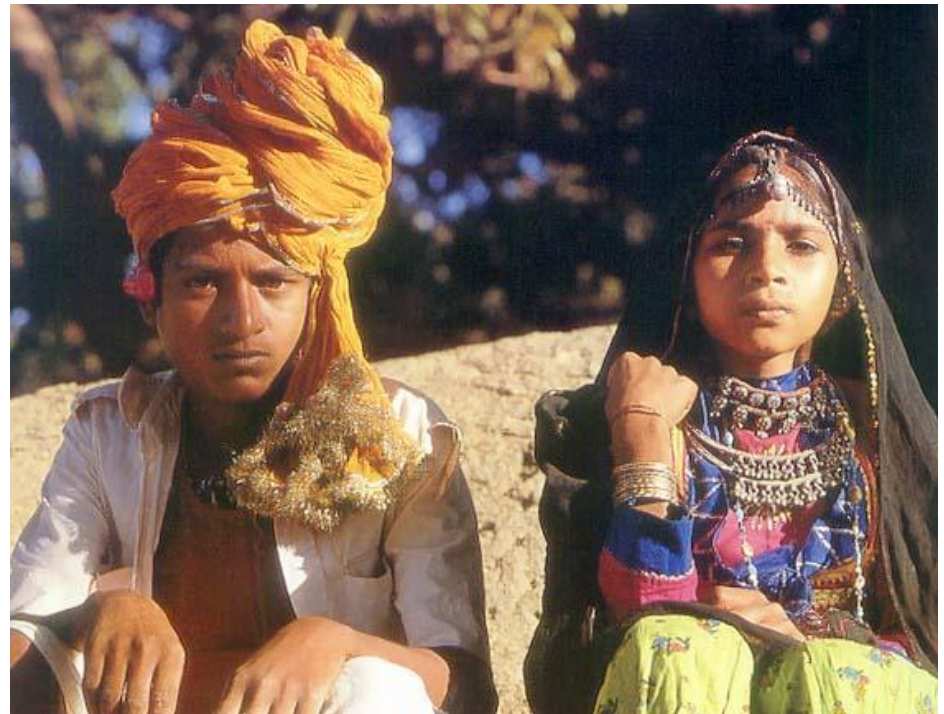


# *Chapter 4*

## **Folk and Popular Culture**

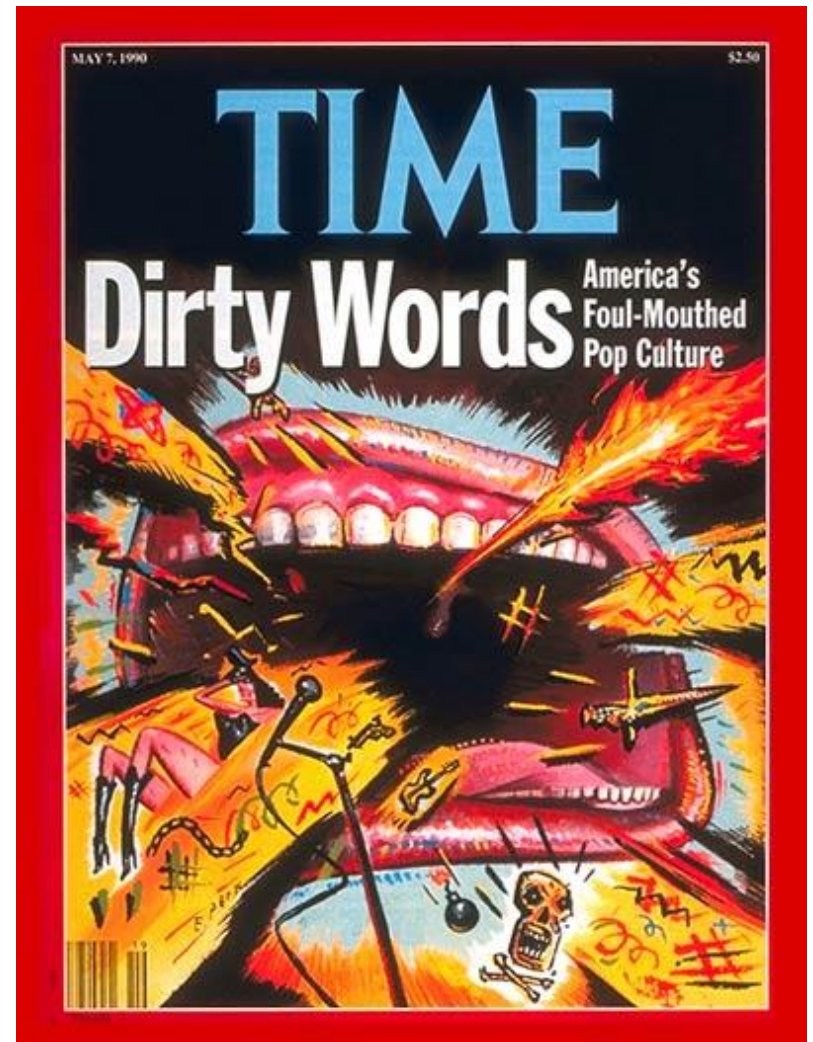
# Culture and Customs

- People living in other locations often have extremely different social customs.
- Geographers ask why such differences exist and how social customs are related to the cultural landscape.



