**4**



**Folk and Popular Culture**

**Learning Outcomes**

***After reading, studying, and discussing the chapter, students should be able to:***

**Learning Outcome 4.1.1:** Introduce concepts of folk and popular culture.

**Learning Outcome 4.1.2:** Compare processes of origin, diffusion, and distribution of folk and popular culture.

**Learning Outcome 4.1.3:** Compare patterns of regions and connections between folk and popular culture.

**Learning Outcome 4.1.4:** Compare differences in geographic dimensions of folk and popular music.

**Learning Outcome 4.1.5:** Describe the transformation of sports from folk to popular culture.

**Learning Outcome 4.2.1:** Introduce environmental and cultural features of material culture.

**Learning Outcome 4.2.2:** Compare reasons for distribution of clothing styles in folk and popular culture**.**

**Learning Outcome 4.2.3:** Understand reasons for folk food preferences and taboos.

**Learning Outcome 4.2.4:** Describe regional variations in popular food preferences.

**Learning Outcome 4.2.5:** Understand factors that influence patterns of folk housing.

**Learning Outcome 4.3.1:** Compare the diffusion of TV and the Internet.

**Learning Outcome 4.3.2:** Compare the distribution of the social media with that of TV and the Internet.

**Learning Outcome 4.3.3:** Understand threats to freedom of use of electronic media.

**Learning Outcome 4.4.1:** Summarize challenges for folk culture from diffusion of popular culture.

**Learning Outcome 4.4.2:** Summarize two principle ways that popular culture can adversely affect the environment.

**Chapter Outline**

**Key Issue 1: Where Are Folk and Popular Leisure Activities Distributed?**

**Culture** is defined as a collection of social **customs**; customs are repetitive acts of groups. Repetitive acts of individuals are called **habits**. Chapter 4 focuses on two facets of material culture: (1) culture deriving from the necessities of daily life such as food, clothing and shelter, and (2) leisure activities such as the arts and recreation.

Culture is defined as the body of material characteristics, customary beliefs, and social forms that together embody the distinct tradition of a group of people. These three components of culture capture the interest of geographers; in Chapter 4, the visible elements that a group possesses and leaves behind for the future are discussed. Following the examination of migration in Chapter 3, links can be made to the discussion of culture in this Chapter; two locations have similar cultural beliefs, objects, and institutions because people bring along their culture when they migrate. Differences become apparent when two groups have limited interaction.

To analyze the relationship between culture and the behavior of people, geographers differentiate between habit and custom. Habit is a performative act that a particular individual repeats, such as wearing jeans to class every day. A custom is a repetitive act of a group, performed to the extent that it becomes characteristic of the group, such as many students typically wearing jeans to class.

**Introducing Folk and Popular Culture** Geographers have identified two major categories of culture: **folk** and **popular** **culture**.Folk culture and popular culture differ in their patterns of origins, diffusion, and distribution. Folk culture is practiced by small homogenous groups living in isolated rural areas. Popular culture is found in large heterogeneous societies that share certain customs despite differences in other personal characteristics. Landscapes heavily influenced by folk culture change relatively little over time, while popular culture’s foundation rests on rapid simultaneous global connections through communications systems, transportation networks, and other modern technology. Rapid diffusion promotes persistent changes in popular culture. Scalar differences are observed in folk and popular culture, as well – globally, popular culture is becoming more dominant (at least for those with the income to have access to it), while many folk cultures are locally based. This global phenomenon threatens the existence of unique folk cultures, potentially reducing local diversity the world over. Popular culture may also pose negative environmental effects, with “built environments” being unsustainable.

**Origin, Diffusion, and Distribution of Folk and Popular Culture** The distribution of folk and popular culture can be explained by two basic factors: the process of origin and the pattern of distribution.

**Origin** Customs originate from hearths. Folk customs are often anonymous while popular customs originate in more developed countries as part of the market for recreational (leisure) and disposable income to purchase these material goods.

**Diffusion** Popular culture diffuses (usually hierarchically) through rapid electronic communications and transportation networks. Folk culture diffuses through relocation diffusion (migration).

**Distribution** Popular culture is distributed widely across many countries, with little regard for physical factors. The primary barrier to access is lack of income to purchase the materials of popular culture. Folk cultures often (though not always) incorporate elements of the local environment. Groups with relatively little contact with others develop unique folk cultures. Himalayan religious art is used as an example of how isolated religious groups depict the same environment much differently in their art.

**Geographic Differences Between Folk and Popular Culture** Geographers recognize that cultural features display distinctive regional distributions. Culture regions are often vernacular – people perceive these regions to exist as a component of their cultural identity. Culture regions may also manifest as formal or functional. The region encompassing a folk culture is generally much smaller than one encompassing a popular culture, due to connections (or lack thereof). Limited connections, possibly due to physical barriers, may engender different folk cultures in a relatively small geographic area.

**Origin and Diffusion of Folk and Popular Music** Music researcher Daniel Levitan argues that every culture in human history has had some tradition of music. Music can be looked to as an example of the differences in the origin, diffusion, and distribution of folk and popular culture.

