

CULTURAL DIFFUSION



FOR PART II HONS.(1+1+1 SYSTEM) GEOGRAPHY

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Defining Diffusion

- **Cultural Diffusion:** The spread of cultural traits across space and time

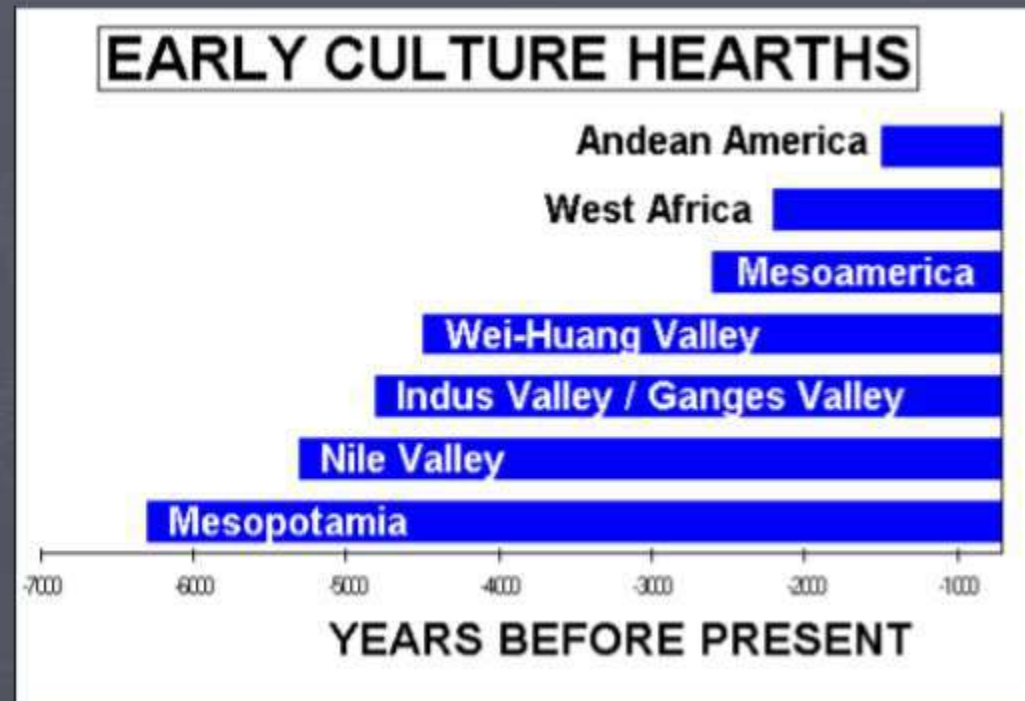


Cultural Diffusion

- A process in which one cultural trait, material object, idea, or behavior pattern is spread from one society to another.
- Definition: the process by which an idea, invention, or way of behaving is borrowed from a foreign source and adopted by the borrowing people
- Can be intentional or unintentional
- Can have both positive and negative consequences

Cultural Hearths

- **Cultural Hearth** – Points of origins for cultural traits
 - Typically large population centers

