

Relative isolation of sub-saharan africa



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Relative Isolation on Sub-Saharan Africa Relative isolation affected the development of sub-Saharan African cultures. The lack of contact with other African societies and non-African societies helped shape many distinct groups with individualistic forms of religion, language, and customs. Religion can only spread by contact with other people. There are two main religions in the Middle East and in Europe that have gained dominance and fight to maintain power. Religions such as Greek mythology were quickly pushed aside when a dominant power came in with a different religion.

There are physical obstacles that kept people out of sub-Saharan Africa until the sixteenth century. This means that no major powers/religions were able to spread across the continent and unify the culture. This type of relative isolation is also true amongst African societies. Environmental factors have rendered it nearly impossible for an African society to put itself in a position of dominance over other societies. Because the individual societies were focused on self-preservation instead of trading and conquering they each created their own unique religion.

Africans did not have a large society/kingdom to fall back on for protection and survival. They also live in one of the harshest environments in the world; this forced them to live "as one with nature", causing semi nature based religious systems which can also be seen in Native American culture pre-colonization. Even though the groups developed unique religions they still parallel other groups that lived under the same ecological conditions in Africa and in the Americas.

Language is a defining piece of a societies identity; it creates a sense of unity amongst people, it shows a group's means of food production, and it

individualizes bands of people. African societies historically have not been in conflict with each other. This means that each group developed its own language and the language has advanced along with the society. In places such as Europe and the Middle East each group had developed individual languages but with the progression of empires such as the Egyptians and the Romans came the spread of unified language.

Unified language means societies now have words for tools and gods that they do not have. With little to no contact amongst African societies language did not spread through natural transactions: curiosity or trade. Societies in the rest of the world have been in contact with one another long before they were able to penetrate into sub-Saharan Africa. This means that they were trading; in order to trade one must be able to communicate with another. Trading will affect the language as a whole, which will in turn cause unification in counting systems, religion, and technology.

Societies in Africa did not have this exchange between groups which caused them to develop distinct societies which only had the technology and religion required to keep them alive. African customs were derived from a need for survival. Societies in Africa had to deal with a harsh environment that was constantly pushing back at them. Their customs were a means of survival from the way they handled religion to telling children scary stories about dangerous plants and animals in the means of fairy tales. Unlike societies in Europe that usually had a kingdom of people to rely on for protection and food, Africans had to fight for survival.

European societies created customs to separate classes of people based on wealth or physical appearance or some other identifier whereas African

groups only created customs that benefited the group. The isolation of African societies caused them to create similar but distinctly different customs from each other. Relative isolation caused African societies to develop differently than the shared cultures of most the world. Societies in Africa also develop distinct cultures from each other due to their lack of contact with neighboring groups.