**Folk Music** The purpose of folk music is to tell stories or to disseminate information. Folk music typically originates from an anonymous hearth and is transmitted among populations orally. As people migrate, folk music travels with them as part of the diffusion of folk culture.

**Popular Music** Popular music is deliberately written to be sold and performed. While some forms of popular music contain references to local places or events, the purpose of the music is still to appeal to a variety of people across Earth. As with other elements of popular culture, popular musicians have more connections with performers of similar styles, regardless of where in the world they happen to live, than they do with performers of different styles who happen to live in the same community.

In the past musicians clustered in particular communities according to their shared interest in specific styles. Because of the globalization of popular music, musicians are less tied to the culture of a particular place. Now musicians cluster in communities where other musicians reside regardless of the style of music they play. Musicians are also clustered in large metropolitan areas so they can be near sources of employment.

**Origin and Diffusion of Folk and Popular Sports** Many sports originated as isolated folk customs and were spread like other folk culture, through the relocation diffusion (migration). The contemporary diffusion of organized sports, however, displays the traits of popular culture.

**Folk Culture: Origin of Soccer** Soccer is an example of a popular folk custom that was popularized and then globalized. The hearth of soccer is believed to be in England in the eleventh century. Following the Danish invasion of England between 1018 and 1042, workers excavating a building site discovered a Danish soldier’s head, which they began to kick. “Kick the Dane’s head” evolved into boys using an inflated cow bladder in the place of the head, and games were played between two villages. The victorious side was the one to kick the ball into the center of the rival village.

**Popular Culture: Diffusion of Soccer** In the 1800s, soccer transformed from a folk custom to a popular culture. Several English soccer clubs formed an association to standardize the rules and to organize professional leagues. Spectators started to pay to see first-class events. Soccer then diffused to other parts of Europe. Soccer later diffused to other parts of the world by new communication systems such as the radio and TV. Today, the global popularity of soccer is exemplified in the World Cup, held every four years.

**Olympic Sports** Other sports are similar to soccer as elements of popular culture, though the distribution of each sport is different. If a sport becomes popular enough worldwide, it becomes part of the Olympics. For a sport to be to be included in the Olympics it must be widely played in at least 75 countries (50 countries for women sports) and on four continents.

**Surviving Folk Sports** Most other sports have diffused much less than soccer. Cricket, Wushu, baseball, and lacrosse are examples of sports that never became very popular globally.

**Key Issue 2: Where Are Folk and Popular Material Culture Distributed?**

**Elements of Material Culture** Folk culture is more apt to be influenced by environmental conditions, but popular culture is not insulated from these environmental influences. Geographers have noted that folk and popular culture can come into conflict with one another.

**Wine Geography** The spatial distribution of wine production is indicative of the importance of both environmental and cultural elements. Grapes needed for making decent wine grow better in some places compared to others.

**Wine Production: Environmental Factors** The distinctive character of a wine stems from a vineyard’s terrior – the unique combination of soil, climate, and other traits at the place where the grapes are grown.

**Wine Production: Cultural Factors** Cultural values underpin the historical and contemporary production of wine. The distribution of wine production shows that the diffusion of popular customs depends less on the distinctive environment of a location than on the presence of beliefs, institutions, and material characteristics conducive to accepting those customs.

**Conflicting Folk and Popular Cultural Values** Conflicts may emerge between folk and popular culture. For example, wearing folk clothing in countries dominated by popular culture can be controversial, and vice versa. Particularly difficult has been the coexistence of the loose-fitting combination body covering, head covering, and veil traditionally worn by women in Southwest Asia and North Africa in contrast to the open-necked blouses, tight-fitting slack, and revealing skirts commonly seen in casual Western-style popular women’s clothing.

**Folk and Popular Clothing** People living in folk cultures have traditionally worn clothing in part in response to characteristic agricultural practices and climatic conditions. In popular culture, clothing choices generally reflect occupations rather than particular environments.

**Folk Clothing Preferences** People wear distinctive folk clothing for a variety of environmental and cultural reasons. Women who live in countries in Southwest Asia and Northern Europe are discouraged from wearing popular casual Western-style clothing because of religious reasons. On the other hand, some European countries prohibit women from wearing traditional clothing from Southwest Asia and North Africa because the leaders in government believe that those clothes make women seem like second class citizens.

**Rapid Diffusion of Popular Clothing Styles** Popular clothing habits have little regard for the climate or topography of an area. Because of the sufficient incomes, the social desirability of dressing for a particular job or social class, and rapid communications, popular clothing styles can change several times per year across the more developed world. Jeans are an example of how Western popular culture has diffused to other countries. Jeans retain local diversity because different regions of the world prefer a particular style of jeans.

**Folk Food Customs** According to the nineteenth-century cultural geographer Vidal de la Blache, food supply is one of the most enduring connections that tie people to a particular environment. Food preferences are strongly influenced by cultural traditions, and shared food preferences may help to establish social, religious, and ethnic customs.

**Food and the Environment** The local climate presents a major influence on what can and cannot be grown. The contribution of a location’s distinctive physical features to the way food tastes is known as **terroir.** Folk cultures have had to adapt their food preferences to conditions in their local environment and this has created distinctive local cuisines around the world. Folk cultures will also eat certain foods that are believed to enhance qualities that are considered desirable by their society.