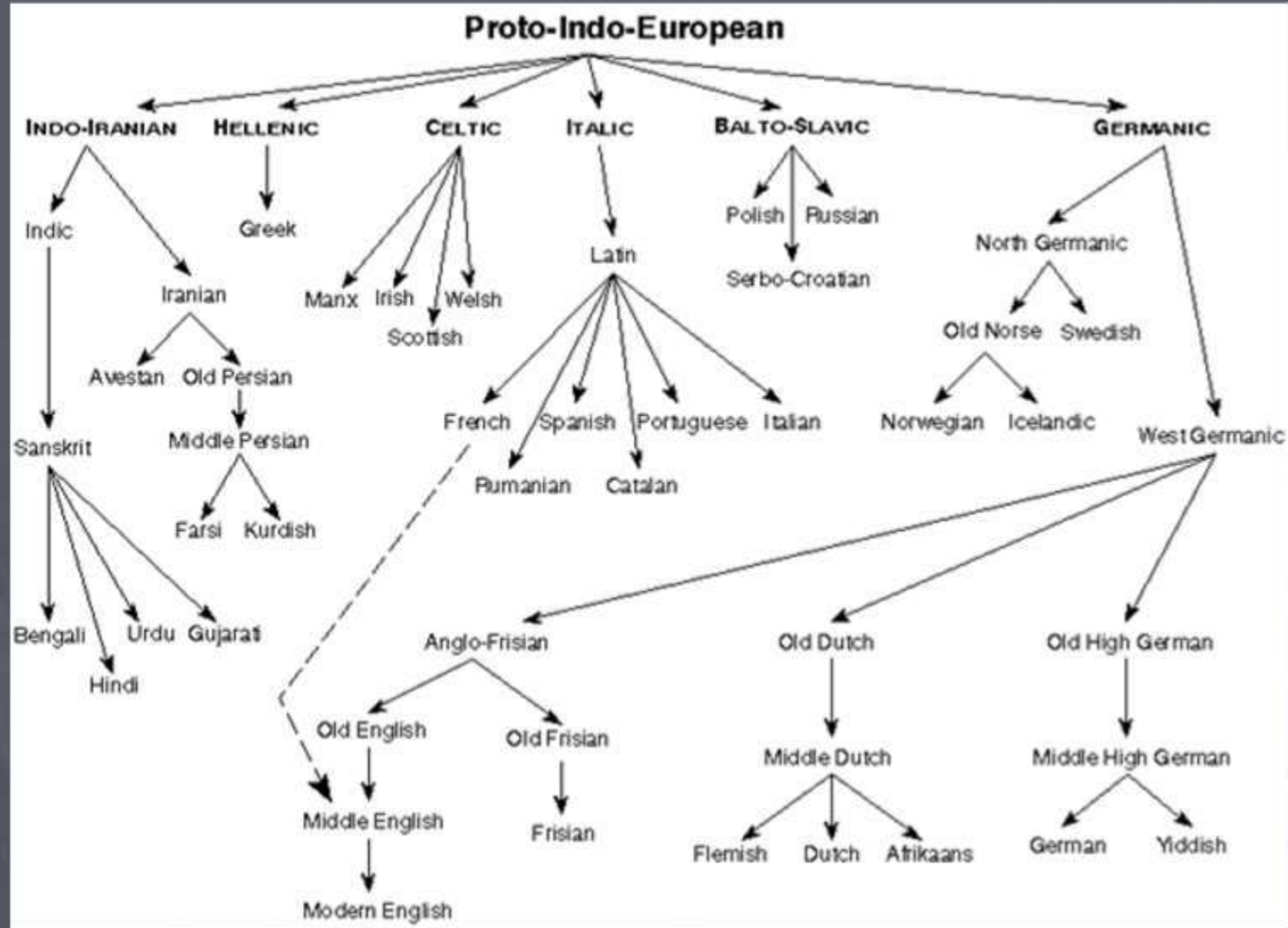


Types of Cultural Diffusion

- **Stimulus Diffusion** – The spread of a cultural trait that changes and adapts to the culture that adopts it, leaving the essential core idea intact
 - Sped up through the growth of transnational corporations
 - Ex. Pizza Hut

