

Introduction to Human Geography

Chapter 1

Key Question:

What is Human Geography?

Human Geography

- The study of how people make places, how we organize space and society, how we interact with each other in places and across space, and how we make sense of others and ourselves in our locality, region, and world.

Geographers use fieldwork to understand linkages among places and to see the complexities of issues



Why do Kenyans grow tea and coffee instead of cash crops?

Globalization

A set of processes that are:

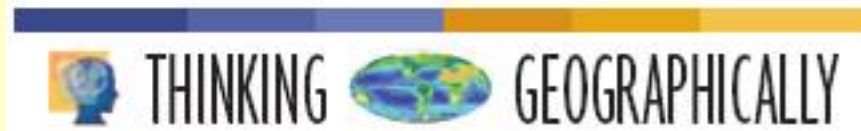
- increasing interactions
- deepening relationships
- heightening interdependence

**without regard to
country borders.**

A set of outcomes that are:

- unevenly distributed
- varying across scales
- differently manifested

throughout the world.



Imagine and describe the most remote place on Earth you can think of 100 years ago. Now, describe how globalization has changed this place and how the people there continue to shape the place – to make it the place it is today.

Key Question:

What are Geographic Questions?

Geographic inquiry focuses on the spatial:

**- the spatial arrangement of places
and phenomena (human and
physical).**

- how are things organized on Earth?**
- how do they appear on the landscape?**
- why? where? so what?**

Spatial distribution

What processes create and sustain the pattern of a distribution?



Map of Cholera Victims
in London's Soho District
in 1854.

The patterns of victim's homes and water pump locations helped uncover the source of the disease.

Five Themes of Geography

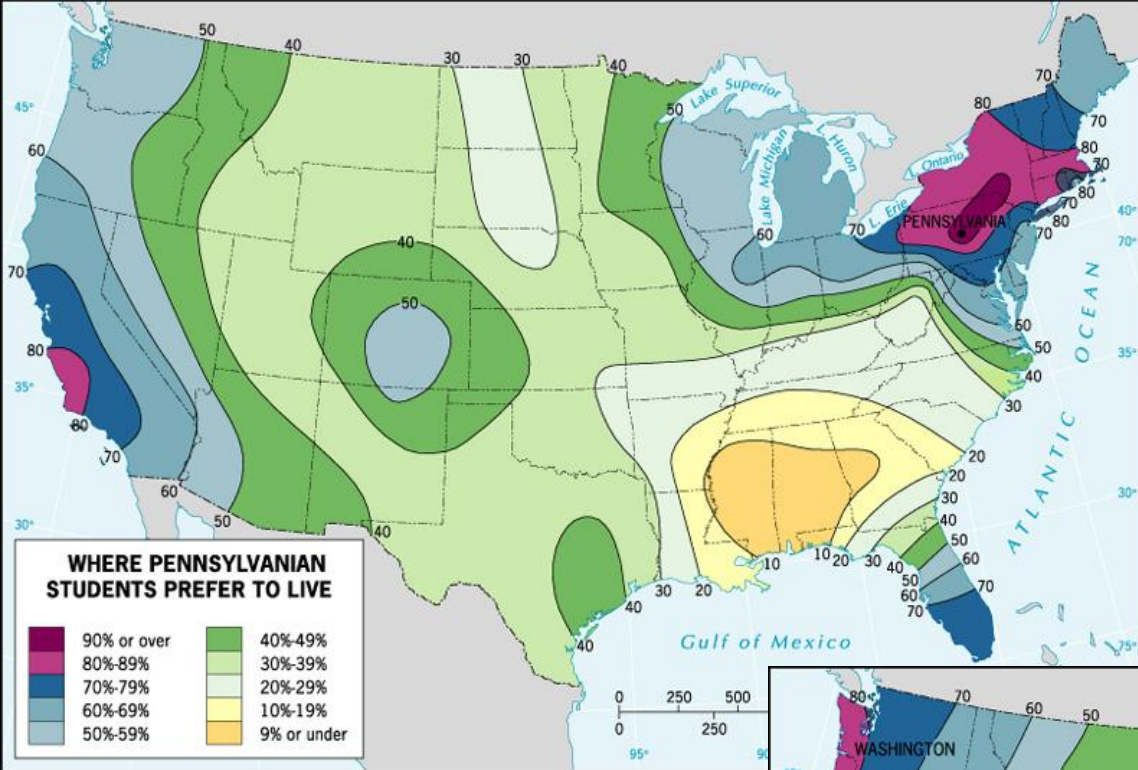
- Location
- Human-Environment
- Region
- Place
- Movement

Place

Sense of place: infusing a place with meaning and emotion.