**Food Taboos** The development of food **taboos** are thought to be partly environmental and partly cultural. Taboos are restrictions on behavior imposed by religious law or social custom. These taboos may help to protect endangered animals or to conserve scarce natural resources. Many religions have food taboos because they protected the environment of the religion’s hearth. Social values can also influence what people eat because people in similar climates and with similar levels of income consume different foods.

**Popular Food Preferences** Popular food preferences are impacted more by cultural values than by environmental features. Despite this, some regional differences are apparent between and within countries, and environmental factors remain significant in specific items.

**Regional Differences: Global Scale** The example of soft drink sales can be instructive in examining differences in global preferences. While Coca-Cola accounts for more than half of the world’s soft drink sales, Pepsi is another prominent brand, making up one-fourth of the soft drink market. Pepsi is preferred in Québec, where marketing practices tied the soft drink to French Canadian identity. Political influences may play a role in preference, as seen in the Soviet Union and the Arab countries in Southwest Asia and North Africa.

**Regional Differences: U.S. Snack and Fast Food** Regional differences in food preferences of developed countries may be associated with cultural or environmental factors, while others are more abstract in their origin. Americans may choose particular beverages or snacks in part on the basis of preferences of what is produced, grown, or imported locally. Many regional variations cannot be easily explained by cultural or environmental factors, as can be seen by the differences in the distribution and concentration of McDonalds across the United States.

**Folk and Popular Housing** The house, as theorized by French geographer Jean Brunhes, is a product of both cultural and natural conditions. American cultural geographer Fred Kniffen considered the house to be a good reflection of cultural heritage, current fashion, functional needs, and the impact of environment.

**Folk Housing** Singular environmental and cultural factors play a role in the provision of housing in folk cultures.

**Environmental Influences** Folk housing styles are another example of the influence of the physical environment, with housing design reflecting both cultural norms and environmental influences from the type of building material used to the shape of the house to more efficiently heat, cool, or shed water. Even in areas that share similar climates and available building materials, folk housing can vary because of minor differences in environmental features.

**Cultural Influences** Some folk housing distinctive design may also derive primarily from religious values and other customary beliefs. Houses in some folk cultures may have sacred walls or corners. Compass direction may play a big role in how the house was built and how the interior of the house is arranged.

**U.S. Folk Housing** Older houses in the United States from the east coast toward the Mississippi River display a local folk-culture tradition. The distribution of U.S. folk housing styles reflected whatever style was prevailing at the place on the East Coast from which the people migrated from. Housing built in the 1940s and beyond is indicative of how popular customs differ more in time than in place.

**Key Issue 3: Why Is Access to Folk and Popular Culture Unequal?**

**Diffusion of TV and Internet** The world’s most popular and important electronic media format is television (TV). While the Internet has grown in popularity and importance in recent years, TV remains the foremost electronic media format.

**Distribution and Diffusion of TV** Popular culture is diffused faster and further than ever with the invention and diffusion of forms of electronic communication like television. Television allows images and messages about popular culture, such as professional sports, to spread instantaneously across the globe. Watching TV is now the most popular leisure activity in the world, with the average human watching 3 hours daily and the average American watching 5 hours daily The technology by which television is delivered is changing throughout the world, with ownership rates in developing countries climbing rapidly since the beginning of the twenty-first century.

**Diffusion of the Internet** Internet service has diffused at a rapid pace throughout the world. The diffusion of the Internet has occurred much more quickly than TV. It is likely to diffuse even further in the years ahead at a rapid rate.

**Diffusion of Social Media** People in the United States have dominated the use of social media during the early years. Social networking websites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube still enjoy their greatest popularity in the United States, but are quickly diffusing to other countries. The possibility of other social media platforms gaining popularity outside the United States also exists.

**Diffusion of Facebook** Since the founding of Facebook by Harvard University students in 2004, it has diffused rapidly. Mirroring the early dominance of Internet in the United States, Facebook users in the United States outnumbered those in other countries during its early years. As of 2014, the United States and India claim more than 100 million Facebook users each, with developing countries such as Brazil, Mexico, and Indonesia behind. Facebook is not as popular in China and Russia, due to competing social media platforms and restrictions on Internet usage.

**Diffusion of Twitter** The United States was the source of one-third of all Tweets in 2014, with another one-third originating in India, Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, Brazil, and Canada. The rising presence of social media in developing countries such as India and Brazil may be a preview of future trends, in which electronic communications advances diffuse rapidly not only in developed countries, but the world over.

**External Threat: Developed Countries Control the Media** Since media outlets are largely Western (especially television programming), their content may present values or beliefs in conflict with those of a particular place receiving those broadcasts. Government may perceive this Western control as a threat to their national systems and attempt to restrict the programming available to the populace.

**Internet Threat: Social Media** In some places around the globe residents have sought out Western programming otherwise not available through the use of satellite dishes. Governments around the world are also trying to limit the Internet content in their countries. Social media has started to play an even more significant role in breaking the monopoly of government control over the diffusion of information.

