Cultural Diffusion

Its process and patterns
Defining Diffusion

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

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

![Early Culture Hearths Diagram]

- Andean America
- West Africa
- Mesoamerica
- Wei-Huang Valley
- Indus Valley / Ganges Valley
- Nile Valley
- Mesopotamia

YEARS BEFORE PRESENT

-7000  -6000  -5000  -4000  -3000  -2000  -1000
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
Contagious 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.
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
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
Case Study: The Growth of Wal-Mart

The Growth of Walmart

Year: 1962
Openings: 1
Total Stores: 1