

Cultural Diffusion Defined

Explain how Europe benefited from [cultural diffusion](#) during the period c. A.D. 1000 - 1500.

Cultural diffusion is the spreading of a cultural trait (e.g., material object, idea, or behavior pattern) from one society to another.

There are three different forms of cultural diffusion.

Direct diffusion is when two cultures are very close to each other, resulting in intermarriage, trade, and even warfare. An example of direct diffusion is between the United States and Canada, where the people living on the border of these two countries engage in hockey, which started in Canada, and baseball, which is big in American culture. Direct diffusion was very common in ancient times, when small groups, or bands, of humans lived in adjoining settlements.

Forced diffusion occurs when one culture subjugates (conquers or enslaves) another culture and forces its own customs on the conquered people. An example would be the conquistadors that took over the indigenous population and made them practice Christianity.

Indirect diffusion happens when traits are passed from one culture through a middleman to another culture, without the first and final cultures ever being in direct contact. An example could be the presence of Mexican food in Canada, since they have a huge country in between them. Indirect diffusion is very common in today's world, because of the mass media and the invention of the Internet.

The four main elements in the diffusion of new ideas are: (1) innovation, (2) communication channels, (3) time, and (4) the social system.

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