

# The process of the columbian exchange

Government, Colonialism



The Native Indians and Europeans exchanged many cultural ideas and concepts. This process was called the Columbian Exchange. The Columbian Exchange was prompted upon the use of syncretism and imperialism. Culture Syncretism was used to merge different beliefs to produce a general belief of way of life. Culture Imperialism was used by the Europeans to influence the Indians under their ruler ship.

From the 15th to 16th centuries, the New World began to culturally change. The Europeans arrived to the New World not knowing anything about their surroundings. This caused them to have total reliance on the Indians in order to survive. They borrowed from each other causing a cross-cultural system. According to the article " Lies My Teacher Told Me", the Indians took into their culture guns, blankets, and kettles, new foods, and a host of other things.

The Indians of the Atlantic North America had an abundance of skills. They produced weave, watertight baskets and used plants as medicine, in which they showed to the Europeans. In the early stages of the Columbian Exchange, they traded corn, beaver, fish, sassafras, and other goods to the Europeans for axes, blankets, cloth, beads and kettles. These amounts of trading goods caused the Indians way of life to decline. The use of European goods made it easier for the Indians to be more sufficient in hunting and other things.

For a period of years, Europeans lived with Native Americans and worked together. This caused an abundant amount of cultural exchange from food and names to the ideas of farming. The Indians shared many agricultural

ideas with the Europeans. Their knowledge of agriculture was amazing. To the native people, farming was the key to survival. The technique of swidden helped to produce fertile soil. Moreover, the use of squash was used to keep weeds down. The Europeans learned these ideas and transformed them into their farming.

The Europeans brought animals that were a blessing and curse to the Indians way of life. The horses were a blessing to the native people. They allowed tribes to hunt better and travel long distances. Pigs were literally a curse. These nasty animals destroyed their crops and ate almost everything they could put their hands on. Not only did they destroy the native people's agriculture, but brought a load of diseases, diseases that the Indians were not capable of curing.

Amongst the many goods that the Europeans exchanged, they brought a lot of transmitted diseases. These transmitted diseases were familiar to the European culture. Europeans lived close to one another causing them to build resistance to these germs. Unfortunately, the Indians had never had contact with these diseases. The germs were literally spread to the Indians causing thousands to die.

The Eastern Indians societies experienced a substantial amount of change. According to the article " Lies My Teacher Told Me", when the use of Europeans guns and Native American tactics were combined into the Iroquois culture, the culture of the Iroquois was completely changed. They learned how to repair guns, cast bullets, and use other Europeans warfare

tactics. These Indians also became more acquainted with the use of European languages.

This cultural transformation of war tactics caused the Indians to use European guns as a more efficient weapon than their bow and arrows. Guns became the most useful war tactic, causing some nations to have great military advantage. The article states that the Europeans began to realize that trading goods could be used to win and maintain political alliances with the Indian nations. The Indian nations began to form governments similar to the Europeans. They also became more male dominated.

At this point, cultural imperialism came into play. The Europeans would increase Indian warfare by playing one nation against the other. This caused European power to dominate over the Indians. Increased combat caused the enslavement of other Indians to sell to the Europeans for goods. The enslavement of Indians became a common practice in the southern tribes. Thusly, causing the Europeans to literally expand the Indian slave trade by trading guns and other goods for people.

It's quite interesting how the Europeans begin to push power over the Indians by enslaving them. This same tactic of power was used amongst the African nations. These factors of war and slave trade began to affect other Indian nations, causing them to abandon their villages. Its amazing that now they had to rely on Europeans for food by trading their goods. The Europeans themselves became less dependent upon Indian culture, while the Indians became more dependent on European culture. This form of imperialism caused the Indian culture to die out and eventually fall apart.

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The Indians culture changed dramatically. Not only did they embrace European culture, but embraced their religion. Now we see the change from syncretism to imperialism. At one point, the Europeans thought that Indians were savages. Indian tactics and culture confused them, but now the roles were switch.

Cultural Imperialism is the practice of influencing cultural beliefs and dominating over another culture. Metacomet , a Wampanoag leader based summarized the culture imperialism of Europeans . He states

“ The English who first came to this country were but a handful of people, forlorn, poor, and distressed. My father [Massasoit] was then sachem; he relieved their distresses in the most kind and hospitable manner. He gave them land to plant and build upon. They flourished and increased. By various means they got possessed of a great part of this territory” (Lowen).

This quote is the very definition of the vicious domination the Europeans did. They came to a country where people already had a culture. They freeloaded off their way of life. Then they pushed their influence into the native people's culture, causing unnecessary warfare, and eventually wiping their culture out. Thusly, making the New World a European nation called America.

In conclusion, how must we summarize the concepts of culture syncretism and cultural imperialism between the Europeans and the Indians? At one point, the Europeans depended on the Indians to survive. As time progressed, both cultures begin to trade cultural ideas, resulting in the European culture to take domination. Therefore, resulting in native people's

culture to be wiped out by strong European ideas. Thusly, showing the pull to cultural imperialism.