

# Religion

---

## Defining 'Religion'

Wallace: "belief and ritual concerned with supernatural beings, powers, and forces"

Anthropologists focus on social aspects, not just 'beliefs'. What does religion do for society? What are its functions?

Turner: religion/ritual creates *communitas* (a feeling of great social solidarity, equality, and togetherness)

## Spiritual Beings

- **Animism: Belief in spiritual beings**
  - o E.g., Maisin: ghosts of the recent dead, ancestral spirits, bush spirits.
- **Polytheism: Belief in multiple gods**
  - o E.g., Greek Pantheons (Gods of love, war, etc.)
- **Monotheism**
  - o E.g., Belief in a single, all-powerful deity

## Mixing of Religious Systems

- E.g., Maisin
  - o Have been Christian for 80 years, following arrival of Western missionaries
  - o Still retain strong animist beliefs: ghosts, spirits, sorcery

## Powers and Forces

- Supernatural can also include impersonal powers people can sometimes control
- **Mana:** Sacred impersonal force found in people, animals, plants and objects
  - o Pacific Islands
- **Maisin:** *anno wenna*: Spiritual strength and magic power, found in places and people

## Religion and Magic

- Magic: Supernatural techniques to accomplish specific aims
  - o E.g., offerings, spells, rituals
- **Imitative Magic:** Produce an effect by imitating it – e.g. pins in a voodoo doll

- **Contagious Magic:** Affect a person through an object they've touched – e.g., spell using a lock of hair

It helps us deal with uncertainty/anxiety, and provides solace. It helps us face death, adversity, along with uncertainty and danger.

Example:

- Malinowski – Ocean fishing in the Trobriand Islands (Lagoon vs Ocean)
- Gmelch – Baseball magic (North American culture)

### Baseball Magic (George Gmelch)

- Pro baseball players: Rituals, taboos, and sacred objects (fetishes)
  - o Helps decrease stress, create sense of control
- In hitting and pitching, but not fielding
  - o Like Melanowski: situations of uncertainty
    - Fielding is predictable; hitting and pitching involve a lot of chance

### Rituals

- Formal, stylized, repetitive, and stereotyped behavior
- Performed in sacred places at set times
- Social acts – bind people together socially and morally (we're a group, we believe the same things)

### Rites of Passage

Customs of transition from one life stage to another. 3 typical stages:

1. Separation: separated from normal life
2. Liminality: suspension or reversal of ordinary social distinctions and expectations ('in limbo')
  - a. Communitas
3. Incorporation: Return to normal life with a new status

Examples: Initiations, confirmations, bar/bat mitzvahs, weddings

Military:

- Separation: Boot camp
- Liminality: Communitas, anonymity/lack of individuality, in-between statuses
- Incorporation: Become a soldier, etc.

### Religion and Social Control

- Controls people's behaviour and thoughts:

- Rewards: Obedience = social support, access to heaven
- Punishment: Misbehaviour = excommunication, damnation
- Moral standards, expectations, guilt (“Thou shalt not...”

## Sorcery (Witchcraft)

- Controls behaviour
  - E.g., Masion: Failure to share (reciprocity) could cause a sorcerer to attack you
- Explains misfortune or illness
  - “Someone inflicted this illness on me!”

## Kinds of Religion

- Religious specialists mediate between humans and supernatural
  - Shamans: curers, mediums, ‘witch-doctors’, etc.
    - Part time specialists, small-scale societies (e.g., foragers, horticulturalists)
  - Agricultural and state societies: full-time religious specialists and institutions
    - Priests, temples, churches, etc.