**Challenges in Accessing Electronic Media** Not every country enjoys the same open access to information and modern electronic communications (e.g. the Internet and cell phones) as the citizens of the United States do. Based on a Freedom on the Net survey of the level of Internet and digital media freedom in 65 countries, 19 countries were categorized as “free,” 31 were classified as “partly free,” and 15 were “not free.” Three categories of restrictions on the free use of the Internet are recognized by Freedom on the Net: banned technology, blocked content, and violated user rights.

**Banned Technology** Governments can prevent electronic technology deemed unwanted by regulating the underlying technology platforms that are supported by the infrastructure in the country. Some governments do not permit the sale of certain models of phones, tablets, and computers. Devices that are permitted must be configured to exclude certain functionality. Some travelers between free countries, such as from the United States to Western Europe, discover that their devices fail to operate due to incompatible cellular infrastructure. China is an example of a country that aggressively monitors and restricts foreign applications, as evidenced by the relatively small fraction of Facebook and Twitter users living there.

**Blocked Content** Some websites and web content is censored or prevented altogether from being displayed on devices in a particular country. The leaders of some developing countries view American dominance of TV programming as a new method of cultural and economic imperialism. Social norms present in this programming may not match those of developing countries; many satellite and cable providers in these developing countries block programming containing such content. Three types of Internet content are routinely censored in select countries:

* Political content that expresses views in opposition to those of the current administration or that is related to human rights, freedom of expression, minority rights, and religious movements.
* Social content related to sexuality, gambling, and illegal drugs and alcohol, as well as other topics that may be socially sensitive or perceived as offensive.
* Security content related to armed conflicts, border disputes, separatist movements, and militant groups.

**Violated User Rights** Some citizens of countries that are not “free” digitally have devised ways of circumventing government restrictions on ownership of hardware, use of software, and viewing of online content. These governments have codified physical attacks and imprisonment to intimidate their citizens into ceasing these departures. Freedom on the Net has noted that women and the LGBTQQIAAP community have been targeted in a number of countries for their online activities. Iran, Syria, and China have been identified by Freedom on the Net as the worst-offending countries in using the oppressive actions.

**Key Issue 4: Why Do Folk and Popular Culture Face Sustainability Challenges?**

**Sustainability Challenges for Folk Culture** Growing connections with popular culture can make it difficult for folk culture to maintain centuries-old practices and customs. A folk culture group often undergoes a process of **assimilation**, which is a process of giving up cultural traditions, such as food and clothing preferences, and adopting social customs of the dominant culture of a place. Instead of assimilation, a folk group often undergoes **acculturation**, which is a process of adjustment to the dominant culture of a place, while retaining features of a folk culture, or syncretism (the creation of a new cultural feature through combining elements of two groups).

**Preserving Cultural Identity: The Amish** The Amish are an example of a group in the United States that shuns any mechanical or electrical power. The globalization of popular culture represents to many people in folk cultural societies a loss of traditional values. Many fear the loss of folk culture, especially because of the rising demand for possessions of a popular culture. For folk culture, increased connection with popular culture can make it difficult to maintain centuries-old practices. Folk societies are trying hard to maintain their unique culture in an age of globalization.

**Challenging Cultural Values: Dowries in India** The global diffusion of popular culture has challenged the subservience of women that is embedded in some folk cultures. This has been both a good thing and a bad thing for women in developing countries. The family of the bride in India is sometimes expected to provide the groom with a dowry. Some women in India have actually been killed because their family did not pay a large enough dowry to the groom. Although anti-dowry laws were enacted by the government of India in 1961, they are largely ignored and women still face the consequences of the harsh reality of this custom.

**Sustainability Challenges for Popular Culture** Popular culture can greatly modify or control the environment, with little regard for local environmental conditions, such as climate and soil. The diffusion of some popular customs can negatively impact environmental quality in two ways: landscape pollution and depletion of natural resources.

**Landscape Pollution**  For many popular customs, the environment is altered to enhance participation in a leisure activity or to promote the sale of a product. Although some built environments are designed to look “natural,” they are actually deliberately created by people in the pursuit of popular social customs.

**Uniform Landscapes** The spatial expression of a popular custom in one location will be similar to another. To build a uniform landscape, hills may be flattened and valleys filled in. Promoters of popular culture actually want a uniform appearance to generate “product [or brand] recognition” and greater consumption. Gas stations, supermarkets, and fast food restaurants all exhibit characteristics of a uniform landscape. Physical expression of uniformity in popular culture has diffused from North America to other countries, further establishing uniformity in the global landscape.

**Resource Depletion** Popular customs may also involve the overuse and depletion of scarce natural resources. The increased demand for meat is leading to a decrease in the total amount of grain available. Pollution often times results from popular cultural practices. Recycling consumer products is helping to alleviate all the unwanted by-products that usually end up in landfills or burned in incinerators.

Golf courses require large expanses of open, carefully managed grass. Some golf courses are designed partially in response to local physical conditions. Many courses have little regard for local conditions and usually dramatically alter the natural landscape of an area. Golf course remake the environment by creating of flattening hills, cutting grass, carting in or digging up sand for traps, and draining or expanding bodies of water to create hazards.

**Ice Breakers**

**Pop Culture Trivia**

An exercise in pop culture trivia will remind college students of how much they do know.

