



3.4 Types of Diffusion

Objective and Essential Learning

3.4 Define the types of diffusion.

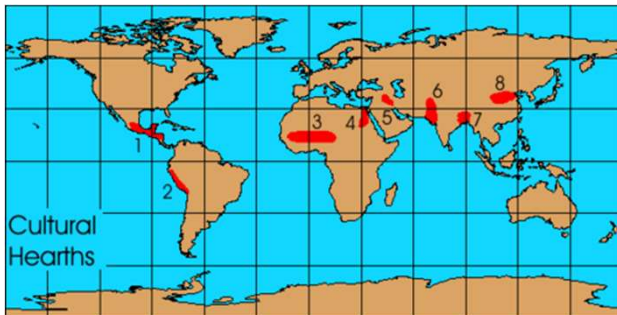
- Relocation and expansion - including contagious, hierarchical, and stimulus expansion - are types of diffusion.



Cultural Hearths

A **cultural hearth** is the geographic origin of a culture or cultural trait. Traits first diffuse from the cultural hearth.

Ancient Cultural Hearths

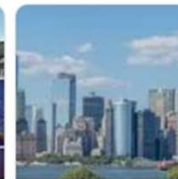


1. Mesoamerica
2. Andean America
3. West Africa
4. Nile River Valley
5. Mesopotamia
6. Indus River Valley
7. Ganges River Valley
8. Wei/Huang Rivers

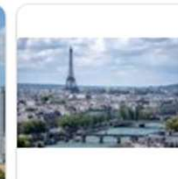
Modern Cultural Hearths



London
Pop. 9.0 mil...



New York
Pop. 8.6 mil...



Paris
Pop. 2.1 mil...



Shanghai
Pop. 26 mill...

These are examples, not a total list.

Types of Diffusion

Diffusion: The movement or spread of cultural traits, knowledge, ideas, trends from hearths to other geographic areas. Two major categories:

RELOCATION



EXPANSION



Relocation Diffusion

The spread of a cultural trait through the migration of people.

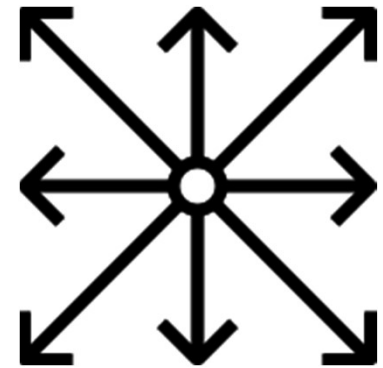
- As people migrate, they take their cultural traits with them.
- Example: The migration of Europeans to the Americas in the 13th & 14th centuries resulted in the spread of Christianity and European languages such as Spanish and English.



Expansion Diffusion

The spread of a cultural trait through the **interaction** between people. There are three subtypes of expansion diffusion:

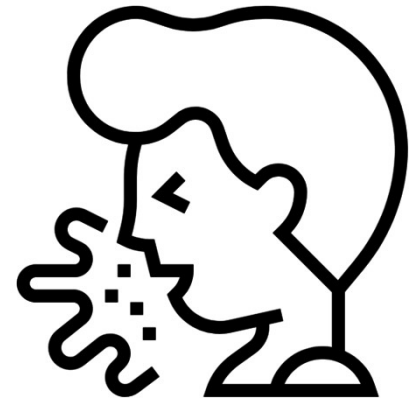
- Contagious Diffusion
- Hierarchical Diffusion (and Reverse)
- Stimulus Diffusion



Contagious Diffusion

A cultural trait spreads rapidly, widely, and continuously from its hearth through close **contact** between people.

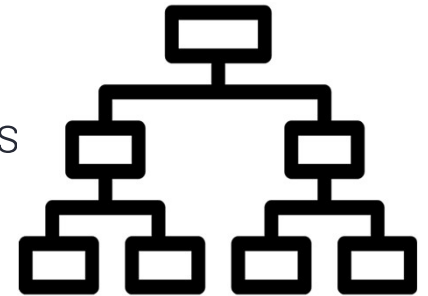
- Time-space compression and globalization have accelerated contagious diffusion via the internet and smartphones.
- Example: Viral videos



Hierarchical Diffusion

The spread of cultural traits from the **most interconnected**, powerful, wealthy people/organizations down to others.

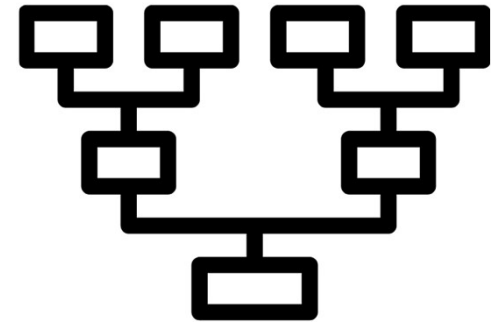
- May be restrictive due to cost or access.
- Examples:
 - Cell phones were first only owned by wealthy elites in large cities, as time progressed they became mass-produced and spread to a wider market.
 - Popular culture trends, music, fashion.



Reverse Hierarchical Diffusion

The spread of cultural traits from the least interconnected, wealthy, or powerful people/organizations outwards.

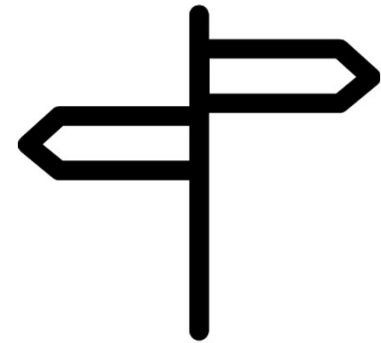
- Examples:
 - Hip Hop music in the United States started in city centers with large amounts of poverty and discrimination against African Americans. Then diffused to the broader public.
 - Walmart was initially started in a small town in Arkansas and now has locations internationally



Stimulus Diffusion

As cultural traits spread they are **altered/modified** due to a cultural barrier, taboo, or difference.

- Examples:
 - Followers of the Hindu religion are clustered in India and believe that cows are sacred and holy animals. It is a TABOO to eat beef. As McDonald's diffused to India, it was adapted to offer veggie burgers.



Types of Barriers

- **DISTANCE DECAY** – the effects of distance on interaction, generally the greater the distance the less interaction
- **CULTURAL BARRIERS** – some practices, ideas, innovations are not acceptable/adoptable in a particular culture – e.g. pork, alcohol, contraceptives...
- **PHYSICAL BARRIERS** – physical barriers on the surface may prohibit/inhibit adoption

https://youtu.be/4va_DtpAMHo