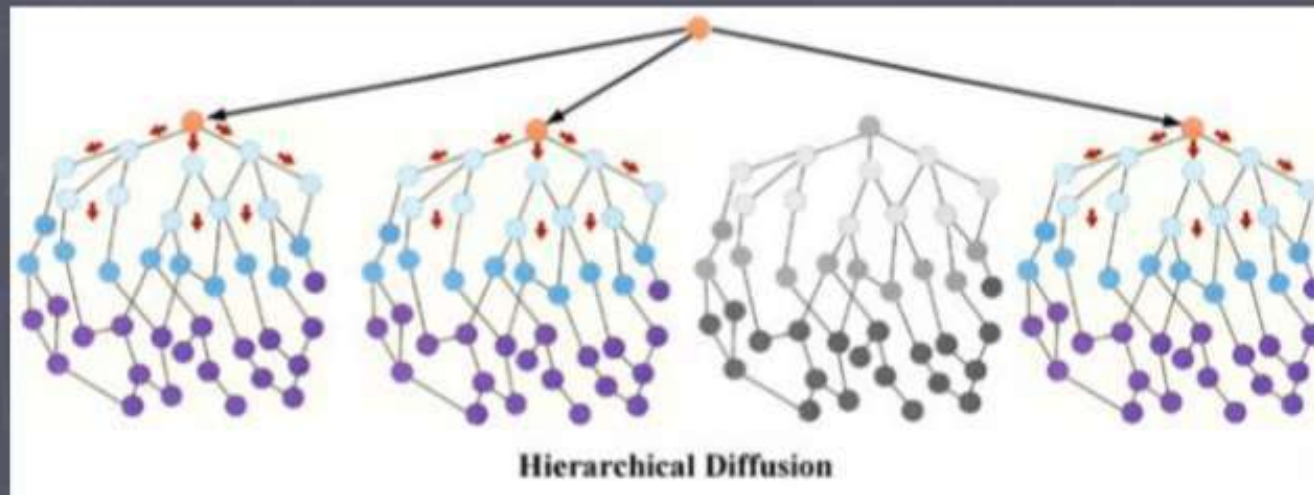


Stimulus Diffusion in Language



Types of Cultural Diffusion

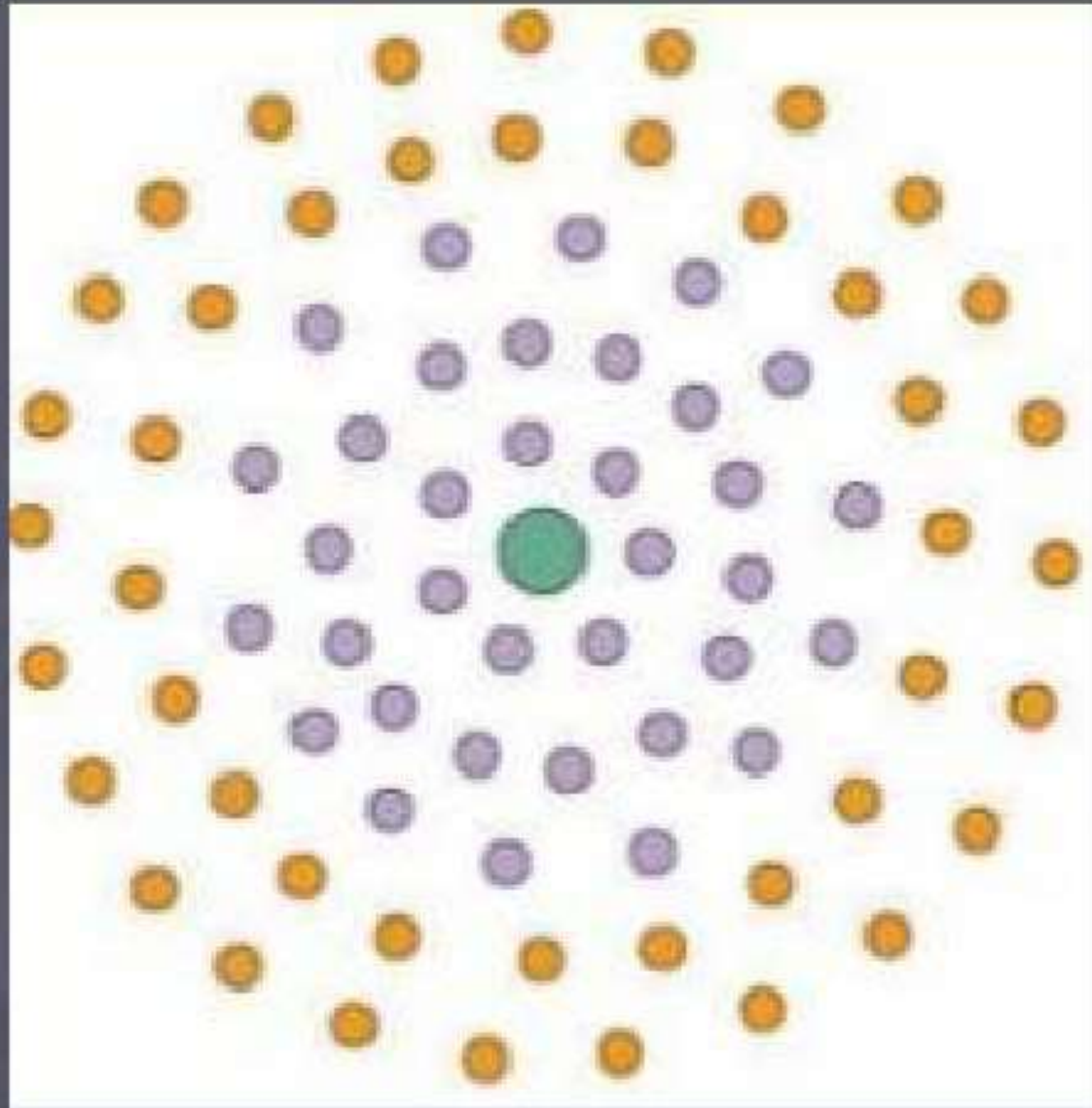
- **Hierarchical Diffusion** – The beginning of a cultural trait that starts with a minority and spreads to the majority
 - Normally beginning with people in positions of political or cultural power






