Studying Ethnicity Geographically

- Ethnic geography is the study of the spatial aspects of ethnicity.
- Cultural geographers:
  - identify ethnic regions
  - study ethnic diffusion and interaction
  - delve into the relationship between people and their environment (ecology)
  - differentiate ethnic landscapes.

Ethnic Regions

- Ethnic homeland is a region occupied by a group of people with common ancestry who have developed a distinct culture and whose interaction with the environment over time has created a visible, recognizable landscape that is now associated with them:
  - The group’s characteristics are usually different from those of groups in nearby areas.
  - The area can be considered a hearth for the group.
- These visible recognizable cultural characteristics can be transferred to another area (diffusion) when the group moves to a new location and settles (concentrates) there.

Regional Ethnic Ecology, Interaction, Diffusion and Landscape

- “Homeland” connotes a strong sense of attachment to the region and implies some measure of political/social control over it.
  - What is homeland?
    - Mother country – fatherland – place of one’s birth – native soil
  - However, throughout history outsiders – as a reverse means of control – have divided homeland areas, imposed foreign political control and instituted rules and regulations (laws) that may not be acceptable to the native culture group.
- Textbook asks:
  - Are ethnic groups always minorities?
  - Can a majority group form an ethnic region?

Tribal “Homelands” in South Africa

- During the apartheid era, South Africa created a series of black “homelands” with the expectation that every black would be a citizen of one of them. These were abolished with the end of apartheid.
The unification of a homeland for the Kurds and the creation of Kurdistan was prevented after WW I by European powers who drew political borders through the area, thus lessening the power of a unified people. Yugoslavia was established after WW I to make the small Balkan countries more powerful as a unit. It officially recognized five of its member states or “republics” as homelands.

North America is composed of native populations (ethnic homelands) and immigrant populations who established themselves in certain areas (ethnic islands). They exist in various states of vitality. A moribund ethnic homeland is one that was once thriving but now in decline or is a remnant (relic) area.

Ethnic Islands: Small ethnic areas in the countryside; sometimes called folk islands.
Local Ethnic Regions

- **Ethnic Neighborhood**
  A voluntary urban community where people of like origin reside by choice.

- **Ghetto**
  An area of a city where an ethnic group lives either by choice, lack of a better opportunity or force.

- **Ethnoburb**
  A area outside of a city (suburban ethnic neighborhood) that becomes home to an immigrant population; usually wealthier immigrants.

Ethnic Concentrations in Chicago

Jewish Venetian Ghetto
16th Century

Los Angeles Chinatown

Cultural Diffusion and Ethnicity

- **Migration**: the large scale movement of people between different regions. Most migration of ethnic groups falls under the definition of relocation migration.

  - **Chain Migration**
    The tendency of people to migrate over a period of time from specific source areas to specific destinations. (Dominicans and Upper Manhattan.)

  - **Involuntary (forced) Migration**
    The forced displacement of a population, whether by government policy, warfare, or other violence, ethnic cleansing, disease, natural disaster or enslavement. (Darfur region of the Sudan)

  - **Ethnic Cleansing**
    The removal of an unwanted minority populations from a nation-state through harassment, mass killing, deportation, or imprisonment. (Jews in Nazi Germany; Rwandan genocide)

  - **Return Migration**
    Ethnic diffusion that involves the voluntary movement of a group of migrants back to its ancestral or native country or homeland. (African-American return to areas in the South)

Pattern of African American Migration in the U.S.

Now there is a return migration to the South.
Cultural Diffusion and Ethnicity

Cultural simplification
The process by which immigrant ethnic groups lose certain aspects of their traditional culture in the process of settling overseas, creating a new culture that is less complex than the old.

- But languages and dialects, traditional food flavorings, and modernized religious services offer good examples of the preservation of the archaic.

Ethnic Ecology

- Cultural Pre-adaptation
  A complex of adaptive traits and skills possessed in advance of migration by a group, giving it survival ability and competitive advantage in occupying the new environment.
  - Scandinavians in Wisconsin
  - Cubans in South Florida

- Cultural Mal-adaptation
  Poor or inadequate adaptation that occurs when a group pursues an adaptive strategy that fails to provide the necessities of life or, destroys the environment that nourishes it.
  - Try to plant homeland crops in new environment (Bantu in southern Africa)
  - Use improper techniques (British in subtropical Africa)

Caucasus Ethnic Ecology: Diversity within a small area

Cultural Ecology: Hillside Farming in Asia

Ethnic Cultural Interaction

Ethnicity interacts with:
- Religion: religion tenets and belief systems will influence how people will relate to others
- Health: attributes affecting health as diet, seeking medical attention, vaccinations, smoking, personal hygiene, body mutilations, etc. vary with culture
- Business activity: how business is done; the way items are bought and sold: post prices/barter for best deal

- Types of employment:
  - Certain groups have tended to excel in employment/labor niches; can be ecology related or a history of working with a skill set;
  - With immigrant groups this is evident when they bring their trades with them to a new location;
  - Opposite occurs when groups whose skill sets cannot be utilized are employed in low wage and menial jobs.
- Stereotypes may develop as Korean grocers, Chinese launderers, Italian cooks, Kenyan long-distance runners, Irish police officers, Jewish merchants, Dominican baseball players, Native American construction workers, German brewers.
Religion and Neighborhood Businesses

Dominant Ethnic Cuisine in North America

Ethnic Landscapes

Ethnic Landscapes: Who lives there?

Ethnic Landscapes

Alien Culture?

How else!

http://www1.cuny.edu/portal_ur/content/nationofimmigrants/gallery.php
Urban Ethnic Landscapes: Greek Area in Astoria, Queens

Urban Ethnic Landscapes: San Diego Mural

Religious Ethnic Landscape Symbols

NEXT:
Politics of Culture