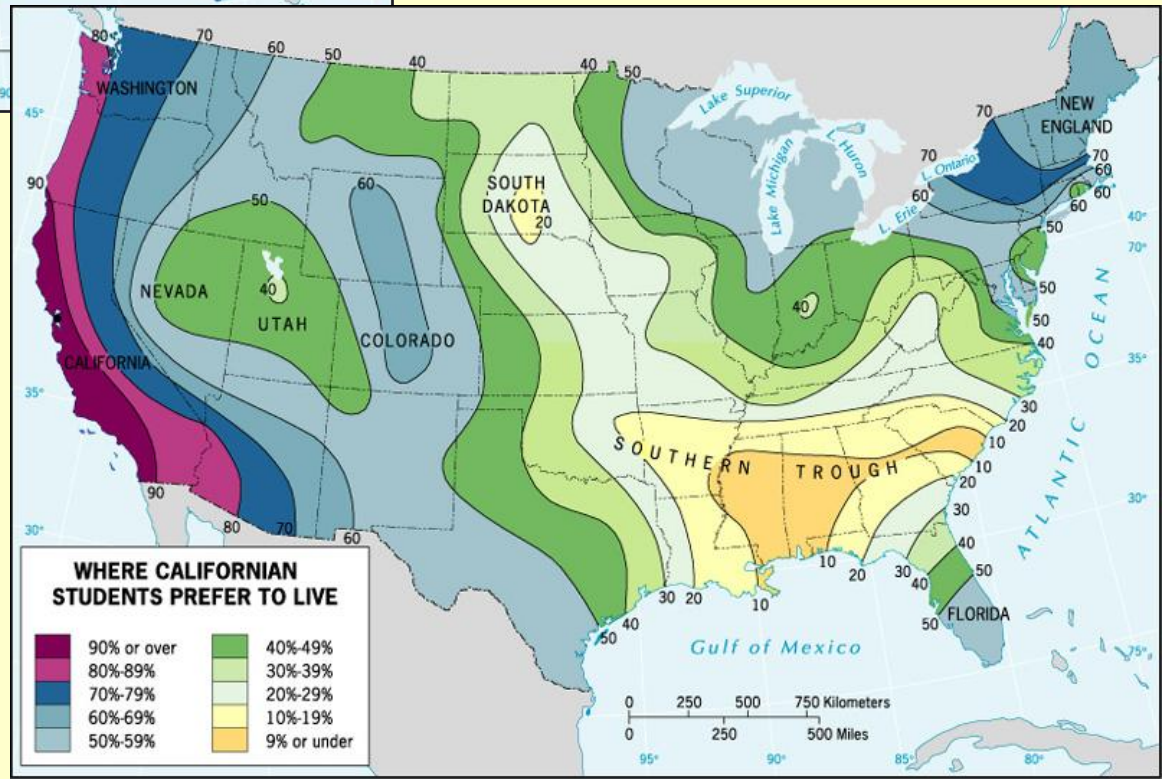
Perception of place: belief or understanding of what a place is like, often based on books, movies, stories, or pictures.

Perception of Place



Where Pennsylvanian students prefer to live

Where Californian students prefer to live



Movement

Spatial interaction: the interconnectedness between places depends upon:

Distance

Accessibility

Connectivity

Cultural Landscape

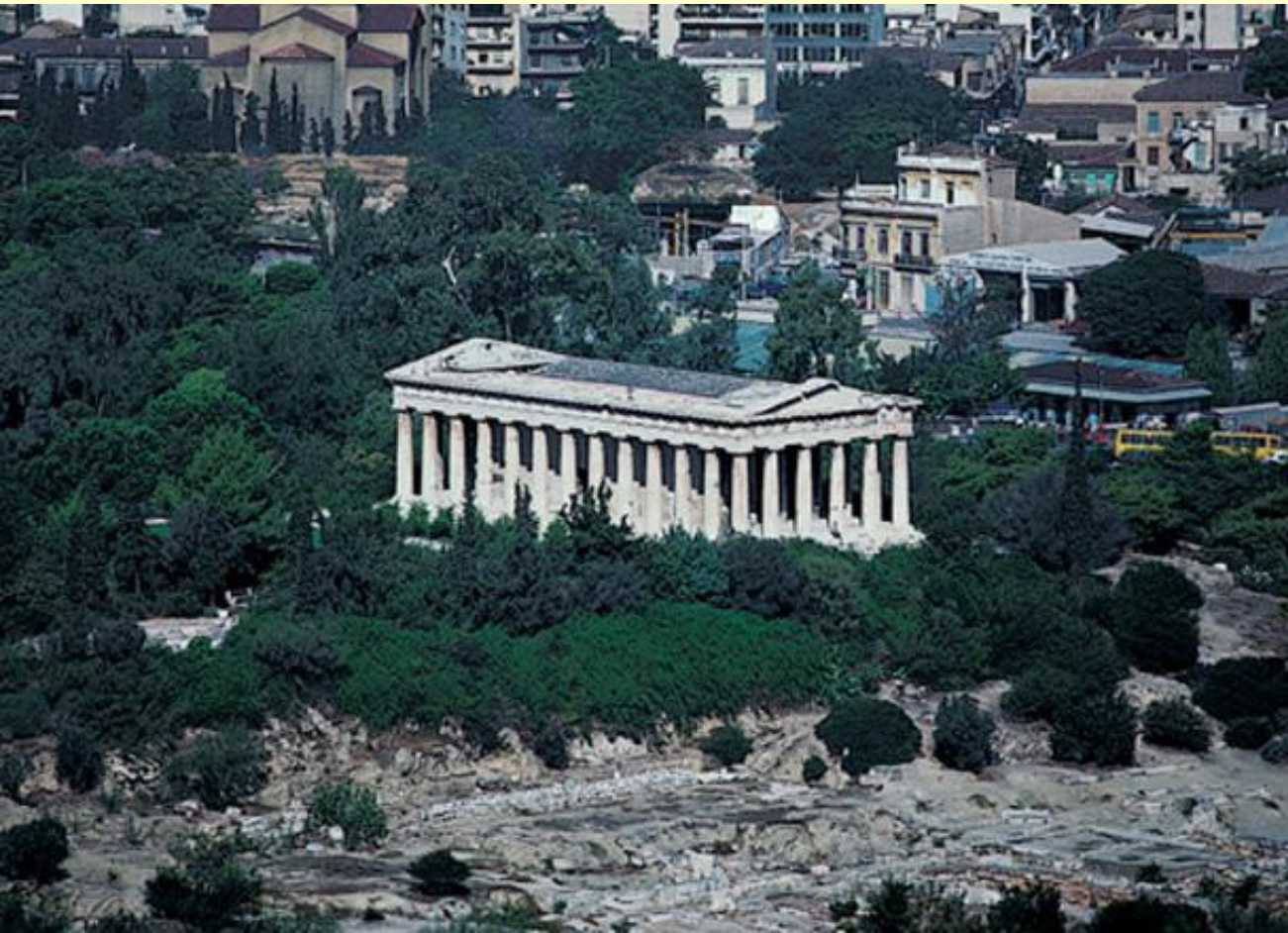
The visible human imprint on the landscape.