Organize a series of questions for the class on popular culture topics ranging from TV shows to Top 40 or “alternative” music, to sports, to Hollywood celebrities.

Now ask a series of questions on a folk-culture-based topic. You might have a favorite to pick from, such as bluegrass music or a lesser-known sport like Jai-Alai. It won’t take long for the students to tire of these meaningless (to them) trivia questions.

Now a discussion can be started on the nature of one trivia contest versus the other. Why do so many students know so much about the first category of culture, and so little about the other examples from folk culture? The discussion will serve as an introduction to the differences between folk and popular culture.

**Challenges to Comprehension**

**Norms and “Normal”**

Younger students may not have previously encountered any discussion of cultural relativism or the construction of social norms. The text introduces this idea with a discussion of habits, customs, and taboos but does not explicitly address the challenge of understanding other material cultures from their own perspective.

Consider introducing a common North American custom in an unfamiliar context. For example, “A drug crop is grown in fields, where it is harvested and put into 100-pound bags. These bags are sold by the farmer for anywhere between $70 and $100. The product is then brought into another country, often using middlemen, where it is processed, refined, and sometimes mixed with other substances before being sold on the street. The final market value of the original bag can now be as high as seven to ten thousand dollars. What are we talking about?”

Some students will guess “cocaine”, many more “marijuana,” but few or none will guess the real subject of this word problem: **coffee!**

Ask your students how they reacted to the idea of the drug as an “illegal” or “abnormal” one versus a “normal” one; then discuss whether we bring these prejudices to bear on other material cultures.

**Uniform Landscapes**

The Chamber of Commerce in your hometown wants to hire you to create a new town seal. Is there a symbol or symbols that reflect the unique identity of your town? Is the cultural and/or physical landscape of your town distinctive enough to create a real sense of place? Will you end up having to turn down the job because your hometown is the definition of “Anytown U.S.A.”?

**Assignments**

**Review/Reflection Questions**

* Describe a distinctive food preference that your family has and trace its origins to a folk hearth. If you don’t have one, use an example that you’ve heard or seen (not from the book).
* List some of your food taboos and give an explanation for each. How many have to do with cultural traditions you’ve inherited, and how many have to do with cultural views you’ve adopted as an adult?
* Social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube is changing the way that popular and folk cultures are diffused. Give and support an argument for how the Internet might aid the preservation, or even expansion, of some folk cultural elements.
* Describe one activity of popular culture that you engage in and evaluate its impact on the environment. What might a folk cultural alternative to your activity be?
* Describe a personal habit, a custom that you follow that is not generically “popular culture,” and a culture that you follow. Be sure to define and explain each one, and then try to explain where each one originated.
* Do you consider your culture to be part of the “dominant” culture at this school? If “yes,” explain how you observe other cultures and why you make these observations. If “no,” explain how the dominant culture influences your own culture.

**Cultural Observation Assignment**

For this assignment, you’ll observe the *cultural landscape* of one part of our community. You can choose a location that represents popular culture (e.g., a mall, the campus bookstore, a coffee shop, a park, a street intersection) or folk culture (e.g., a folk art festival, a street market, a musical performance). You’ll need to use all five of your senses to study a particular/event and report on your observation.

**Objectives**

First, prepare a plan of your objectives. Where will you be going? What are you planning to observe? How will you record your observations? Write this plan down to give your investigation a more direct focus.

**Observations**

Go to the location you’ve selected for your observation and spend some time there. Your report should include detailed observations of the site and situation characteristics of your location, so take careful notes.

Find a good place to make your observations and stay for at least one hour. Take notes on what you’ve decided to observe. You may also change your mind about what is most important to observe.

Attach your observation notes to the end of your assignment.

**Results**

Present the results of your observations. Depending on what and how you choose to observe some elements of culture, you might arrange your results in a table, or you might summarize your observations in several paragraphs.

**Discussion**

Now write about 500 words discussing what you observed. Make sure to relate your observations to key concepts in Chapter 4 and earlier chapters.

Your final paper should have following section: Objective, Results, Discussion, and your observation notes attached after your bibliography.

*For additional review and test prep materials, have your students visit MasteringGeography****™*** *to access a variety of resources, including interactive maps, videos, Google Earth activities, RSS feeds, flashcards, web links, and self-study quizzes.*

**Thinking Geographically Questions**

*4.1: In what ways does age affect the distribution of leisure activities in folk or popular culture?*

Elderly people in folk culture and popular culture may be limited to only a select number of leisure activities, due to certain disabilities attributed to old age (e.g. a game of chess in a park, rather than competing in triathlons). Folk culture leisure activities enjoyed by older people may include woodworking in Amish communities, or performing bonsai gardening in Japan. Popular culture leisure activities practiced by the elderly may include playing a game on a smart phone, or playing bingo. Their younger counterparts in folk culture in Japan may participate in sumo wrestling, while in Japanese popular culture they may engage in playing video games at an arcade.

*4.2: In what might gender affect the diffusion of material culture in folk or popular culture?*

Folk culture women may have limited access to many areas of the city. In fundamentalist Muslim societies women are typically not allowed out of the home without a male escort. Their leisure activities are mostly limited to the home.