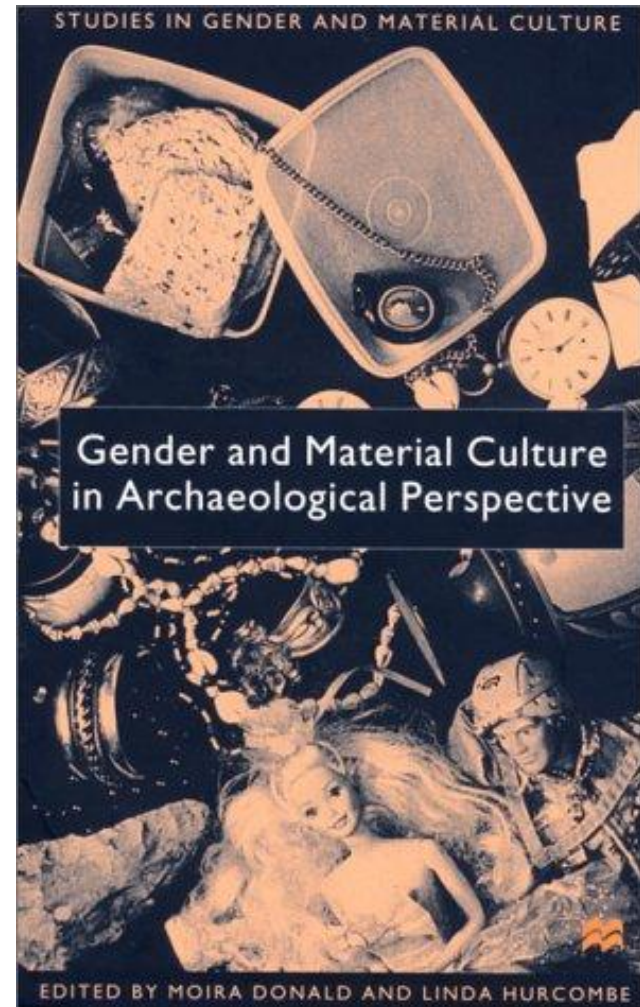
# Folk and Popular Culture

- The Key Issues are:
  1. Where do folk and popular cultures originate and diffuse?
  2. Why is folk culture clustered?
  3. Why is popular culture widely distributed?
  4. Why does globalization of popular culture cause problems?



# Material Culture

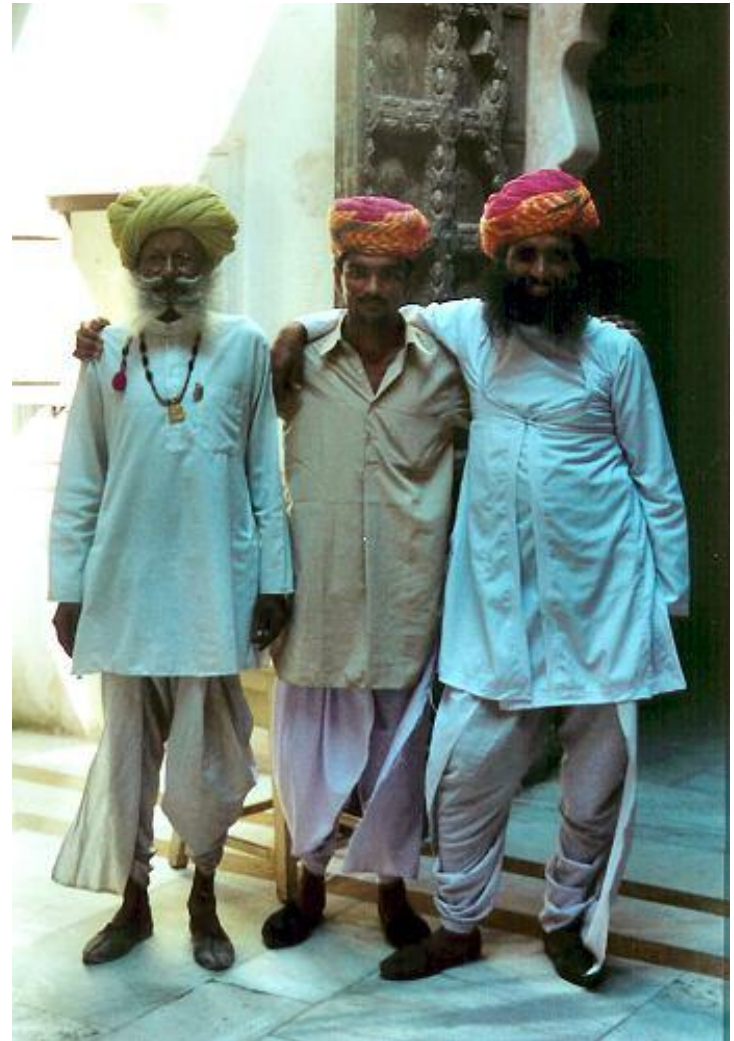
- Material artifacts of culture are the visible objects that a group possesses and leaves behind for the future.
- Here we look at two facets of material culture.
  - 1) Survival activities.
  - 2) Leisure activities
    - The arts
    - Recreation.