Religion and cremation practices diffuse with Hindu migrants from India to Kenya.

Sequent Occupance

Layers of imprints in a cultural landscape that reflect years of differing human activity.



Athens, Greece

ancient Agora
surrounded by
modern buildings

Sequent Occupance

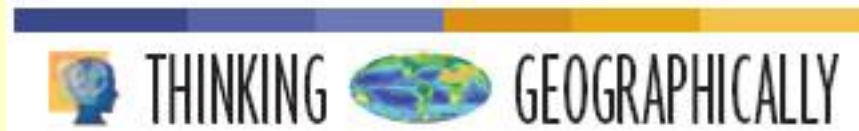
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

African, Arab, German, British, and Indian layers to the city.

Apartment in Mumbai, India

Apartment in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania





Geographers who practice fieldwork keep their eyes open to the world around them and through practice become adept at reading cultural landscapes. Take a walk around your campus or town and try reading the cultural landscape. Choose one thing in the landscape and ask yourself, “what is that and why is it there?” Take the time to find out the answers!

Key Question:

**Why do Geographers use Maps,
and What do Maps Tell Us?**

Two Types of Maps:

Reference Maps

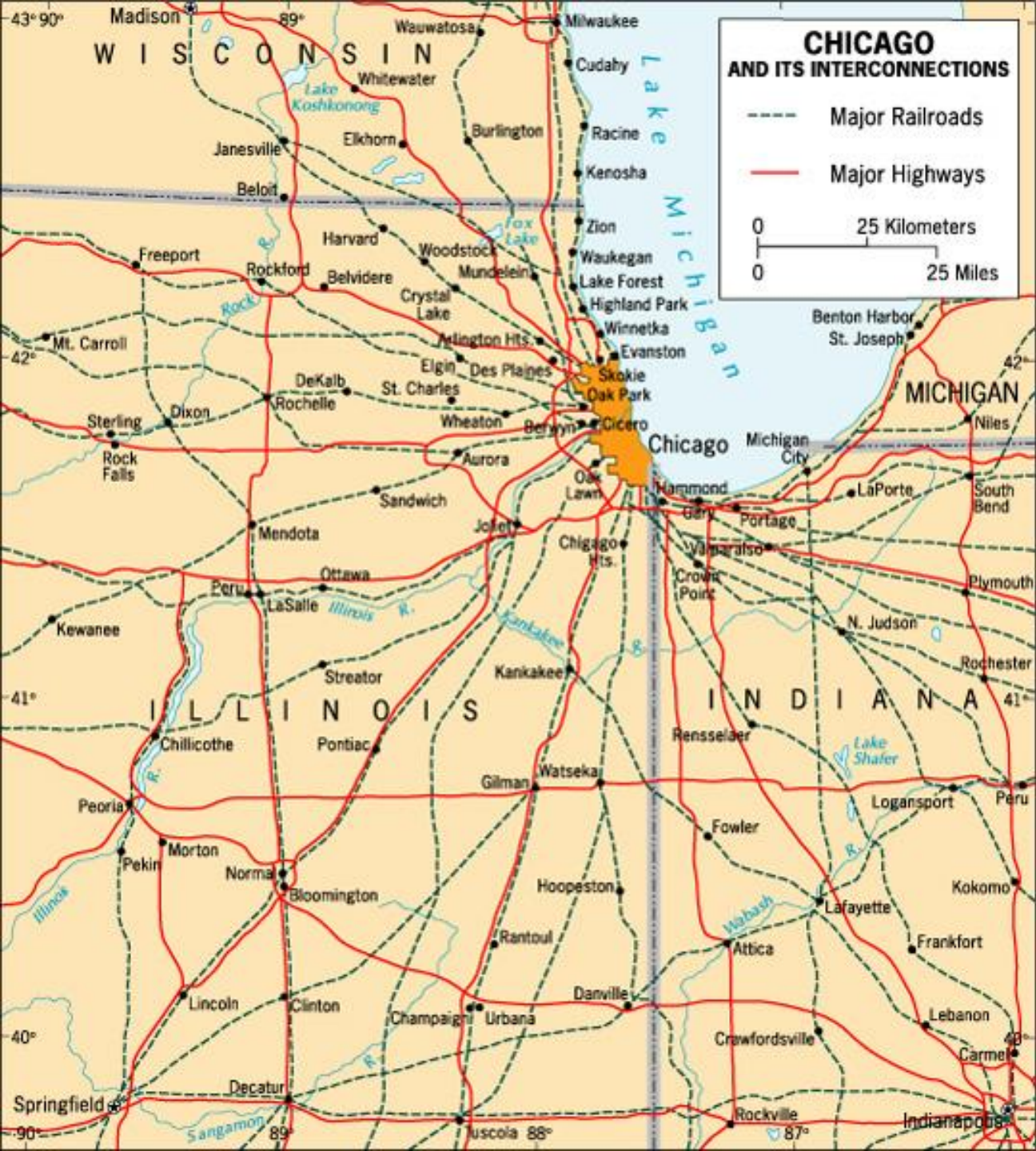
- Show locations of places and geographic features
- Absolute locations

