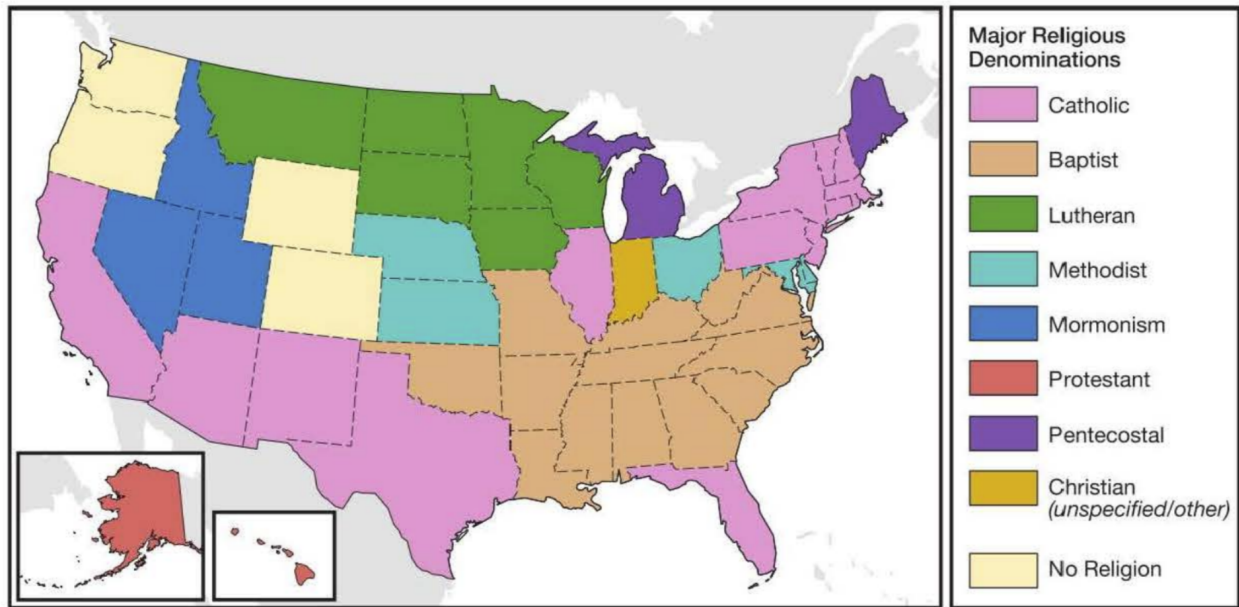
**Culture Hearth** → where a religion or ethnicity began

- Track its movement to predict future direction & spread

The spread of religious settlements contribute to the Earth's cultural landscape.

### Regional Patterns in U.S. Religions

- Congregationalists remain in New England
- Baptists and Methodists are most common in the Southeast
- Lutherans live mostly in the Midwest
- Most Mormons live near Utah
- Roman Catholics are most common in the Northeast and throughout the Southwest
- Jews, Muslims, and Hindus live mostly in urban areas (traditionally home to immigrants)



## Religion, Ethnicity & Nationality

**Religion:** a system of spiritual beliefs that help form cultural perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and values

- Motivates behind cultural behaviors

**Ethnicity:** membership in a group of people who share characteristics

**Nationality** → based on people's connection to a particular country

## Centripetal & Centrifugal Forces

**Centripetal Forces:** forces that unify a group of people or a region (ex. common language or religion)

**Centrifugal Forces:** forces that divide a group of people or region (ex. ethnic conflict, differing religions)

- Harmful towards national cohesion

## Religion's Impact on Laws & Customs

Most religious traditions predate modern government.

- Source of inspiration for governmental laws and punishments

(Ex. **blue laws** - laws that restrict certain activities on Sunday, **Sharia** - the legal framework of a country derived from Islamic edicts taken from the Qur'an)

**Pilgrimage:** a journey to a holy place for spiritual reasons

Religion can impact the distribution of its *adherents*.

- **Adherents:** people who are loyal to a belief, religion, or organization

## Subdivisions of Religions

*Religion → Branch → Denomination → Sect*

- **Branch:** a large fundamental division within a religion
- **Denomination:** a separate organization that unites multiple local congregations
- **Sect:** a relatively-small group that has separated from an established denomination

## Religious Fundamentalism

**Fundamentalism:** an attempt to follow a literal interpretation of a religious faith

- Degree of adherence varies with religions

The strength of *fundamentalism* diminishes with distance from its religious hearth.

**Theocracies:** countries whose governments are run by religious leaders through the use of religious laws (ex. Iran)

## Cultural Ethnocentrism & Relativism

**Multiethnic:** possessing a significant number of people who do not identify with the national majority as their own ethnic group

**Ethnocentrism:** belief that one's culture is superior and more important than others

- Make generalizations and stereotypes about other cultures
- Leads to centrifugal forces within a place

**Cultural Relativism:** concept that peoples' beliefs should be understood from others' perspectives

- Allows for environmental adaptation
- Brings forth centripetal forces

**Cultural Appropriation:** action of adopting traits, icons, or elements from other cultures

- Fosters communication
- Concerning if those traits are interpreted incorrectly

**Acculturation:** people within one culture adopt traits of another while retaining distinctiveness

**Assimilation:** one culture adopts another's customs and fully joins that culture

- **Syncretism:** innovation combining different cultural features
- **Multiculturalism** → many diverse people living in one area (share cultural features)

**Collectivist Cultures** → people are expected to conform to collective responsibility within the family and be obedient to elders

## 3.4 — Types of Diffusion

### Types of Diffusion

**Diffusion:** the spread of information, ideas, behaviors and other aspects of culture from their hearts to wider areas

- Occurs through exchanged between people (travel or sharing ideas)

### Relocation Diffusion

**Relocation Diffusion:** the spread of culture or cultural traits by people who migrate and carry their cultural traits with them

- Ex. spread of pizza from Italy to the United States

The new area where the trait is relocated may continue popularity even if lost in the hearth.