Women in a popular culture are not restricted to where they can go. Many businesses in malls cater exclusively to women. Many women use the mall as a place to meet up with other women. Many female oriented businesses are also clustered around aerobics studios. Women spend time patronizing these businesses after working out. Women also tend to congregate in parks with large playgrounds because many are taking care of small children.

*4.3: Why do many governments consider it important to limit the freedom to use social media?*

Governments may see social media as an avenue to introduce unsavory ideas and views to their citizens. These ideas may foment dissent in these countries, generating the possibility for protest or revolutionary groups to be born. For instance, in the People’s Republic of China, the government does not allow the use of Twitter and Facebook, so they have banned these “threatening” sites in their country.

*4.4: What types of folk customs might be able to be communicated through social media?*

Folk customs, such as traditional music, may be able to be communicated through social media. For instance, on the social media website Facebook, traditional Azerbaijani may be shared whereas it typically would be relatively hard to access. Oral traditions may also be typed out and stored online, and diffused through social media.

**Pause and Reflect Questions**

*4.1.1: Can you think of an entertainer, a politician, or another public figure who displays a distinctive habit in choice of clothing?*

Regarding political parties in the United States, the Republican and Democratic parties are generally associated with the colors red and blue, respectively. For instance, in a debate between two candidates for President, the participants will generally wear red or blue accented attire.

*4.1.2: What geographic factors account for the diversity of cultures in the Himalayas?*

Topographic features, primarily the Himalayan Mountains, played an important role in isolating groups of people. This isolation led these groups to develop distinct folk cultures in this region.

*4.1.3: What type of music do you like? On what “line” in Figure 4-9 does it fit?*

I prefer experimental music – I would most likely would fit on the gray “avant-garde” line.

*4.1.4 Do you like your state’s favorite artist?*

Jay-Z is my state’s favorite artist.

*4.1.5: How many Olympic sports are played at your school?*

Golf, tennis, basketball, volleyball, and women’s track are the Olympic sports played at my school.

*4.2.1: Can you think of other restrictions on clothing styles in developed countries, perhaps in schools?*

Children in schools can’t wear clothes with obscene images or words. Girls in school can’t wear clothing that is too revealing and boys can’t wear pants that expose their underwear. Clothing related to gangs may also be banned from schools.

*4.2.2: What sort of folk or popular clothing do you typically wear?*

I generally wear clothes associated with the “hipster” subculture in the winter months (e.g. tight jeans, boots), while in the warmer times of year I wear clothes associated with the “yuppie” aesthetic (e.g. short shorts, oxford shirts).

*4.2.3 What foods do you avoid? Do you avoid foods because of taboos or for other reasons?*

I am a vegan, so I abstain from any foods containing animal products. I avoid these foods for moral reasons.

*4.2.4: Do your food preferences match the predominant ones in your region?*

My food preferences do not match those of my region (I do not eat Krispy Kreme doughnuts).

*4.2.5: What factors were considered in the arrangement of the bed in your bedroom?*

I have my bed arranged in my bedroom to maximize floor space, as there isn’t much room in my apartment.

*4.3.1: The United States has slightly less than 1 TV per person. Does your household have more than 1 TV or less than 1 TV per person? Why might you have more or less than the national average?*

My household has one television per person (just me). One might have less than the national average due to budgetary reasons, while one might have more than the national average because they love television, or perhaps use them for multiple purposes (such as a computer monitor).

*4.3.2: A recent study of University of Maryland students found that not using any electronics for 24 hours produced anxiety, craving, and other symptoms akin to withdrawal from alcohol or drugs. How do you think you would react to a 24-hour ban on all electronics?*

I think I could manage without electronics for 24 hours with no issue – I often camp outside and have no qualms having no access to electronics in the wild.

*4.3.3: If you lived in a “not free” country, what use of electronic media might get you into trouble? Why?*

Social media and the use of message boards (a relatively outdated web phenomenon) would probably get me in trouble, as all manner of issues are discussed in the outlets. These topics can be critical of the government (and other people in power), so they most likely would see reason to censor it.

*4.4.1: In what ways might Amish people need to interact with popular culture?*

As far as participating in any sort of leisure activity, they would see little reason to interact with popular culture. However, if they are enterprising, they could open up a gift shop on their property and sell Amish-made goods to tourists who are not familiar or a part of the Amish community.

*4.4.2: Summarize two principal ways that popular culture can adversely affect the environment.*

Car culture is an enduring part of American life, and has been for generations. People take car rides for leisure, and the interstate system laid the foundation for a wide network of automotive activity for all kinds of purposes. Automobiles emit carbon dioxide, a pollutant known to contribute to global warming – obviously this is detrimental to the environment. Popular music is also an important part of popular culture in the United States. Since bottom lines at record companies have taken a hit as a result of music piracy, touring is relied on by bands to make up the difference lost in record sales. The growing touring itineraries have increased the need for trucks to carry to equipment, or private jets to transport musicians – these elements of touring also contribute to global warming.

**Explore**

Use Google Earth to explore the place in London where the 2012 Summer Olympics were held.

1. *Fly to* Olympic Stadium, London.
2. *Click Historical Imagery. Move the time slider to 9/1999. What sort of structures occupied the site of the stadium then?*

It appears to be an industrial area – long buildings appearing to be factories occupied the area of the stadium. There are approximately seven large structures in the area.