What are reference maps used for?

Thematic Maps

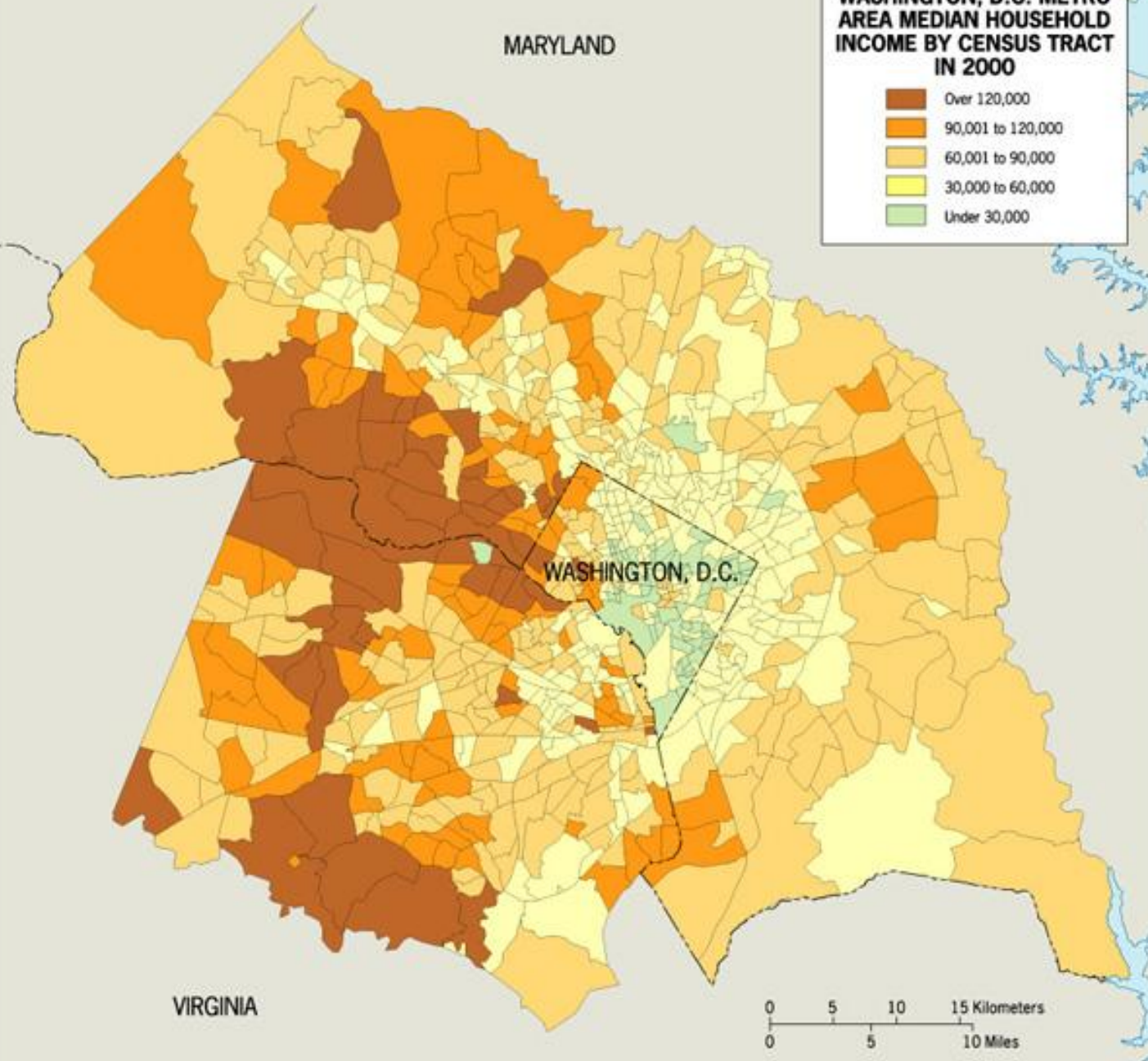
- Tell a story about the degree of an attribute, the pattern of its distribution, or its movement.
- Relative locations

What are thematic maps used for?



Reference
Map

**WASHINGTON, D.C. METRO
AREA MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD
INCOME BY CENSUS TRACT
IN 2000**



Thematic Map

What story
about median
income in the
Washington, DC
area is this map
telling?

