# Chapter 54 Indigenous Societies

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# Abstract

Indigenous societies exist outside the major influences of the global economic system, or within a larger society but separate in a social and cultural sense. In any society there is variation in the degree to which individuals are able to achieve the ideals of that society, and difficulty in doing so can be stressful. This can be manifest in the form of culture-bound syndromes, or local idioms of distress. Major sources of stress involve the processes of acculturation and modernization, or the degree to which traditional societies’ values, beliefs, and, especially, economic systems are impacted. At the same time, there are traditional forms of stress resistance that are configured specifically within traditional systems of social relationships that serve as buffers against the stressful effects of modernization and migration. The study of stress within indigenous and changing societies can help to illuminate fundamental processes in health.