## Revitalization Movements

- Occur in times of change, oppression
  - Religious leaders emerge to alter or revitalize a society
    - E.g., Christianity, during Roman rule in Middle East
- Iroquois reformation led by Handsome Lake (New York, 1800)
  - Response to dominance by American colonists, deterioration of life on new reservations
  - Handsome Lake church established

## Cargo Cults: E.g., Papua New Guinea

- Revitalization movements that emerge when small-scale communities have contact with industrial societies but lack their wealth, technology
  - Indigenous communities attempt to:
    - Achieve similar success magically by mimicking European behaviour
    - Explain European domination and wealth
    - Political: Points out and tries to change inequality

## Secular Rituals

- Religion is hard to define. What is religion and what is not?

- E.g.,
  - o 'Secular' events (e.g., soccer game, fraternity initiation) can involve ritual, intense community spirit, etc.

## Functions of Religion

- Social unity: Community
- Psychological: Coping with uncertainty, adversity, fear, tragedy
- Explanation: Where do we come from? What happens when I die? Why me?
- Guidelines: Rules for living, behaviour, morality, courses of action
- Purpose: Provides meaning, direction, hope

## Film: Inventing Reality (1991)

4 Stories:

1. American man struck by lightning 7 times
  - a. "I asked God, why me?"
    - i. Tribes believe in the web of life. Everyone is connected to everything.
    - ii. Industrialized nations don't. No sense of connection to the universe.
2. Mexican shaman healing his son's measles
  - a. "Pills treat the symptoms, I treat the cause"
    - i. The gods send sickness when they are angry. It might be caused by disharmony in the village, or lack of offerings. The creator gave me the gift to treat the chest and stomach, but none of my cures are working. (Must restore balance so gods are satisfied).
3. Toronto cancer clinic
  - a. Healing through meditation and visualization
    - i. Chances of living 5 more years is little as 1 in 100 after chemotherapy and cancer spread to lymph nodes.
4. Dreamtime in Australian aboriginal cosmology
  - a. Origins of world/spirit world
    - i. Spirits are like a life force and essence. To make connection to those sites, you use "liam"?

# World System and Colonialism

---

## The World System

Truly isolated societies do not exist today (nor have they ever existed)

### Modern World System:

- World in which nations are economically and politically interdependent

Traced back to the 15<sup>th</sup> Century and onwards, there was an increase in international trade. It led to the current **capitalist world economy**

- A single world economic system based on maximizing profits, not supplying domestic needs

## Emergence of the World System

European exploration/trade in the 15<sup>th</sup> century

- Permanently linked Europe with Asia, Africa and Americas

## Industrial Revolution

- Began in England
- Manufacturing moved from home to factories
- Cities developed, population increased
- Importing and exporting increased
  - o More population = more demand for imports
  - o British settlers in colonies = desire for stuff from England

## Expansion of the World System

- Example: Sugar: Became an everyday item in England, imported from tropical zones
- Plantations in Brazil and Caribbean established to grow sugar
- Slave trade from Africa developed to provide labour to these plantations

## Colonialism

- Imperialism: Policy of extending rule of a nation/empire over foreign nations and taking colonies
- Colonialism: Political, social, economic and cultural domination of a territory and its people by a foreign power

### Example: British Colonialism

- Justification for British imperialism:
  - o “The White Man’s Burden”
    - Racist notion that British guidance was needed to civilize non-Europeans
- British empire disintegrated after World War II, due to independence movements

### Socioeconomic Effects of Industrialization

- Prosperity:
  - o English national income
    - Tripled from 1700 to 1815
    - Increased by 30 times from 1815 to 1939
- Social Ills accompanying industrialization:
  - o Pollution
  - o Crowded and unsanitary housing
  - o Insufficient water and sewage disposal
  - o Disease
  - o Rising death rates
- Industrial Stratification
  - o Marx: A sharp division between two opposed classes:
    - Bourgeoisie: Capitalists, wealthy and powerful
      - Owned means of production
    - Proletariat: Property-less working class
      - Had to sell their labour to survive
  - o Unions/labour movements emerged to fight for better wages/working conditions
  - o Emergence of a ‘middle class’, more mobility
  - o Wealth disparities remain in rich countries
    - Great differences in wealth

### Other Effects of Industrialization

- Energy consumption: Shift to use of fossil fuels
- Destruction of local economies, ecologies and populations
  - o Loss of land, independence, etc.