# Material Culture Defined

- Culture can be distinguished from habit and custom.
  - A habit is a repetitive act that a particular individual performs.
  - A custom is a repetitive act of a group.
- A collection of social customs produces a group's material culture.



# Folk vs. Popular Culture

- Folk culture is traditionally practiced primarily by small, homogeneous groups living in isolated rural areas.
- Popular culture is found in large, heterogeneous societies.



# Folk vs. Popular Culture Continued

- Landscapes dominated by a collection of folk customs change relatively little over time.
- In contrast, popular culture is based on rapid simultaneous global connections.
- Thus, folk culture is more likely to vary from place to place at a given time, whereas popular culture is more likely to vary from time to time at a given place.



# Effects of Popular Culture

- In Earth's globalization, popular culture is becoming more dominant, threatening the survival of unique folk cultures.
- The disappearance of local folk customs reduces local diversity in the world and the intellectual stimulation that arises from differences in background.
- The dominance of popular culture can also threaten the quality of the environment.





# Issue 1: Origins and Diffusion of Folk and Popular Cultures

- Origin of folk and popular cultures
  - Origin of folk music
  - Origin of popular music
- Diffusion of folk and popular cultures
  - The Amish: Relocation diffusion of folk culture
  - Sports: Hierarchical diffusion of popular culture

# Origin of Folk and Popular Cultures

- A social custom originates at a hearth, a center of innovation.
- Folk customs often have anonymous hearths.
- They may also have multiple hearths.
- Popular culture is most often a product of the economically more developed countries.
- Industrial technology permits the uniform reproduction of objects in large quantities.

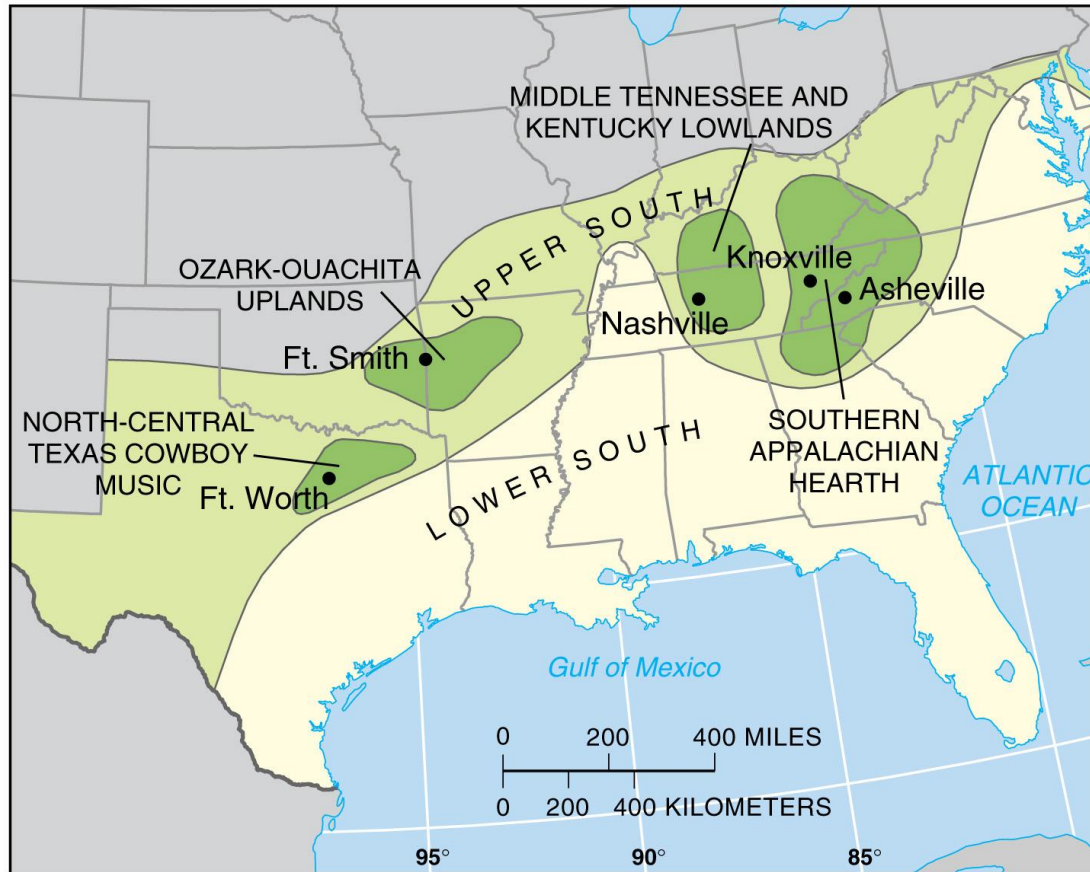


# Folk Music

- Music exemplifies the differences in the origins of folk and popular culture.
- Folk songs tell a story or convey information about daily activities such as farming, life-cycle events (birth, death, and marriage), or mysterious events such as storms and earthquakes.