1. *Click* More*, then* Transportation*. Zoom out until you see the nearest subway station. What is the straight-line distance from the station to the stadium? What feature prevents walking in a straight line from the station to the stadium?*

Hackney Wick is the nearest subway station, at 0.49 miles away. The River Lea prevents one from walking in a straight line from the station to the stadium.

1. *Click* View *in* Google Maps*. What is the function of the football-shaped building immediately to the east of the stadium?*

It is the Olympic Park Aquatics Centre.

**GeoVideo Questions**

1. *How is the fact that mountain climbing is forbidden in Bhutan a reflection of the country’s folk culture?*

Tibetan Buddhism is the predominant religion in Bhutan, and as the predominant religion, beliefs associated with Tibetan Buddhism have impacted local customs and regulations. According to their beliefs, deities live at the mountain peaks, making climbing these sacred areas forbidden.

1. *Based on the video, how prevalent is global, popular culture in Bhutan? Explain.*

Global culture has not reached Bhutan as much as it has neighboring countries, due to government intervention and policies of isolation. For instance, traditional clothes are to be worn by law.

1. *List and discuss at least three reasons for the survival of folk culture in Bhutan.*

First, Bhutan is a culturally homogenous country, engendering an enduring folk culture. Second, government intervention has prevented the rise of global culture in Bhutan. Third, strict visa laws have prevented mass tourism (e.g., for a stay in the Bhutanese capital of Thimphu, one must pay a daily $200.00 fee).

**Resources**

**American Cultural History, 19th and 20th Centuries**

Entertaining and informative details of American popular culture from the last 200 years. Produced by Lone Star College Library references librarians, Kingwood, Texas.

http://www.lonestar.edu/library/kin\_AmHistory2.htm

**The National Museum of American History**

http://americanhistory.si.edu/Exhaustive resource for educators and students.

**Connections between Chapters**

**Back to Chapter 1**

The spread and influence of different elements of material culture can be understood in the discussion of diffusion. Remind students of the importance of these terms in understanding how folk and popular cultures spread. The globalization of culture is also referenced in Chapter 1.

**Back to Chapter 3**

Remind your students that folk cultures are most often spread by relocation diffusion, so the link between Chapters 3 and 4 should be clearer. Students might reflect on whether it is simply migration that is a source of conflict, or whether culture plays a larger role.

**Forward to Chapter 5**

Language and popular culture are interrelated in the formation of new slang and the creation of new words. As a transition to Chapter 5, have the students list words that did not exist 10 to 20 years ago. Numerous examples from the Internet and technology will be offered.

**Cultural Geography** **Term Paper**

Ethnicity is identity with a group of people who share the cultural traditions of a particular homeland. Our own ethnicity (culture and experience) shapes our beliefs and also influences our perceptions of differing people and places encountered throughout our lives. Therefore, it is important to reflect on and understand our own opinions. Furthermore, we need to increase our awareness of the diversity of people and places not only in the world at large, but also in our own fascinating, multicultural Southern California environment. You must, however, get out and about to experience and taste this richness for yourself.

This assignment (fieldwork) is intended to be enjoyable. You choose the time and the place. Many students have combined this assignment with a family outing, a date, time with friends or even have formed informal groups with classmates to venture out together. It is your choice.

**Procedure**

1. Choose one of the locations from the attached list. No passports are required to explore Southern California’s many ethnic neighborhoods.

2. You need to thoughtfully answer the questions below using as much detail as possible in your descriptions. Be observant to the sights, sounds, and smells that create this unique sense of place. Your responses to the questions need to be typed (using 12 point font) and double spaced. Your responses need to be numbered and you should not write out the questions. You will be required to turn in at least two full pages, but most students usually need more than two pages to adequately respond to all the questions.

3. You need to write an essay discussing your visit from a geographical perspective. The essay needs to be at least one full page. Your essay must be typed (using twelve point font) and double spaced. Some possible topics in your essay could be: (1) how the landscape is arranged, (2) the creation of a cultural landscape (architecture), (3) characteristics of the homeland country (political, economic, environmental, cultural) that creates push factors for migration, and so on. Be sure to connect the attributes of the homeland your ethnic enclave represents. Include your internal reactions and feelings about this place briefly in your conclusion.

**Questions**

1. Where did you go? Which ethnic, cultural group is dominant here?

2. Why do you think most of the people in this area migrated to the United States? What do you think are the push/pull factors?

3. What landscape elements do you think give this area a distinctive appearance from surrounding areas? **Be specific**—describe buildings, architecture, spatial arrangement, clothing, types of stores, and music that you encounter.

4. Try a new ethnic food (it doesn’t have to be expensive, just a little exotic to you and typical of what is common in the homeland). What did you try? Did you like or dislike it? What ingredients were in it?

5. Do you see outward symbols of religious systems that are associated with the homeland? Look closely and describe. Does it help or hinder your cultural understanding of this ethnic group?

6. Do you see evidence of the convergence of traditional and modern worlds? If so describe them—look for impacts of communications and technological systems. What kind of connections are going on between the homeland and this region?