Types of Cultural Diffusion

- **Contagious Diffusion** – The rapid diffusion of cultural traits because of mass media
 - Sped up because of internet and television usage





LEGEND

-  Hearth
-  Early diffusion
-  Later diffusion

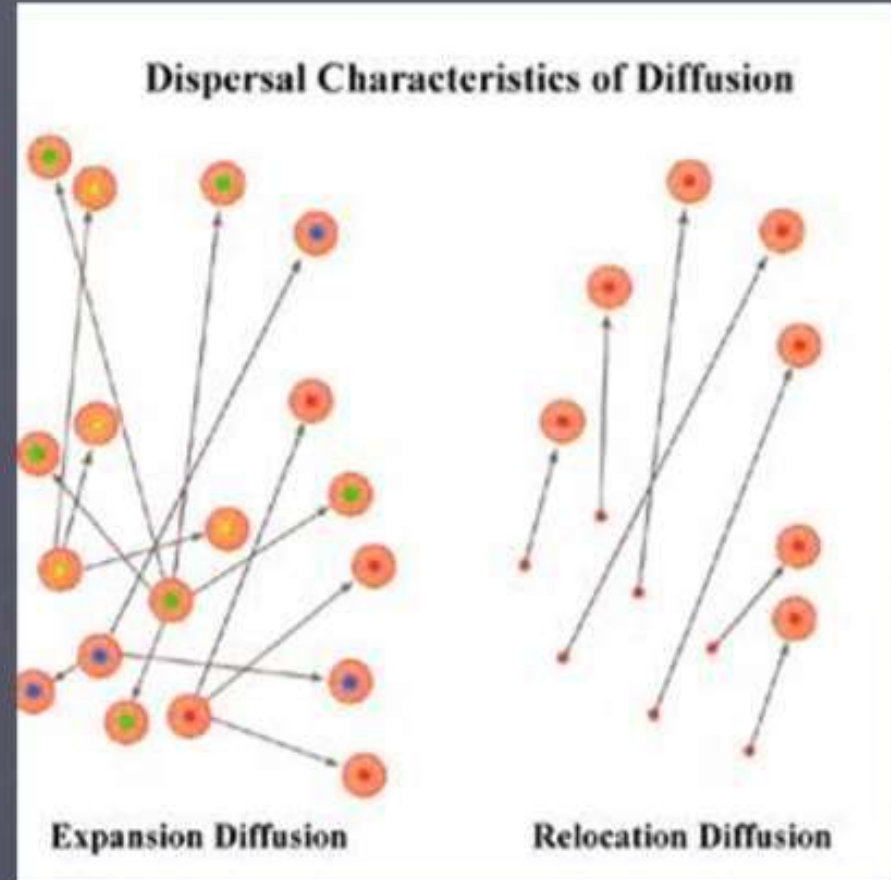
Types of Diffusion

- **Relocation Diffusion** – The spread of culture because of the physical movement of people from one place to another
 - Often accentuated through chain migration



Relocation vs. Expansion Diffusion

- In expansion diffusion the cultural trait expands in the area you are in
- In Relocation diffusion the trait evacuates and moves from one place to another



Selective Borrowing

- Do not take ideas and inventions indiscriminately
- Cultures are very choosy in what features are adopted
- Only borrow the most concrete and tangible elements and shape it to fit their larger culture



Everyday Items

- Where did it come from?
 - Toothbrush – China 1498
 - Buttons – Greece 770 BC
 - Lock and Key – Mesopotamia 2000 BC



The Diffusion Process

- How quickly do others in a culture acquire, learn about, and/or come to use or consume a new idea, behavior, or invention?
- Three Factors
 - The extent the borrowing causes people to change their ways of thinking and behaving
 - The existence of a media structure that lets people learn about it.
 - The social status of the early adopters

Adaptive Culture

- Reference to the norms, values, and beliefs of the borrowing culture play in adjusting to a new product or innovation.
- Specifically adjusting to the associated changes in society
- What norms, values, and beliefs allowed Americans to adopt things like the automobile, cell phone, and computers so easily?