# Origin of Country Music



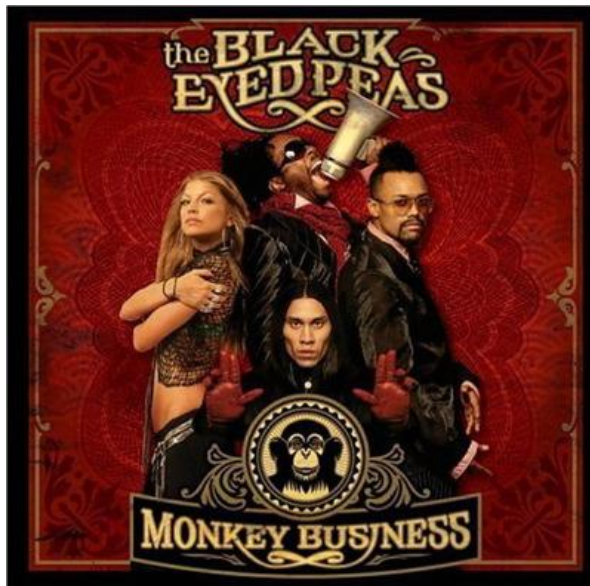
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Fig. 4-1: U.S. country music has four main hearths, or regions of origin: southern Appalachia, central Tennessee and Kentucky, the Ozark-Ouachita uplands, and north-central Texas.

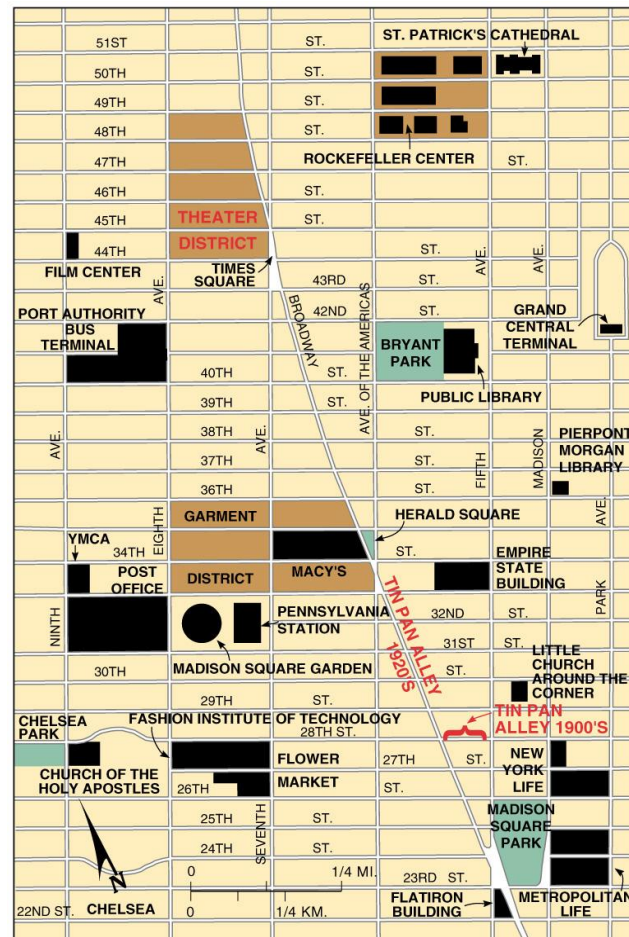


# Origin of Popular Music

- In contrast to folk music, popular music is written by specific individuals for the purpose of being sold to a large number of people.



# Tin Pan Alley and Popular Music



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Fig. 4-2: Writers and publishers of popular music were clustered in Tin Pan Alley in New York City in the early twentieth century. The area later moved north from 28th Street to Times Square.

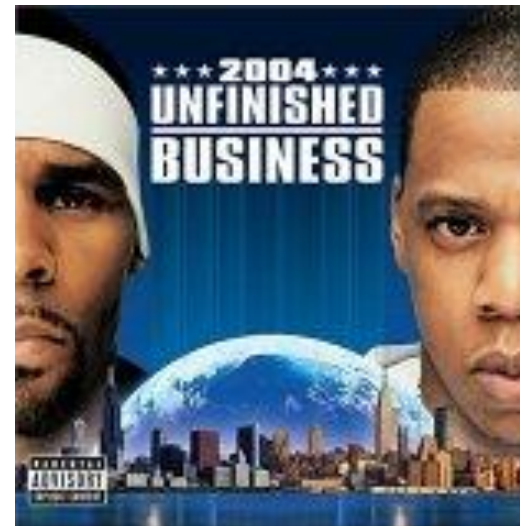
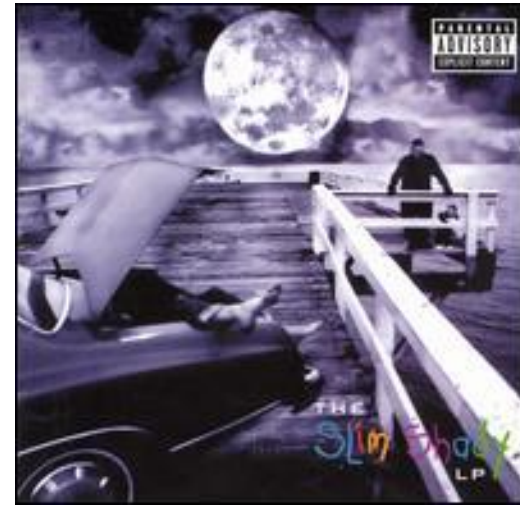
# Diffusion of American Music