Mental Maps:

maps we carry in our minds of places we have been and places we have heard of.

can see: terra incognita, landmarks, paths, and accessibility

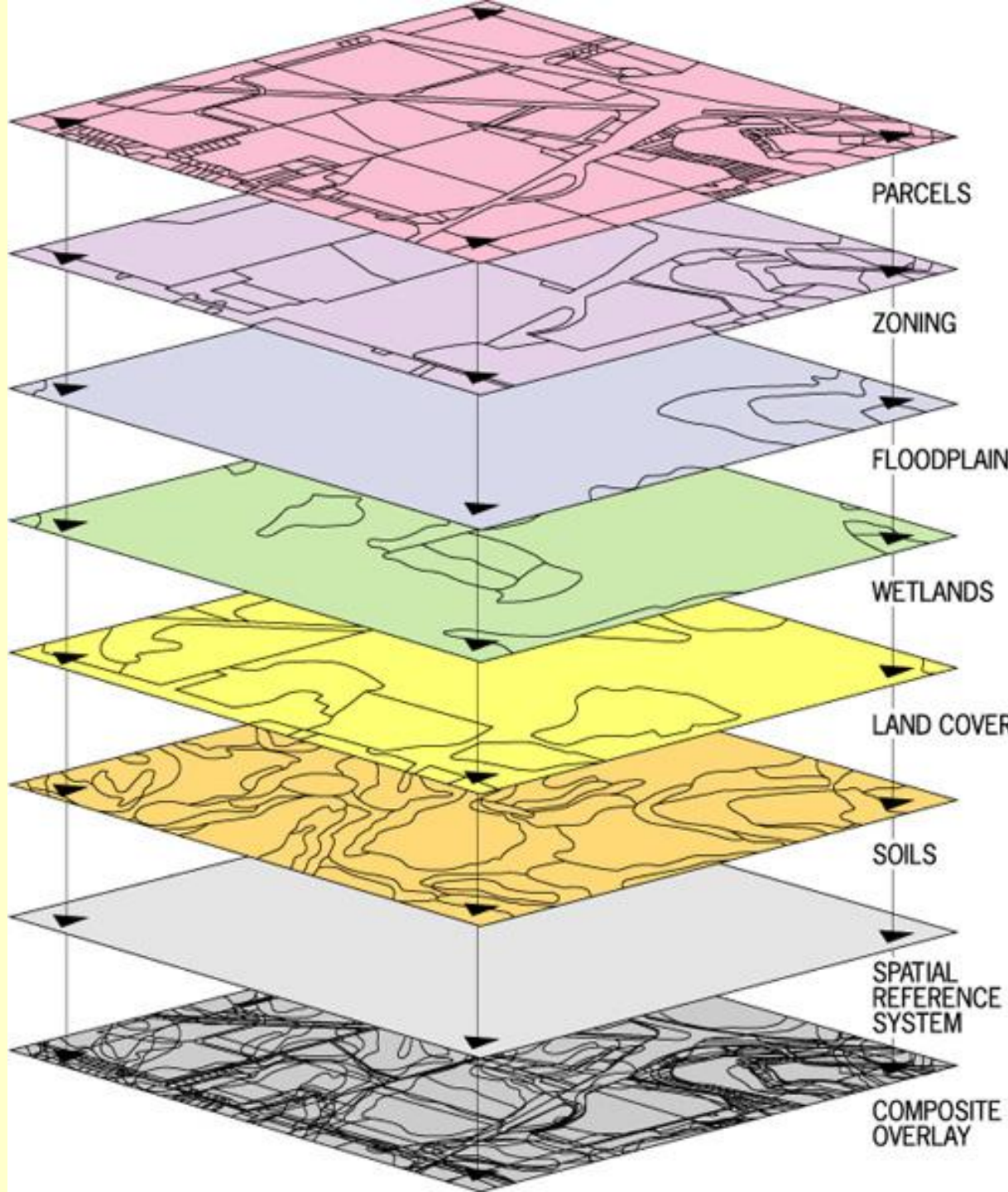
Activity Spaces:

the places we travel to routinely in our rounds of daily activity.

How are activity spaces and mental maps related?

Geographic Information System:

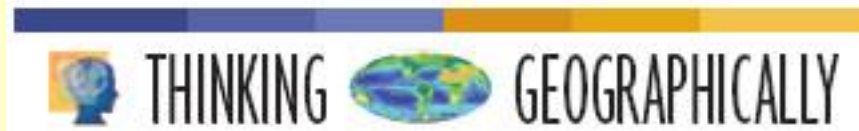
a collection of computer hardware and software that permits storage and analysis of layers of spatial data.



Remote Sensing:
a method of collecting data by instruments that are physically distant from the area of study.







Give a friend or family member a blank piece of paper. Ask the person to draw a detailed map of how he or she gets from home to the place where most of his or her weekdays are spent (work, school). Note the age of the person and the length of time he or she has lived in the place and traveled the route. Analyze the map for terra incognita, landmarks, paths, and accessibility. What does the map reveal about the person's lifestyle and activity space?

