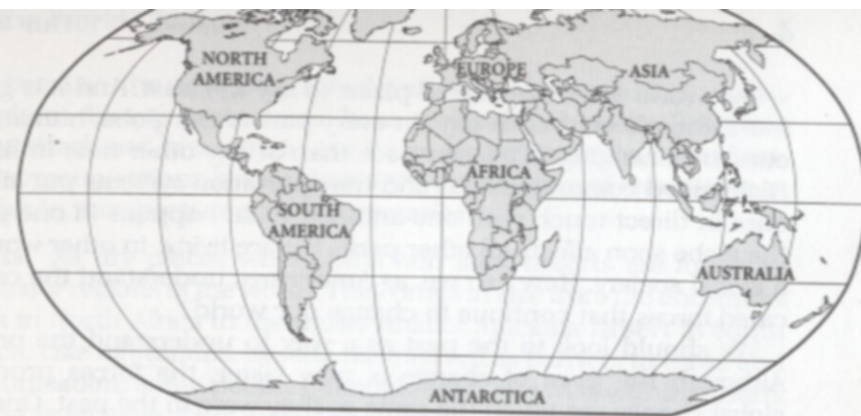


CHAPTER 1

How the World



Changes

Main Ideas

1. **CULTURE:** Social scientists use the term "culture" to refer to all the customs, practices, and beliefs of a group of people.
2. **TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES:** A traditional society is one that follows a way of life from an earlier period of its history.
3. **CULTURAL DIFFUSION:** As different societies have come in contact with one another through trade, travel, or migration, they have often adopted aspects of one another's cultures. This important cause of change is known as cultural diffusion.
4. **IMPACT OF MODERN TECHNOLOGIES:** Modern technologies, such as air travel and electronic communication, have increased both the speed and the extent of cultural diffusion.
5. **GEOGRAPHIC ISOLATION:** Certain geographic features, such as deserts, mountains, and oceans, have acted as barriers to human movement and cultural diffusion.
6. **REGIONS:** A region is an area that is tied together by one or more characteristics. (For example, the region may be

distinguished by a shared religion, geographic feature, or political history.)

7. **WORLD REGIONS:** Major world regions include Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, Canada and the United States, South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia, Western Europe, and Russia and Eastern Europe.
8. **INDUSTRIALIZATION:** In modern times, a major cause of change has been the economic process of industrialization (shifting of a nation's resources from agriculture to manufacturing).
9. **NATIONALISM:** Another major cause of change in modern times is nationalism (a people's desire to either expand their nation or break away from foreign rule to establish a new nation).
10. **INTERDEPENDENCE:** More than ever, nations today interact through trade and depend upon one another for essential products and services. This condition is known as global interdependence.

Our world is a complicated place, to say the least. And it is getting more complicated each day. In every part of the globe, human societies are changing at a faster pace than at any other time in history. High-speed communication and transportation systems put all societies in direct touch with one another. What happens in one part of the globe soon affects all other parts. We are living, in other words, in a global society. How can we, as Americans, understand the complicated forces that continue to change our world?

We should look to the past as a way to understand the present. Although the pace of change is now faster, the forces producing global change are much the same as they were in the past. One such force, geography, is as important to the development of modern Egypt as it had been to the ancient civilization that built the pyramids there. Other forces of change include the timeless efforts of people everywhere to achieve economic progress, political power, and social status. This chapter identifies a number of such major forces of change. Later chapters will show how these forces have shaped both the past and the present in major regions of the world.

Let us begin with geography. We will look briefly at the way different landforms, bodies of water, and climates affect human life.

I. How Geography Influences Culture

Geography, the study of the earth's physical features and their effect on humans, has two major branches. Those scientists who study physical geography are concerned chiefly with the earth's landforms, bodies of water, climates, and natural resources. Those who study human geography (or cultural geography) examine the impact of an area's land, water, climate, and resources on the people who live there.

A. MAJOR LANDFORMS

The seven continents of the world are made up of four basic landforms: mountains, deserts, plains, and plateaus.