- The diffusion of American popular music worldwide began in earnest during World War II, when the Armed Forces Radio Network broadcast music to American soldiers.
- English became the international language for popular music.



# Hip Hop

- Hip hop is a more recent form of popular music that also originated in New York.
- Lyrics make local references and represent a distinctive hometown scene.
- At the same time, hip hop has diffused rapidly around the world through instruments of globalization.





# A Mental Map of Hip Hop

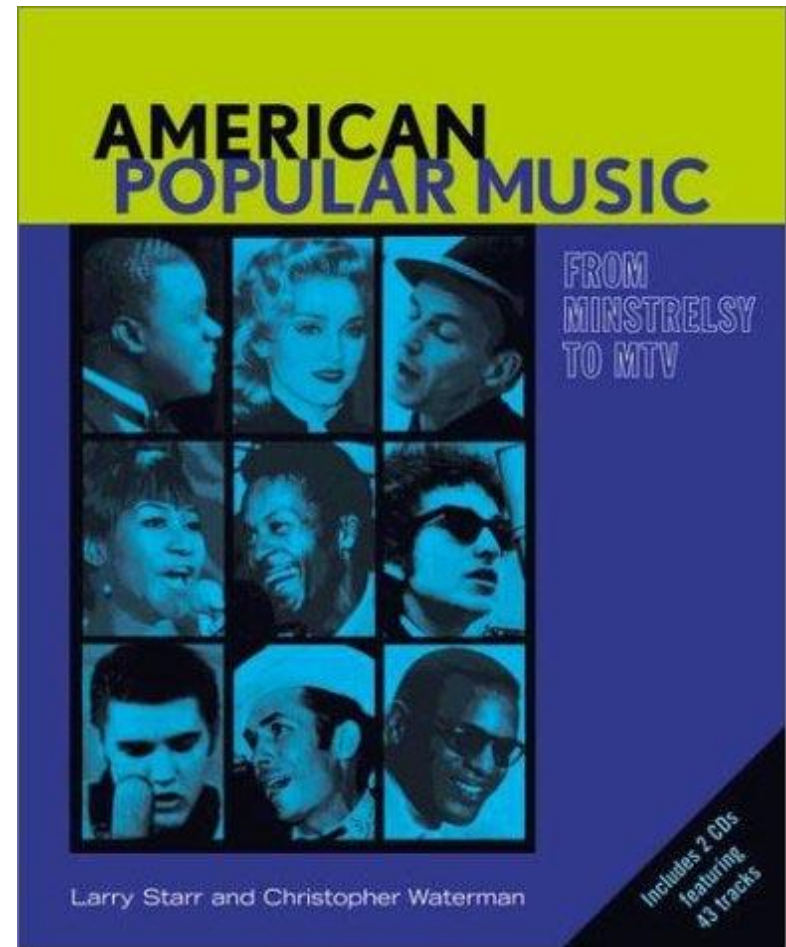


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Fig. 4-3: This mental map places major hip hop performers near other similar performers and in the portion of the country where they performed.

# Diffusion of Folk and Popular Cultures

- The broadcasting of American popular music on Armed Forces radio illustrates the difference in diffusion of folk and popular cultures.
- The spread of popular culture typically follows the process of hierarchical diffusion from hearths or nodes of innovation.
- In contrast, folk culture is transmitted primarily through migration, relocation diffusion.