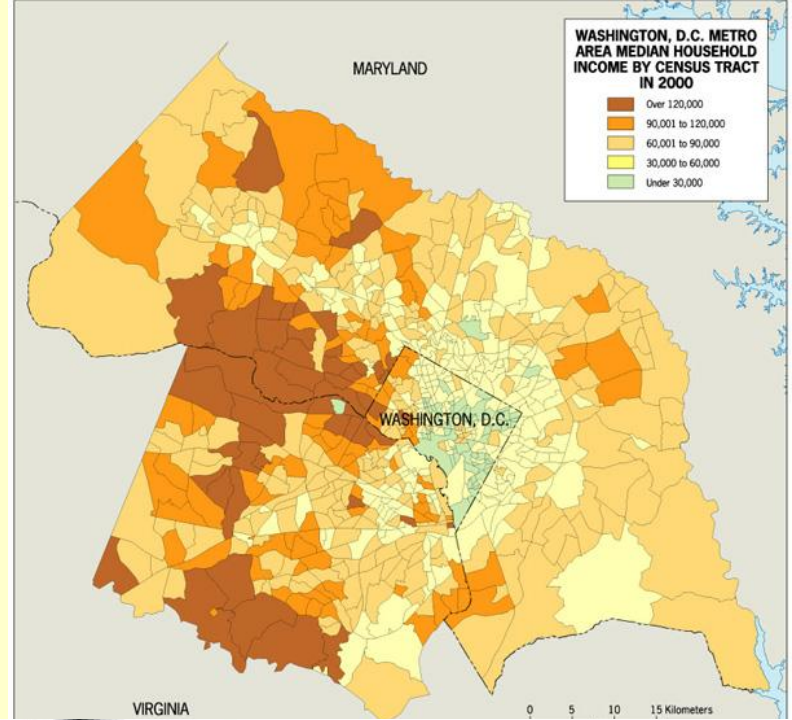
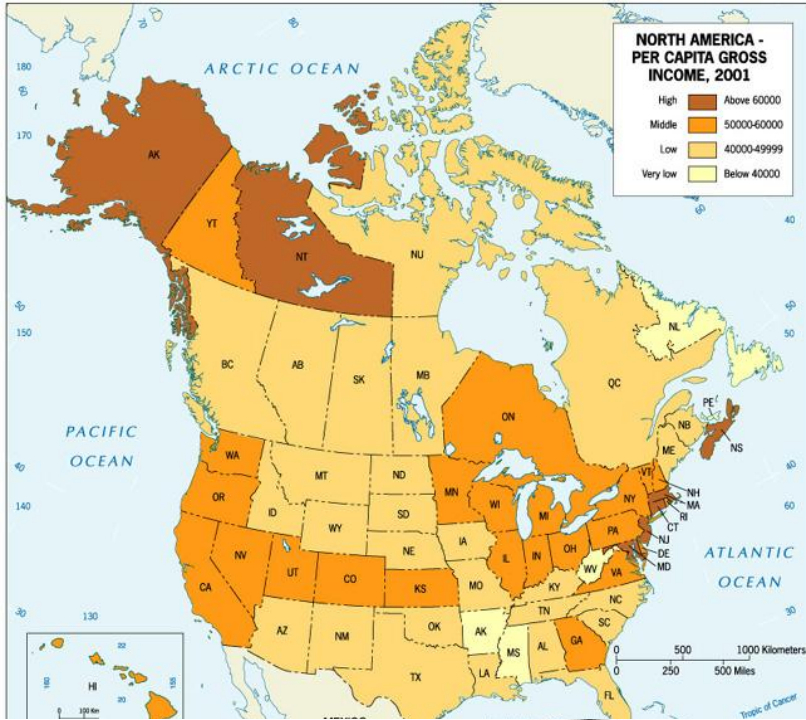
Key Question:

**Why are Geographers Concerned
with Scale and Connectedness?**

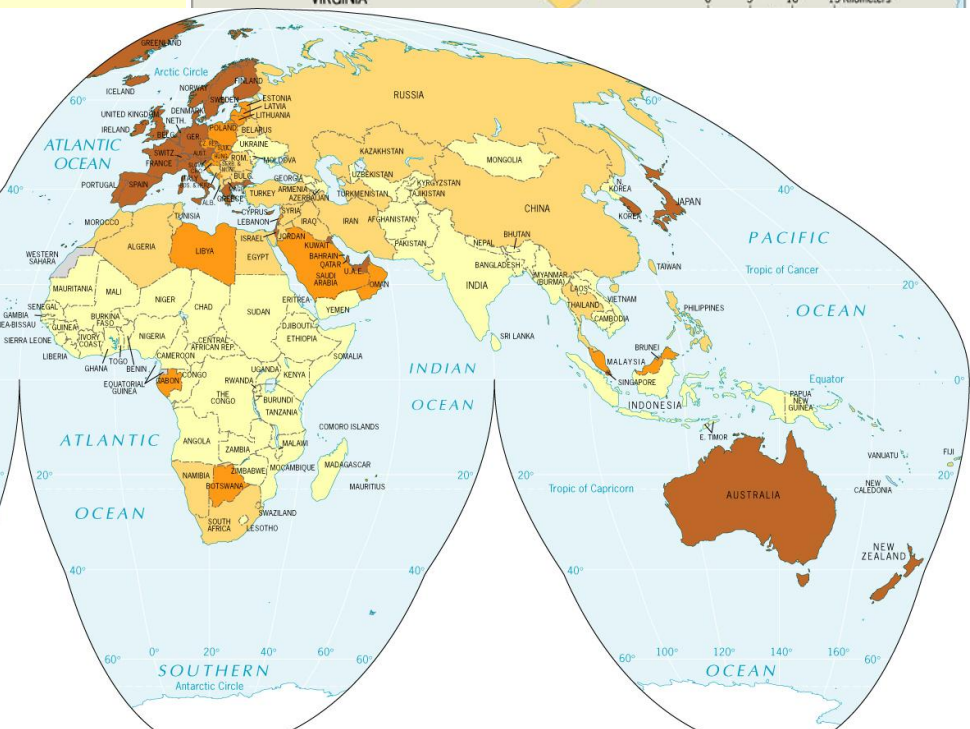
Scale

**Scale is the territorial extent of something.
The observations we make and the context
we see vary across scales, such as:**