Mountains Not all mountain ranges are alike. Some, like the Himalayas in South Asia, rise to heights of 29,000 feet. In contrast, the highest point in the Ural Mountains in Eastern Europe is some 6,000 feet above sea level.

Some regions are far more mountainous than others. Much of the land in Western Europe, for example, is mountainous. Africa, though several times larger than Europe in area, has fewer mountains.

Until recent times, mountains posed a major obstacle to the movement of people and ideas from one area to another. For example, there was relatively little contact between ancient civilizations in China and

India because the towering Himalayas stood between them. Also, throughout history mountains have served as a natural defense against attack and invasion. In our times, however, airplanes and satellite communications have reduced the significance of mountains as a barrier to transportation and communication.

Deserts As dry places where little rain falls, deserts are found in most major regions of the world. They range in size from the enormous Sahara in North Africa to the much smaller Atacama Desert in South America. Like mountains, deserts have served as barriers to travel and communication. Some peoples, though, have survived within deserts by living as *nomads*. They move from place to place seeking water and vegetation for their grazing animals. Others live more permanently in deserts at *oases* (green areas within deserts that have sources of water).

Today, deserts can easily be crossed by flying over them. But deserts as dry and barren as the Sahara still prevent people from settling there in large numbers. As you might expect, the world's deserts have a very low *population density* (number of people per square mile).

Plains As broad, flat stretches of land, plains are usually of two main types: interior plains and coastal plains. An *interior plain* usually has

OASIS IN A DESERT: In an oasis in the Sahara, there is just enough underground water for palm trees to grow. If deserts are among the least habitable areas on earth, what are the most habitable areas and why?



a river or a river system flowing through it. Because rivers sometimes flood the plains, these plains are good for agriculture. As the floods retreat, they leave the soil enriched with minerals.

All along a continent's coastline are lowland areas known as *coastal plains*. Such areas usually receive a lot of rain and are generally good for farming. Furthermore, bays and inlets on the coast make good harbors for ships. In such places, cities often develop as centers of trade. For good reason, both the coastal plains and the interior river valleys have always been the most densely populated areas in the world.

Among the major plains of the world are the: Great European Plain, which stretches across France, Germany, and Poland into Russia; Great Plains of the central United States; and broad river valleys watered by the Indus and Ganges rivers in South Asia.

The flatness of plains makes them good places for people to settle on or to travel across for trade. At the same time, however, this same feature makes it easier for invading armies to enter and take over an area. Thus, the people inhabiting plains are vulnerable to being conquered by newcomers coming from other places.

Plateaus Elevated plains are called *plateaus*. Because of their elevation, they have cooler temperatures than do lowlands. Often they are drier, too. Because there are fewer rivers running through plateaus, the soil there is less rich than in lowland plains. Less land is cultivated on plateaus than in the lowlands. Instead, the grazing of livestock is a more common agricultural activity on the plateaus. Major plateaus include the highlands of Kenya in Africa and the Deccan Plateau in India.

B. BODIES OF WATER

Major bodies of water include oceans, seas, lakes, and rivers.

Oceans The world's four oceans are the Pacific, the Atlantic, the Indian, and the Arctic. Both the Pacific and Atlantic oceans are much larger than any continent. At one time, because of their huge size, these oceans were barriers to the movement of people, ideas, and products. Since the late 1400s, however, improvements in shipbuilding and navigation have helped make the oceans highways for travel, trade, and communication.

Seas Large bodies of water that are (1) smaller than oceans and (2) partly or wholly enclosed by land are called seas. Because of their smaller size relative to oceans, seas were easier for people to travel across. Often, cities located near seas became important trading centers. Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey) became a major center of trade, for example, primarily because of its location on a *strait* (narrow

water passage) between the Mediterranean and Black seas. Other major world seas include the Caribbean Sea, South China Sea, and Red Sea.