# The Amish: Relocation Diffusion of Folk Culture

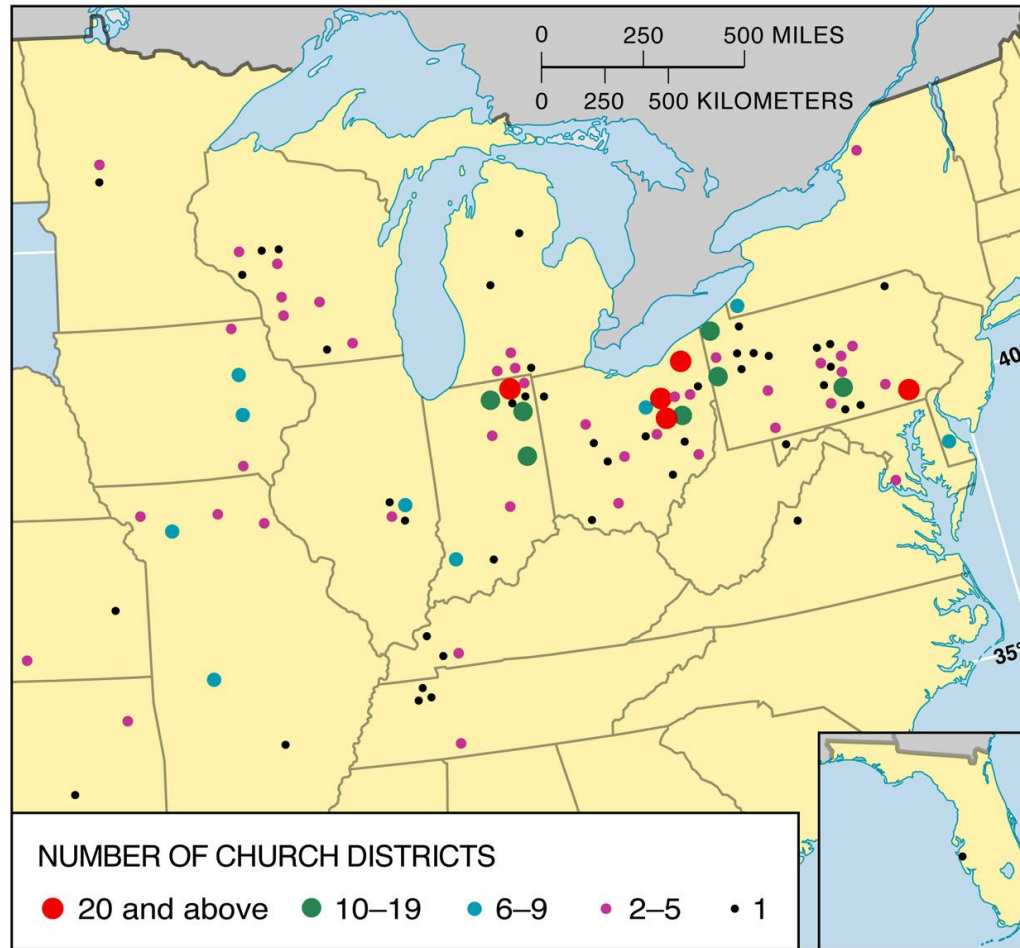
- Amish customs illustrate how relocation diffusion distributes folk culture.
- Amish folk culture remains visible on the landscape in at least 17 states.
- In Europe the Amish did not develop distinctive language, clothing, or farming practices and gradually merged with various Mennonite church groups.
- Several hundred Amish families migrated to North America in two waves.
- Living in rural and frontier settlements relatively isolated from other groups, Amish communities retained their traditional customs, even as other European immigrants to the United States adopted new ones.



**FIGURE 4-4** Amish settlements are distributed throughout the northeastern United States. According to William Crowley, who documented this distribution, the number of church districts within a settlement indicates the relative number of Amish in the community. Amish buggies and motor vehicles must share the highway in the larger Amish settlements, such as Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, shown in the photograph.



# Amish Settlements in the U.S.



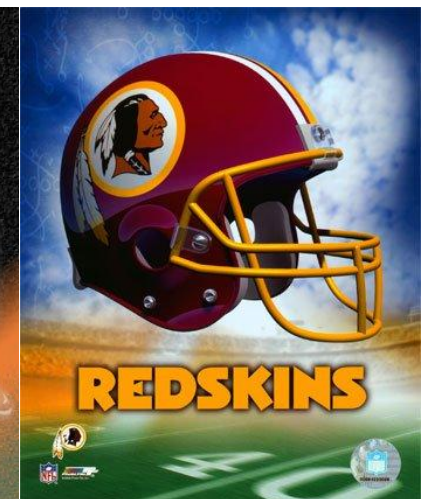
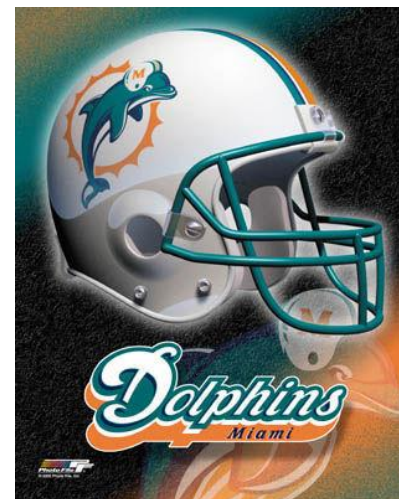
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Fig. 4-4: Amish settlements are distributed through the northeast U.S.



# Sports: Hierarchical Diffusion of Popular Culture

- In contrast with the diffusion of folk customs, organized sports provide examples of how popular culture is diffused.
- Many sports originated as isolated folk customs and were diffused like other folk culture, through the migration of individuals.
- The contemporary diffusion of organized sports, however, displays the characteristics of popular culture.