- local**
- regional**
- national**
- global**



Scale



Scale is a powerful concept because:

- Processes operating at different scales influence one another.
- What is occurring across scales provides context for us to understand a phenomenon.
- People can use scale politically to change who is involved or how an issue is perceived.
 - e.g. Zapatistas rescale their movement
 - e.g. laws jump scales, ignoring cultural differences

Regions

Formal region: defined by a commonality, typically a cultural linkage or a physical characteristic.

e.g. German speaking region of Europe

Functional region: defined by a set of social, political, or economic activities or the interactions that occur within it.

e.g. an urban area

Regions

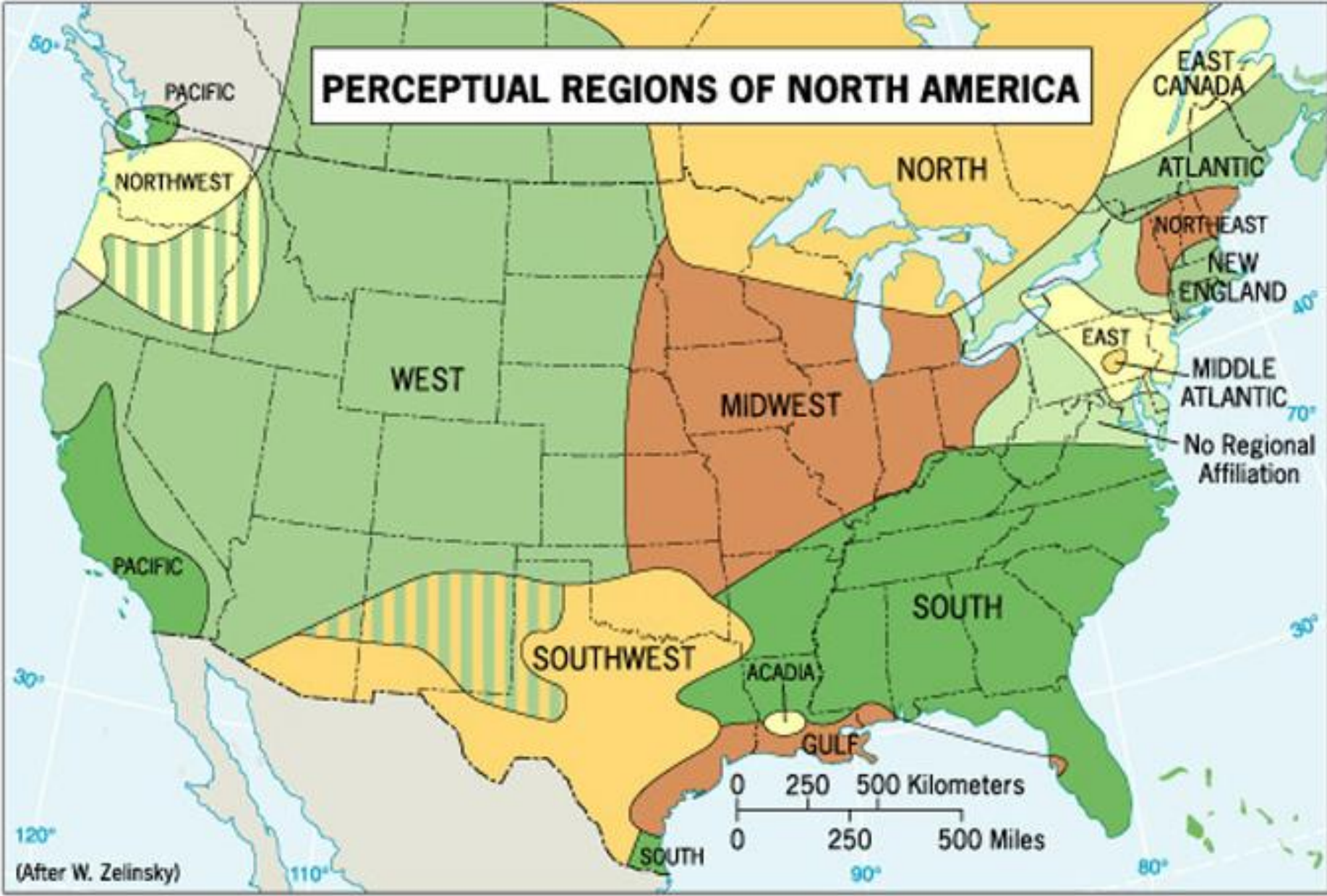
Perceptual Region: ideas in our minds, based on accumulated knowledge of places and regions, that define an area of “sameness” or “connectedness.”

e.g. the South

the Mid-Atlantic

the Middle East

PERCEPTUAL REGIONS OF NORTH AMERICA



(After W. Zelinsky)



The meanings of regions are often contested. In Montgomery, Alabama, streets named after Confederate President Jefferson Davis and Civil Rights leader Rosa Parks intersect.

Photo credit: Jonathan Leib

Culture

Culture is an all-encompassing term that identifies not only the whole tangible lifestyle of peoples, but also their prevailing values and beliefs.