### Expansion Diffusion

**Expansion Diffusion:** the spread of cultural traits outward through exchange without migration

- **Contagious Diffusion:** the spread of cultural traits outward from the hearth through contact among people (ex. spread of blues music)
- **Hierarchical Diffusion:** the spread of cultural traits outward from more interconnected places or centers of wealth or influence
  - May skip some areas while moving to others (ex. diffusion of cell phones - originally costly but more spread out)
  - **Reverse-Hierarchical Diffusion:** the spread of cultural traits from a group of lower status to a group of higher status (ex. tattoos)
- **Stimulus Diffusion:** the spread of an underlying idea from a culture hearth and its adoption into more cultures but some specific traits are adopted or rejected



- Ex. fast food - idea diffuses, trait of meat is not always accepted in certain cultures

## 3.5 — Historical Causes of Diffusion

### Influences of Colonialism, Imperialism, and Trade

- Spread religion and culture

**Imperialism:** a variety of ways of influencing another country or group of people by direct conquest, economic control, or cultural dominance

- **Colonialism:** a specific type of *imperialism* in which people move into and settle on the land of another country

European imperialism and colonialism have strongly influenced the diffusion of language and religion.

- Ex. **Animism:** belief that non-living objects had spirits (common practice for indigenous people, but Europeans forced subjects to adopt the Christian faith)

### Diffusion of Languages

- Spread through relocation and expansion diffusion
- Political control can lead to hierarchical diffusion of a language
  - Financial benefit by connecting to the networks of power

**Major Globalized Languages of the World:** English, Spanish, French, Arabic

- Mostly through colonization
- Arabic → main language of Islam

Some language have never diffused widely.

- China has never established colonies → Chinese speakers are concentrated in China

MOST SPOKEN LANGUAGES IN THE WORLD IN ORDER OF TOTAL SPEAKERS			
Language	Language Hearth	Total Population of Hearth 2019	Total Speakers Worldwide 2019 (native and second language)
English	England	55 million	Over 1.5 billion
Mandarin (Chinese)	China	1.4 billion	Over 1.2 billion
Hindi	India	1.3 billion	Over 615 million
Spanish	Spain	47 million	Over 570 million
French	France	67 million	Over 300 million
Arabic	Arabian Peninsula	78 million	Over 270 million

**Native Speakers:** speakers of a language learned from birth (highest for *Mandarin*)

## English as a *Lingua Franca*

- Wide spatial distribution

**English** is the most widely-used language in the world.

- Concentrated in lands colonized by Great Britain (ex. USA, Canada, South Africa, India, Australia)

**Lingua Franca:** a common language used by people who do not share the same native language

- English is commonly used as a *lingua franca*
  - Explained by globalization
    - English is the common language for international business
    - Scientists, pilots, and journalists use English globally
    - English is used across the Internet
    - English is spoken in movies and TV shows

## Creating New Words and Languages

**Slang:** words used informally by a segment of the population

- New words begin as slang and spread globally (*globalization*)

## Pidgin Languages

**Pidgin Language:** a simplified mixture of two languages (ex. the pidgin language in Papua New Guinea)

- When speakers of two different languages have extensive contact (often because of trade)
- Fewer grammatical rules
- Smaller vocabulary
- Not the native language of either group

## Creole Languages

Two or more separate languages can mix and develop a formal structure and vocabulary (no longer pidgin).

- **Creole Language:** a combination of two languages with a formal structure and vocabulary (ex. Afrikaans)

## Swahili in East Africa

- Mix between Arabic and Bantu
- Spoken by many African peoples

Many people believe that making Swahili the common language of Africa would **promote unity** and **overcome the legacy of colonialism**.

# 3.6 — Contemporary Causes of Diffusion

Cultural ideas are created in social groups.

- **Social Constructs:** ideas, concepts, or perceptions that haven't been created before and accepted by people in a societal group (not made by nature)
  - Influence culture through urbanization and globalization

# Communication Technologies

- Allow for globalization to create popular culture

The rate of diffusion has increased dramatically due to technological changes.

- Social media influencers depict hierarchical diffusion (spreading information to followers)

## Time-Space Convergence

**Time-Space Convergence:** the greater interconnection between places that results from improvements in transportation

- Reduces cultural distinctness
- Less time to travel ("shrinking" the world)

## Cultural Convergence and Divergence

Relative distance between places shrinks → Interactions among different cultures increases

- **Cultural Convergence** → cultures become similar to each other and share cultural traits
  - Homogenization (becoming more alike) → can be concerning for certain groups of people
- **Cultural Divergence** → culture changes over time as distance, time, physical separation, and modern technology create change
  - Isolation of a culture (physically or socially) can limit diffusion
    - Longer isolation → Longer it takes to diffuse