# Folk Culture Origin of Soccer

- Early soccer games resembled mob scenes.
- In the twelfth century the rules became standardized.
- Because soccer disrupted village life, King Henry II banned the game from England in the late twelfth century.
- It was not legalized again until 1603 by King James I.
- At this point, soccer was an English folk custom rather than a global popular custom.



# Globalization of Soccer

- The transformation of soccer from an English folk custom to global popular culture began in the 1800's.
- Sport became a subject that was taught in school.
- Increasing leisure time permitted people not only to view sporting events but to participate in them.
- With higher incomes, spectators paid to see first-class events.



# Soccer's Globalization

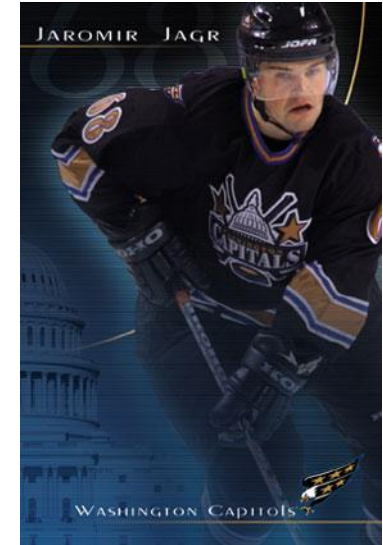
- Soccer was first played in continental Europe in the late 1870s by Dutch students who had been in Britain.
- British citizens further diffused the game throughout the worldwide British Empire.
- In the twentieth century, soccer, like other sports, was further diffused by new communication systems, especially radio and television.
- Although soccer was also exported to the United States, it never gained the popularity it won in Europe and Latin America





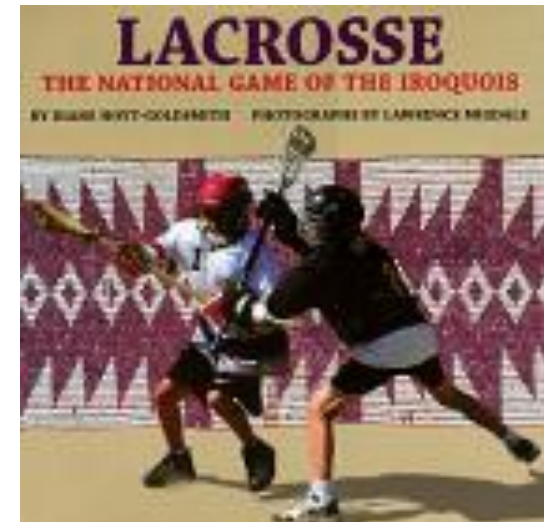
# Sports in Popular Culture

- Each country has its own preferred sports.
- Cricket is popular primarily in Britain and former British colonies.
- Ice hockey prevails, logically, in colder climates.
- The most popular sports in China are martial arts, known as wushu, including archery, fencing, wrestling, and boxing.
- Baseball became popular in Japan after it was introduced by American soldiers.



# Lacrosse as a Popular Sport

- Lacrosse is a sport played primarily in Ontario, Canada, and a few eastern U.S. cities, especially Baltimore and New York.
  - It has also fostered cultural identity among the Iroquois Confederation of Six Nations.
  - In recent years, the International Lacrosse Federation has invited the Iroquois nation to participate in the Lacrosse World Championships.



# Issue 2: Clustering of Folk Cultures

- Isolation promotes cultural diversity
  - Himalayan art
- Influence of the physical environment
  - Distinctive food preferences
  - Folk housing
  - U.S. folk house forms

# Isolation and Cultural Diversity

- Folk culture typically has unknown or multiple origins among groups living in relative isolation.
- A combination of physical and cultural factors influences the distinctive distributions of folk culture.
- Folk customs observed at a point in time vary widely from one place to another, even among nearby places.