Lakes In contrast to seas, lakes are smaller bodies of water and are always surrounded on all sides by land. Usually, only the largest lakes have played a major role in the history of a country. In North America, the Great Lakes are connected to each other and to the Atlantic Ocean by waterways. They therefore helped in the settlement of the interior of both the United States and Canada. In East Africa, people from several countries have long traveled across Lake Victoria and other large lakes to trade with one another.

Rivers Most of the world's earliest civilizations developed along rivers. These bodies of water have provided fertile soil to the valleys surrounding them and have served as important transportation routes. As a result, river valleys have generally been heavily populated. Early river civilizations arose along the Yangtze and Yellow rivers in China, the Indus River in India, the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in the Middle East, and the Nile River in Africa.

COMPARING MAP PROJECTIONS

A map is a flat surface that is used to represent the exact shapes, sizes, and locations of land and water areas. Maps that show small areas of the globe can be drawn with some accuracy. Maps of the entire globe, however, are always distorted in some way. That is because the true shape of the earth is a globe, or sphere. Its roundness cannot be shown on a flat surface without distorting either the shape, the relative size, or the relative location of the continents and oceans.

When representing either the whole globe or *hemisphere* (half of the globe), mapmakers can choose from among various methods. Each method, known as a *map projection*, has both advantages and disadvantages. Consider the four maps shown on the following pages.

Map A is an example of a *Mercator projection*. This type of world map fairly accurately shows Africa, South America, Europe, and the southern sections of Asia and North America. Its chief disadvantage is that it greatly distorts land and water areas near the North and South poles. Notice how the map makes the island of Greenland appear to be as large as Africa. In fact, this island is less than one-twelfth Africa's size.

Map B, a *Mollweide projection*, shows the sizes of all continents (except Antarctica) in the correct proportion to one another. To

A. MERCATOR PROJECTION



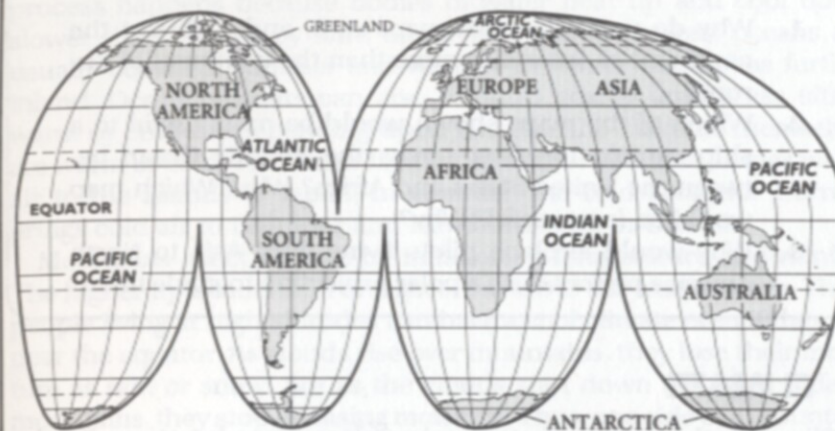
B. MOLLWEIDE PROJECTION



achieve this accuracy, however, the map must distort the shapes of the continents and oceans. Compare, for example, the shape of South America in Map B with the shape of that continent in Map A. The shape of South America in Map A is more accurate.

Map C, a *broken projection*, is drawn as if the globe were the skin of a peeled orange that has been flattened along the lines of the cuts. Both the shapes and relative sizes of major land areas are fairly accurate as shown. The oceans and Antarctica, however, are pulled apart.

C. BROKEN PROJECTION



D. POLAR PROJECTION



Map D, a *polar projection*, shows only one hemisphere (in this case, the Northern Hemisphere). Instead of the polar area being distorted (as in other map projections), lands close to the North Pole have the correct size and shape. Airplane pilots traveling between North American cities and Asian cities often use this type of map to determine the shortest air routes.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why do you think that maps A, B, and C distort the continent of Antarctica more than the continent of Europe?
2. Which of the maps shown would be *most useful* to a ship captain traveling across the Atlantic Ocean between the United States and Africa? Why? Which map would be *least useful*? Why?
3. Why would airplane pilots flying from Asia to North America prefer to use a polar projection to guide them?