- cultural trait**
- cultural complex**
- cultural hearth**

Connectedness

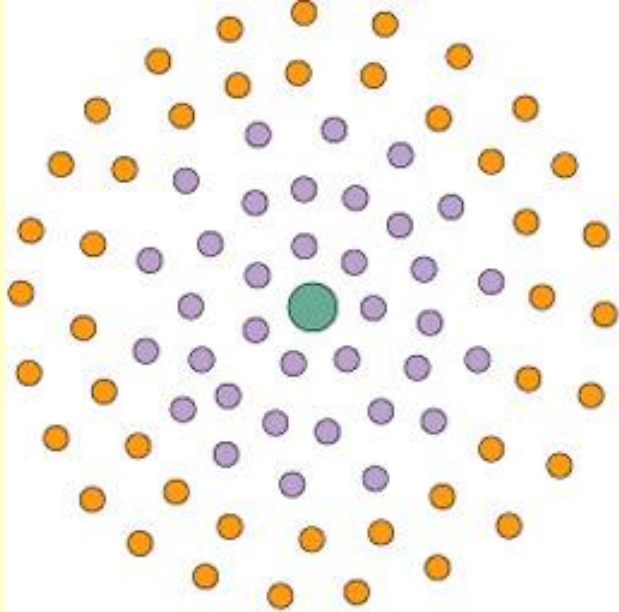
Diffusion: the process of dissemination, the spread of an idea or innovation from its hearth to other areas.

What slows/prevents diffusion?

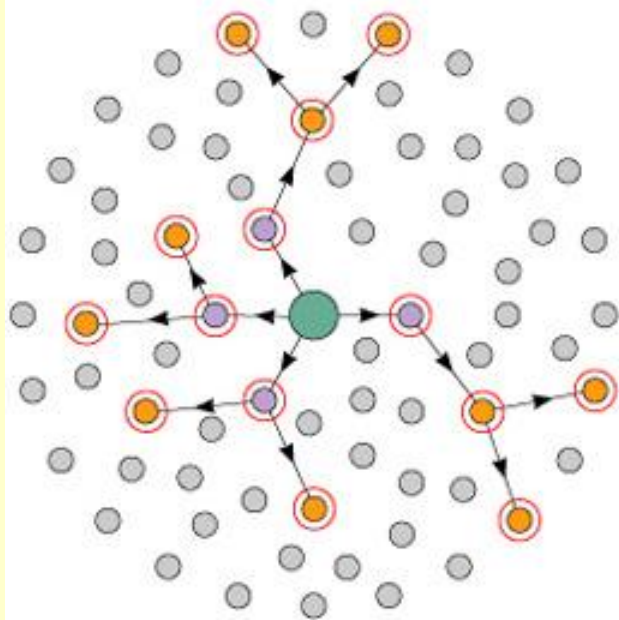
- time-distance decay
- cultural barriers

Types of Diffusion

- **Expansion Diffusion** – idea or innovation spreads outward from the hearth
 - **Contagious** – spreads adjacently
 - **Hierarchical** – spreads to most linked people or places first.
 - **Stimulus** – idea promotes a local experiment or change in the way people do things.



A. Contagious Diffusion



LEGEND

- Hearth
- Early diffusion
- Later diffusion
- Important person or place
- No diffusion

B. Hierarchical Diffusion



Stimulus Diffusion

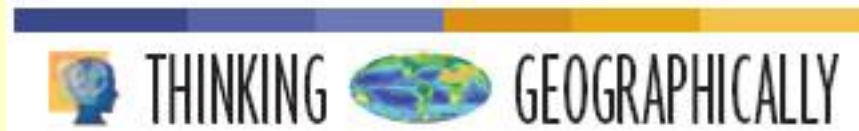
Because Hindus believe cows are holy, cows often roam the streets in villages and towns. The McDonalds restaurants in India feature veggie burgers.



Types of Diffusion

- **Relocation diffusion** – movement of individuals who carry an idea or innovation with them to a new, perhaps distant locale.





Once you think about different types of diffusion, you will be tempted to figure out what kind of diffusion is taking place for all sorts of goods, ideas, or diseases. Please remember any good, idea or disease can diffuse in more than one way. Choose a good, idea, or disease as an example and describe how it diffused from its hearth across the globe, referring to at least three different types of diffusion.

Key Question:

**What are Geographic Concepts,
and How are they used in
Answering Geographic Questions?**

Geographic Concepts

Ways of seeing the world spatially that are used by geographers in answering research questions.

Old Approaches to

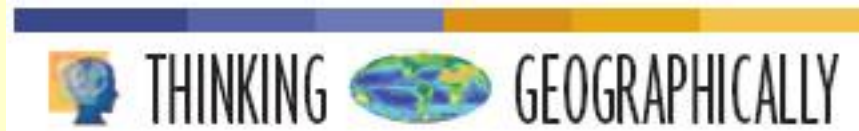
Human-Environment Questions:

- **Environmental Determinism (has been rejected by almost all geographers)**
- **Possibilism (less accepted today)**

New Approaches to

Human-Environment Questions:

- **Cultural ecology**
- **Political ecology**



Create a strong (false) statement about a people and their environment using either environmental determinism or possibilism. Determine how the statement you wrote is false, taking into consideration the roles of culture, politics, and economy in human-environment relations.