Cultural Lag

- Refers to situations where the adaptive culture fails to adjust in necessary ways to a material innovation and its disruptive consequences
- Laws banning cell phones, forced increased gas mileage, regulating disposal of obsolete computers

Methods of Cultural Diffusion

- 1. Direct Diffusion- direct contact between two cultures i.e trade, intermarriage, warfare.
- 2. Forced Diffusion/Expansion Diffusion- one culture defeats another and forces its beliefs and customs on the conquered group.
- 3. Indirect Diffusion - culture spread through middleman or another culture.

What are some examples of periods of cultural diffusion?

The Gunpowder Dynasties

- A series of Muslim dynasties in India, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe that conquered large areas and created cultures that combined Muslim identities with local beliefs



The Renaissance

- A time of “rebirth” and explosion of creativity that both drew from classical Greek, Roman, and Arabic culture and spread throughout Europe.



The Reformation

- A time of religious change that led to the development of many new sects of Christianity and the spread of new religious ideas throughout the western world



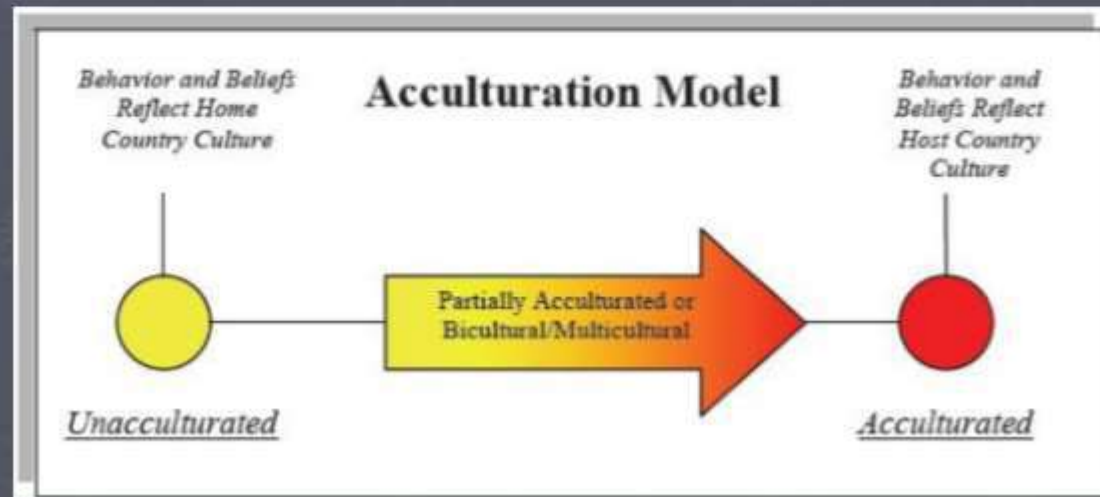
Exploration

- A period of discovery where European monarchs funded explorers missions to India, China, and the “new world”. This period led to the spread of various foods, diseases, and cultural items throughout the world.



Impacts of Diffusion

- **Acculturation** – After migration to a new area an individual slowly assimilates to the new culture
- **Assimilation** – The dying out of old culture and its replacement by new cultural traits



Impacts of Diffusion

- **Cultural Convergence** - The interaction of cultures as they come in contact with each other, influencing and being influenced by each other
- **Cultural Divergence** - The tendency for culture groups to disassociate from others in order to protect or preserve their culture from influence or change

Impacts of Diffusion

- **Cultural Integration** - A form of cultural exchange in which one group assumes the beliefs, practices and rituals of another group without sacrificing the characteristics of its own culture.



Impacts of Diffusion

- Cultural Clashes – Conflicts that arise from contact with people of different cultural values



Impacts of Diffusion

- **Cultural Integration** – When cultural traits of a new culture are included and incorporated into another culture creating a cultural hybrid