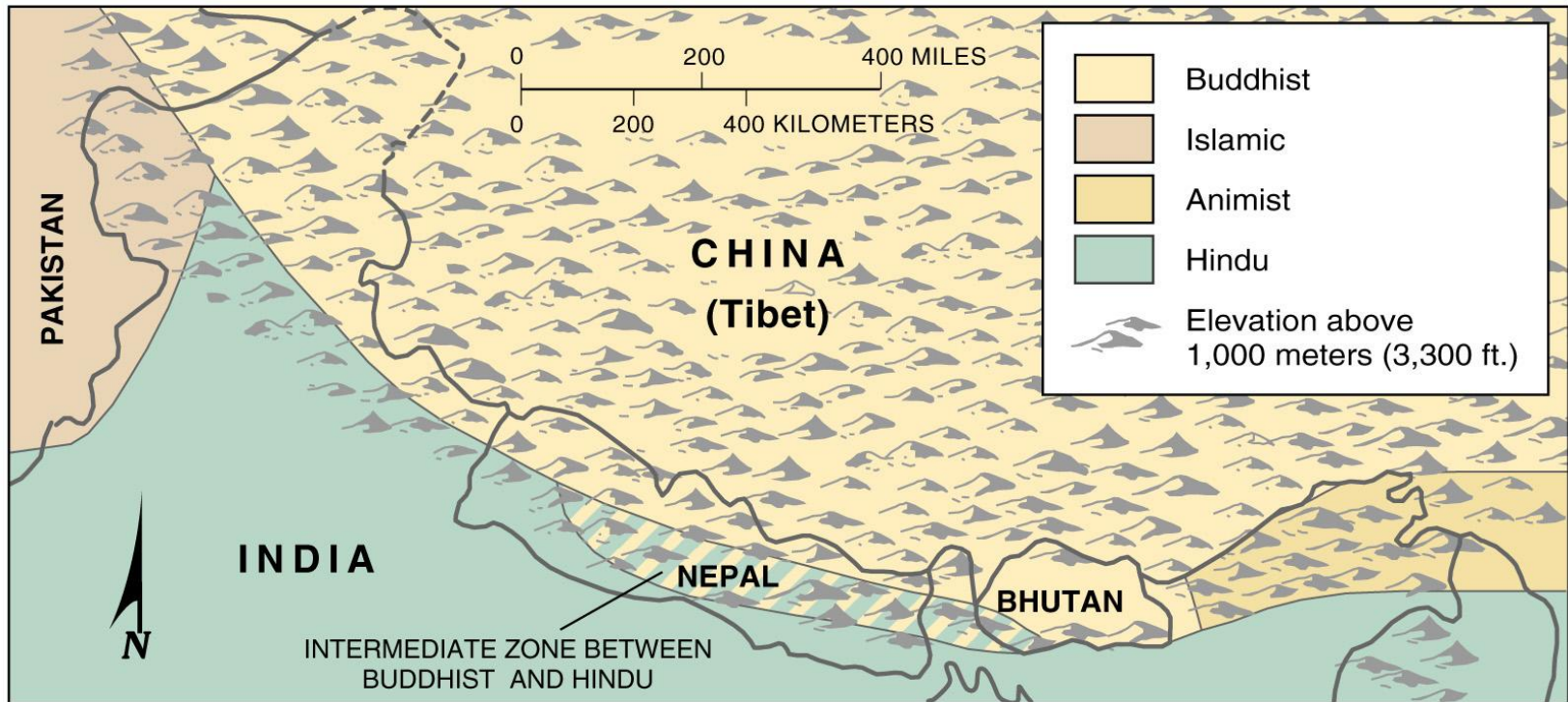
# Himalayan Art

- In a study of artistic customs in the Himalaya Mountains, geographers P. Karan and Cotton Mather demonstrate that distinctive views of the physical environment emerge among neighboring cultural groups that are isolated.
- These groups display similar uniqueness in their dance, music, architecture, and crafts.





# Himalayan Folk Cultural Regions



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Fig. 4-5: Cultural geographers have identified four distinct culture regions based on predominant religions in the Himalaya Mountains.

# Influence of the Physical Environment

- People respond to their environment, but the environment is only one of several controls over social customs.
- Folk societies are particularly responsive to the environment because of their low level of technology and the prevailing agricultural economy.
- Yet folk culture may ignore the environment.
- Broad differences in folk culture arise in part from physical conditions and these conditions produce varied customs.
- Two necessities of daily life—food and shelter—demonstrate the influence of cultural values and the environment on development of unique folk culture.



# Distinctive Food Preferences

- Folk food habits derive from the environment.
- For example, rice demands a milder, moist climate, while wheat thrives in colder, drier regions.
- People adapt their food preferences to conditions in the environment.
- A good example is soybeans.
  - In the raw state they are toxic and indigestible.
  - Lengthy cooking renders (soybeans) edible, but cooking fuel is scarce in Asia.
  - Asians make foods from soybeans that do not require extensive cooking.





# Food Preferences in Europe

- In Europe, traditional preferences for quick-frying foods in Italy resulted in part from cooking fuel shortages.
- In Northern Europe, an abundant wood supply encouraged the slow stewing and roasting of foods over fires, which also provided home heat in the colder climate.





# Food Diversity in Transylvania

- Food customs are inevitably affected by the availability of products, but people do not simply eat what is available in their particular environment.
- In Transylvania, currently part of Romania, food preferences distinguish among groups who have long lived in close proximity.
- Soup, the food consumed by poorer people, shows the distinctive traditions of the neighboring cultural groups in Transylvania.
- Long after dress, manners, and speech have become indistinguishable from those of the majority, old food habits often continue as the last vestige of traditional folk customs.



# Food Attractions and Taboos

- According to many folk customs, everything in nature carries a signature, or distinctive characteristic, based on its appearance and natural properties.
- Certain foods are eaten because their natural properties are perceived to enhance qualities considered desirable by the society, such as strength, fierceness, or lovemaking ability.
- People refuse to eat particular plants or animals that are thought to embody negative forces in the environment.
- Such a restriction on behavior imposed by social custom is a taboo.