7. Look at products sold in stores and businesses. Do you see references to specific locations in the homeland? What cities and regions are on the labels of products? Where are the goods made?

8. What types of economic activities and businesses do you find here? Are there any surprises? Are there any specific businesses that reflect social customs from the homeland? Describe.

9. Any interesting (or perhaps strange to you) items for sale in these stores? People and cultures perceive and utilize resources differently—what is your cultural response to the unique items you see?

10. New immigrant groups have always tried to recreate their homelands when they migrated to the United States. Why do you think it is helpful for new arrivals to the United States to live in or near an ethnic enclave? Do you think you would be attracted to an American enclave if you moved to a foreign country?

**Due Date:** The day of the Final Exam. **No late papers will be accepted.**

AROUND THE WORLD: ETHNIC AREAS PROVIDE GLIMPSES OF OTHER CULTURES

Compiled by Lori E. Miller, Recreated from *Los Angeles Times*, Southland Funbook

***Alpine Village* in Torrance:** www.alpinevillage.net

833 West Torrance Boulevard at Harbor (110) Freeway

Features: This Bavarian-style marketplace, started by German speaking shopkeepers is laced with stores, eateries, nightly entertainment, a market and a wedding chapel. An outdoor Oktoberfest is held September–October.

Hours: Shops generally open from 11a.m.–6 p.m. daily with extended hours for restaurants

Parking: Free

***Chinatown* in Los Angeles:** www.lachinesechamber.org

Bounded by Cesar Chavez Boulevard and Bernard, Figueroa, and Alameda streets

Features: Central Plaza, guarded by its Filial Piety, is flanked with narrow walkways and tiny shops. Nearby are herb shops, fresh fish stores, and eateries.

Hours: Shops generally open from 10 a.m.–6 p.m. daily with extended hours for restaurants

Parking: Lots and metered parking along city streets

***El Pueblo de Los Angeles (Olvera Street)* in Los Angeles**

Intersection of Main and Alameda Streets

Features: Considered to be the birthplace of Los Angeles, this historic enclave consists of 27 landmark buildings, as well as a strip of colorful shops and taquerias lining Olvera Street.

Hours: 10 a.m.- 9 p.m. daily. Docent-led walking tours are offered at 10 a.m., 11a.m., and noon Wednesday through Sunday

Parking: Various lots and metered parking along city streets

***Fairfax District* in Los Angeles**

Fairfax Boulevard between Beverly Boulevard and Melrose Avenue

Features: Home to a large Jewish population. This district remains an intricate part of the city’s Jewish community. Lining the pavement are storefronts containing mostly delicatessens and Kosher markets.

Hours: Stores generally open from 10a.m.–6 p.m. daily with extended hours for restaurants

Parking: Various lots and metered parking along city streets

***Koreatown*** **in Los Angeles**

Between 4th Street and Olympic Boulevard, and Western and Vermont Avenue

Features: Colorful storefronts and restored bungalows can be found in this area that is home to the Korean Cultural Center (offering art exhibits and a resource library); Korean grocery, music, and clothing stores; and Korean restaurants.

Hours: Vary by establishment

Parking: Various lots and metered parking along city streets

***Leimert Park* in Los Angeles**

Bounded by Crenshaw Boulevard, 43rd Street, Leimert Boulevard, and 43rd Place

Features: Consisting of nearly a dozen pedestrian-friendly blocks, this urban village offers a wealth of Afrocentric themed shops and services. Also a popular area for African-American artists, poets, and musicians.

Hours: Stores generally open from 10a.m.–6 p.m. daily with extended hours for restaurants

Parking: Various lots and metered parking along city streets

***Little India*** **in Artesia**

Pioneer Boulevard between 183rd and 187th streets

Features: Among the flour-block stretch of mini malls and Indian eateries are shops laden with silk saris, jewelry, home accessories, and other exotic imports.

Hours: 11a.m.–8 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday

Parking: Two-hour street parking is available along Pioneer Boulevard from 7am- 6pm

***Little Saigon* in Westminster**

9200 block of Bolsa Avenue

Features: The Asian Garden and New Saigon Mall is the gateway to Orange County’s most exotic community. A variety of shops and restaurants, which number more than 200, contain healing herbs, imported wares, jewelry, and a variety of other items. A visit to the Cultural Court reveals a display of artwork and statues depicting Asian history.

Hours: Vary by establishment

Parking: Free

***Little Tokyo* in Los Angeles:** www.janet.org

Bounded by Los Angeles Street, Central Avenue, and 1st and 3rd streets

Features: This historic neighborhood is home to a cultural center, theater, museum, Buddhist temple, plaza-style shopping center, boutiques, and restaurants.

Hours: Stores generally open from 10a.m.–6 p.m. daily with extended hours for restaurants

Parking: Various lots and metered parking along city streets

***Thai Town*** **in Hollywood:** thaicdc.org

Along Hollywood Boulevard (between Western and Normandie Avenues)

Features: Shops, marketplaces, bookstores, and cafes.

Hours: Most businesses operate from 8 a.m.–10 p.m.

Parking: Free parking at Thailand Plaza, as well as metered parking along Hollywood Boulevard and neighboring streets