C. CLIMATE

Climate is the pattern of weather in a place over a long time. It helps determine where people settle and how they live. Three major climate zones in the world are the (1) tropical, (2) temperate, and (3) subarctic and polar zones.

Tropical zone Located on and near the equator, the *tropical zone* is characterized by high temperatures, heavy rainfall, and rain forests. This zone includes the rain forests of Central America and equatorial Africa. Tropical rain forests are lightly populated because of their hot, humid climate and dense vegetation. Groups of people, however, have introduced farming to these areas using traditional methods. With the *slash-and-burn technique*, for example, they cut down trees and other vegetation and burn them to clear an area for farming.

Temperate zones The *temperate zones* are located north and south of the tropical zone. Their climate is noted for moderate temperatures, moderate amounts of rainfall, and seasonal changes. These conditions have helped to produce fertile soil, thereby aiding crop production. As a result, most of the world's population lives in the two temperate zones.

Subarctic and polar zones The *polar regions* near the North and South poles are characterized by extremely low temperatures. Their landforms and bodies of water are covered by snow and ice for much of the year. Because of these severe conditions, few people live in the polar regions. An example of a *subarctic zone* is the frozen *tundra* of Russia. It stretches across the northern part of that country, lacks trees, has permanently frozen subsoil, and supports only a small population.

Factors affecting climate The climate is not the same everywhere within a climate zone. Climate can be moderated in areas that are near oceans and mountains.

How the World Changes

Oceans generally moderate the temperatures of nearby lands. This process happens because bodies of water heat up and cool down slower than do nearby land areas. Thus, lands nearest oceans are usually cooler in summer and warmer in winter than areas further inland. Ocean currents can also bring to nearby land areas either warm or cold air, depending upon whether the currents themselves are warm or cold. The warm Japan Current, for example, brings warm air to the islands of Japan. In contrast, the cold Labrador Current brings cold air to Labrador and Newfoundland, in Canada.

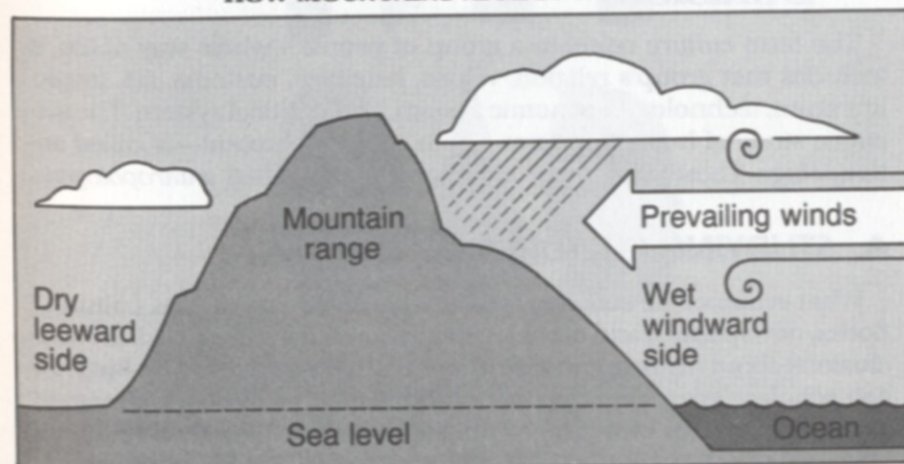
Mountains affect climate by influencing temperature and rainfall. The higher up a mountain one goes, the lower the temperature. Thus, people living at high altitudes can have a cool climate even if they are near the equator. As clouds rise over mountains, they lose their moisture as rain or snow. But as the clouds start down the other side of mountains, they stop releasing moisture. Thus, one side of a mountain or mountain range tends to be wet, while the other side tends to be dry. Deserts are often found on the "dry" side of mountain ranges.

D. NATURAL RESOURCES

A major feature of the global environment is its variety of natural resources. Mineral and agricultural resources play especially important roles in the global economy.

