Geographic Concepts & Themes
HUMAN GEOGRAPHY
CONCEPTS/THEMES
Regions

- Generalizing spatial information to show patterns of spatial similarities
- How can we group features to display significant elements of uniformity?
  - **Formal Regions** “area inhabited by people who have one or more traits in common”
Regions

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  • **Functional Regions** are grouped based on political, social, or economic organization
Functional Region
Regions

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  • Functional Regions are grouped based on political, social, or economic organization

  • **Vernacular Regions** exist only through the perception of its inhabitants and widespread acceptance
Mobility

• Diffusion
  • Relocation: groups move from one location to another
    • Somalia Refugees moving to Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, & Yemen
    • Mormons trek across the US, New York > Utah
Long-term migration for work, political asylum, family
Short-term migration for long-distance business, tourism
Mobility

- Hierarchical: ideas move from 'important' persons to another or from one urban center to another
  - Pop Culture – music, fashion, food
- Contagious: spread of ideas in a wavelike fashion, similar to a contagious disease
  - Western medicine (working with hierarchical)
- Stimulus: adopting an underlying concept, but not a specific trait
  - Religion
Each circle or dot is one person or place.

- Nonknower
- "Very important" person or place
- Knower
- "Important" person or place
- "Person or place low in social-economic hierarchy"

Path of diffusion

**RELOCATION DIFFUSION**

**HIERARCHICAL EXPANSION DIFFUSION**

**CONTAGIOUS EXPANSION DIFFUSION**

Figure 1.9
*The Human Mosaic, Eleventh Edition*
© 2010 W.H. Freeman and Company
Mobility

• Expansion: ideas or beliefs become more popular and accepted as they move throughout a population
  • Internet, Facebook, Twitter
Shifts in dominant ideologies – religion, political
Barriers to Diffusion

- Time-Distance: acceptance of an idea or behavior will decrease the further it gets away from its origin
- Absorbing: a barrier that has the power to totally block an idea or behavior from spreading
- Permeable: a barrier that attempts to block an idea or behavior, but has some ‘holes’ that allows it to seep through
Globalization

• An increasing level of interconnectedness among people and places throughout the world
• Flows of ideas, goods, and people
• Increasingly complex societies where global trends may interfere with local experiences
• Uneven distribution of resources
Spread of Ideas, technologies, crime and disease

“Flu in Kids Higher Than Thought”
“US Swine Flu nears 4,000”

“Solar Gadgets When You’re on the Go.”
Laptop Case that recharges the computer inside

“Police Open Up to Social Media”
Flows of goods and services
Spread of images and messages through the media

“Obama seeks Afghan Closure”

“Liberians Face Increasing Flood Threat”

“Beijing Concerns Over Latest China Mine Blast”
Uncontrollable negatives – drugs, arms, people trafficking
Response to Globalization

- Political nationalism – preserve uniqueness
- Separatist groups
- Customs and practices that preserve local identities
- Religious differences
- Resistance to visible economic penetration
Globalization Discussion

Cultures are coming into contact with one another more regularly because people are on the move and running into others and their ideas, beliefs, technology, material goods, etc.

Do these interactions make us a “global society?”
Concepts in Human/Cultural Geography

• Nature-Culture
  • Cultural Ecology
  • Environmental determinism
• Possibilism
  • Environmental Perception
• Human as Modifiers
Concepts in Human/Cultural Geography

• Cultural Ecology
  • Discipline of study that originated in the 1950’s
  • A way to incorporate the role of the physical environment on culture
  • Holistic view to consider the interaction between humans & environment as a system with a large diversity of factors
Environmental Controls

• Environmental Determinism:
  • The belief that the physical environment by itself shapes humans, their culture, beliefs, actions, etc.
  • Theory that has been dismissed as invalid & limiting; physical environment alone cannot explain the world's variations

• Possibilism:
  • People are the dynamic force behind cultural developments – each culture uses natural resources according to their beliefs, needs, technology
Concepts in Human/Cultural Geography

• Environmental Perception
  • How do humans perceive the environment?
  • How do we react to natural disasters?
    • Hurricane Katrina Response
Concepts in Human/Cultural Geography

• Humans as Modifiers
  • Mining, logging, irrigation, agriculture, urban centers, dams, hatcheries, zoos, etc.
  • Do humans have the ‘right’ to modify the Earth and its ecosystems?
  • How do human modifications affect Climate Change?
Concepts in Human/Cultural Geography

• Cultural landscapes: all landscapes that have been built by humans
  • Symbolic landscapes
  • Settlement Forms
Concepts in Human/Cultural Geography

• Symbolic landscapes
  • Representative of a culture
  • What do these landscapes tell us about culture?