Mineral resources Valuable mineral resources are found in all world regions. The Middle East's plentiful supply of oil enriches that region and helps supply the energy needs of people in all regions. The large deposits of coal and iron found in Western Europe have helped that region develop its industrial strength. Other minerals that have

HOW MOUNTAINS AFFECT RAINFALL



become important in world trade and industrialization include the gold and diamonds found in Africa and the tin and copper found in South America.

Agricultural resources Important world agricultural resources include the wheat grown in Europe, Asia, and North and South America; the rice grown in Asia; and the cotton grown in North America, Africa, and Asia. Each region also raises farm animals, such as cattle, sheep, pigs, and chickens. Like mineral resources, agricultural products are traded in world markets.

In Review

The following questions refer to Section I: How Geography Influences Culture.

- Key terms:** Define each of the following:

nomad	plain	climate
population density	plateau	tundra
- Give the characteristics of each of the following climate zones: (a) tropical, (b) temperate, and (c) subarctic.
- Give *three* examples of how the physical geography of an area either aids or hinders the movement of people.
- Critical thinking:** "In the modern world, geography no longer presents a barrier to travel and communication." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your answer.

II. Cultural Traditions and Cultural Diffusion

The term *culture* refers to a group of people's whole way of life. It includes that group's religion, values, language, customs, art, music, literature, technology, economic system, and political system. The scientific study of human cultures—both past and present—is called *anthropology*. Those who study anthropology are called *anthropologists*.

A. STUDYING CULTURES OF THE PAST

What evidence do scholars look at when studying various cultures? Books, newspapers, and other written records help them to draw conclusions about *historic cultures* (those with a written record). But how can scholars learn about people of the distant past who had not yet invented a system of writing? *Prehistoric cultures* are those cultures

of the past whose people did not leave any written record. Fortunately, however, prehistoric peoples left behind *artifacts* (objects) of their culture that can be examined and interpreted. The social science that is most directly concerned with such evidence of past cultures is called *archeology*, a branch of anthropology.

Sometimes *archeologists*, those who study ancient artifacts, can directly view stone monuments or other structures that are still standing. More often, they must dig in the ground to find the remains of buildings, burial sites, and campsites. Each artifact that they find can become a clue to finding the way that a prehistoric people lived.

Archeologists can determine the approximate age of bones and other artifacts in a burial site by a process called *radiocarbon dating*. Their instruments measure the amount of radioactive carbon that is present in an object. Since radioactive carbon slowly decays at a constant rate, the amount of it that remains in an artifact tells archeologists approximately how old it is.

Another important clue to the prehistoric past is provided by *oral traditions*. In some societies that did not develop writing systems,



ARTIFACTS: The objects above were created by a prehistoric people in Europe more than 10,000 years ago. Can you identify the uses for any of these artifacts?

knowledge of the past has been transmitted by word of mouth. Thus, the stories, folktales, songs, and poems of a people are often of ancient origin and provide significant clues to the way their early ancestors lived. In many societies, traditional folktales and songs continue to have importance because they help maintain cultural identity.

Prehistoric societies From their study of artifacts and oral traditions, archeologists believe that they understand how prehistoric societies were organized. These societies consisted of small groups of people who migrated from one campsite to the next in search of food. The earliest human groups had an economy based on fishing, hunting of wild animals, and gathering of wild fruits, nuts, and grains. Their tools (including knives, needles, arrows, spears, and harpoons) were made of stone, wood, and bone. Tools of metal—copper, bronze, and iron—were the artifacts of more advanced societies of later ages.

Although the cultures of prehistoric peoples are important, this book will concentrate on describing later cultures—those that have engaged in agriculture, built cities, fashioned metal tools, and developed a written language.

B. ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

While all cultures share parts of the same global environment, they differ in how they relate to that environment.

Religion and values Many different religions have come about through the ages. The dominant religion of a people often influences their values. For example, a basic belief of Hinduism, the major religion of India, is *reincarnation*. This is the belief that one's soul does not die when the body dies. Instead, the soul reappears after death in another living form, such as in another person or in an animal. Because of this belief, Hinduism teaches respect for all forms of human and animal life. Consequently, many Hindus do not eat meat.

Language In today's world, some 3,000 languages are spoken. But only 19 of these languages, including English and Spanish, are considered "major" (spoken by at least 50 million people). Some languages originated very early in a culture's history. Some were imposed on a culture through military conquest. Spanish, for example, became the dominant language in Central and South America after Spain had conquered and colonized much of that region in the 1500s. Other languages were adopted from another culture in more peaceful circumstances, such as when a group migrates and settles near people of a different culture.

Social organization In all cultures of the past and present, the basic unit of social organization has been the family. The most common family unit of past societies was the *extended family*. In such a family,

several generations—grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, and children—lived together in the same household. Villages in traditional societies often consisted of family members who were descended from the same ancestral couple. Such a social unit is called a *clan*. Extended families and clans still exist. But today, especially in urban areas, nuclear and single-parent families are more common. In a *nuclear family*, two parents and their children live in the same household. In a single-parent family, just one parent and her or his children live together.

Traditionally, the teaching of a culture's values was chiefly the responsibility of the adult members of the family. Children tended to adopt the cultural values of their parents and to marry according to their elders' wishes. Today, families in modern cultures still teach values. But their influence on children is shared with schools, places of worship, governments, and the *media* (television, radio, recorded music, newspapers, books, and magazines).

Economic systems An *economic system* is the way that a society chooses to produce and distribute its goods and services. The three major systems are generally described as traditional, market, and command. A fourth system, known as a mixed economy, reflects aspects of both the market and command economies.

A *traditional economy* is one in which old ways of producing goods are continued without change for generations. In traditional economies, children tend to follow the occupational roles of their parents. In parts of Africa, Latin America, and Asia, for example, people in villages still plant and harvest food on their own land.

A *market economy* is one in which many businesses compete to sell their goods and services to potential buyers. Consumers are free to decide which of the competing goods and services offered for sale they will buy and which they will reject. Consumers thus have the last word in determining what goods and services will be produced. A leading example of a market economy is the one we have in the United States.

The United States and other countries with a market economy have *free enterprise*. That is, private businesses compete freely with one another in their quest for profits. Governments regulate this competition to protect consumers. Free enterprise is one of the basic principles of *capitalism*, another term for a market economy.

A *command economy* is one in which key economic decisions are made by the government, and all major industries are under government control. The leading example of such a system was the economy of the Soviet Union. When the Communist party governed this nation, all means of production were owned and operated by the Soviet government, including factories, farms, mines, railroads, and retail shops.

Another term for a command economy is *socialism*, an economic system in which the means of production (factories, farms) are



SHOPPING IN TOKYO: Japan is a leading example of a capitalist, or free enterprise, system. In such a system, how do both buyers and sellers determine what goods shall be produced?

publicly owned. A socialist government may make decisions on what to produce, whom to hire, and what prices and wages should be. An extreme form of socialism is *communism*, which combines the socialist economic system with a dictatorship. According to Communist theory, the dictatorship (and all other forms of government) will eventually disappear. In fact, however, no Communist society has ever achieved such a stage of development.

In some forms of socialism, certain industries may be owned privately while others are owned and operated by the government. Examples of such economies include India and Sweden. (The latter two nations have also been called *welfare states* because the government of each provides citizens with extensive social services, such as health care.)

Political systems The way in which people are governed is called a *political system*. In the 16th century, for example, some monarchs in Europe and Asia governed with absolute power. They believed that all political power rested in their hands. They did not want to share this power with anyone else (such as with religious leaders or nobles). We call this type of political system an *absolute monarchy*. Saudi Arabia provides a present-day example of this political system, which is not very common today.

In the 18th century, certain European philosophers challenged the idea of absolute rule. They insisted that laws had to have the consent of elected representatives of the people. Another of their ideas was that governments must protect the basic rights, or liberties, of all people. These ideas became the basis for *democracy*, the system of government upon which the U.S. government is based. Today, democracy is popular in many regions of the world.

Still another form of political system is the dictatorship. In a *dictatorship*, the ruler (dictator, emperor) has total control over his or her nation's political system. All government officials take orders from the dictator. The dictatorship is similar to the absolute monarchy except for the fact that a dictator usually does not inherit power from a parent. Instead, the dictator usually comes to office by seizing power. Fidel Castro of Cuba provides an example of a modern-day dictator.

Some dictators (and some absolute monarchs) have ruled *totalitarian* governments. The word "totalitarian" comes from the word "total." Under a totalitarian government, the state aims for total control over all activities of the people—their religions, social organizations, art—even over what they read, write, and say. Such regimes demand total loyalty of their subjects. Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler, the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin, and China under Mao Zedong all had totalitarian governments.

C. CULTURAL DIFFUSION

Once again, we may ask why and how cultures change over time. Historic changes would probably occur more slowly, if at all, if it were not for one simple fact: People move about from one place to another. They travel; they trade; and they migrate. As they do so, they come into contact with cultures different from their own. Contact with ideas that are different tends to produce a strong reaction. It challenges traditional ways of doing things. People then must decide whether to accept or reject the unfamiliar religions, customs, and technologies that they encounter in a foreign culture. If they accept them, then *cultural diffusion* takes place. This is the process by which ideas and practices from one area spread to another.

History provides many examples of cultural diffusion. One is the spread of the religion Buddhism from India to other parts of Asia. Another example is the spread of Islam from the Arabian Peninsula throughout the rest of the Middle East and elsewhere.

Today, cultural diffusion is less dependent upon the movement of peoples. Now ideas and ways of doing things can easily travel via television, the mails, and computer networks and through the export of films and recorded music. Young people in Russia, for example, now dance to rock music that originated in the United States and Western Europe.

D. ETHNOCENTRISM

Contact between cultures can have a negative effect if, as often happens, one culture rejects another. Dislike, and even hatred, can develop, for example, as one people migrates into an area that has long been settled by another. Under such circumstances, it is common for a feeling of *ethnocentrism* to develop. This is the belief that one's own culture is superior to all other cultures. Throughout history, ethnocentrism has been a powerful force, one that underlies the outbreak of many wars.

History has provided many examples of the destructive effects of ethnic pride. In ancient times, both the Romans in Europe and the Chinese in Asia viewed foreigners as barbarians. Chinese rulers tried to limit the contact of their people with foreigners. In modern times, the German dictator Adolf Hitler argued that the Germans belonged to a superior race whose duty was to destroy "lesser races." Acting on this ethnocentric idea, Hitler first ordered the persecution of Jews, Gypsies, Slavs, and other groups. Then during World War II (1939–1945), he launched a campaign to round up and kill all Jews and many others whom he considered to be of "inferior races."

ETHNOCENTRISM: In the 1930s, Adolf Hitler (standing in the car) came to power in Germany by arousing Germans' feelings of racial or national pride. What examples of ethnocentrism do we find in the 1990s?



Today, ethnocentrism is still strong. In Eastern Europe in the 1990s, Serbs, Croats, and Muslims fought bitterly over control of land in the tiny state of Bosnia. Serbs adopted a policy of *ethnic cleansing*, forcing thousands of Muslims to leave their homes and towns. (This subject is discussed further in Chapter 8.)

In Review

The following questions refer to Section II: Cultural Traditions and Cultural Diffusion.

1. **Key terms:** Define each of the following:

culture	archeologist	cultural diffusion
artifact	totalitarian	ethnocentrism
2. Give the characteristics of each of the following economic systems: (a) traditional economy, (b) market economy, and (c) command economy.
3. State how a democratic form of government differs from both (a) an absolute monarchy and (b) a totalitarian system.
4. **Critical thinking:** "In our times, cultural diffusion is occurring at a faster rate than ever before." Do you agree with this statement? What evidence could you give to either support or refute the statement?