### Current World Stratification System

- Wealth contrast between capitalists/workers in the core nations and workers in periphery

### World-System Theory

- Social system, based on wealth and power differences, extends beyond individual nations

- **Wallerstein:** Nations occupy 3 different positions of economic/political power
  - Core
    - Richest/most powerful nations (US/Canada/Etc.)
  - Periphery
    - Industrialized nations, exporters, but lack power of core nations (Brazil/India/Etc.)
  - Semi-periphery
    - Poorest/least powerful countries, produce raw materials, food, labour for export (African nations, etc.)



Definitions are SWAPPED

## World System Today

- Immigrants from periphery provide cheap labour to core for agriculture, factories and domestic labour
  - Ex. Filipina nannies in Ottawa
- Companies in core nations “outsource” jobs to get cheap labour in non-core countries
  - India’s call centres

## Poor/Illegal Migrants in N. America

- Myth: Burden on society, take jobs, depend on government
- Reality: Do work Canadians/Americans don’t want to do, poor wages, don’t get EI/Health insurance/etc.
  - Ex. Mexican migrant farmworkers

## Mexican Migrant Farm Worker in U.S.

- Part of global world system: peripheral countries provide labour to core
  - Americans benefit from cheap vegetables due to cheap labour (Canadians import them)
- Began coming because invited as cheap labour starting in 1940s by U.S. government

## Mexican migrant farm workers in San Diego County, 1996

- Minimum wage or worse, seasonal
- Lived in squatter camps
- No transportation, stores, bathrooms
- Pesticides, unclean water, back injury
- Hard to get health care

Today: some improvements, but still poor conditions

## Legacies of Colonialism: Development

- Intervention philosophy: core countries direct peripheral nations – e.g., development

- E.g., Neoliberalism: Government should not regulate business/the market
  - Promotion of free trade
  - Maximizing profits through cutting costs
  - Cutting government expenses
  - To get loans, non-core nations accept neoliberal principles: imposed by IMF, World Bank, etc.

### **Film: Bhopal: The Search for Justice**

- Union Carbide (American) chemical plant in Bhopal, India: explosion killed thousands, made hundreds of thousand sick (1984)
- Film: 20 years later: examines the aftermath
- Shows relations between core and semi-periphery/periphery, effects of neoliberalism
  - American company's use of cheap labour in poor nations
  - Cost cutting, less safety controls than in U.S.
  - Devaluing of lives in semi-periphery, little compensation by American company

# Ethnicity and Race

---

**Ethnicity:** A social identity of a group that distinguishes itself from other groups within a nation/region – by language, religion, heritage, etc.

**Race:** An ethnic group or category viewed as having a biological/genetic basis

- Overlapping concepts

## Race

An ethnic group perceived to be biologically/genetically distinct from other groups.

Races are cultural categories rather than a biological reality.

Socially, races are 'real' because they have consequences.

Racial classifications usually based on phenotype (visible traits):

- Problem: Which traits count? Skin colour, hair, eyes, face shape, height?
- Problem: There is much variation in these traits within a single 'race' – e.g., skin colour
  - o What 'counts' as a difference is culturally determined

## Film: Race: The Power of an Illusion [Episode 1: The Difference Between Us]

Problems with the biological race concept:

1. How many races are there?
  - a. Often assumed: 4-5 (white, black, Asian, native American, perhaps Polynesian)
  - b. So where do we put the Māori? Australian aborigines? Are Indians and Chinese the 'same race'?
  - c. Historically, scholars have divided humans into anywhere from 2 to 63 races
2. Human variation exists, but cannot be divided genetically into distinct races
  - a. Cultural ideas, not biology, determines how we group people
    - i. E.g. grouping all sub-Saharan Africans together ('black')
  - b. Populations gradually change in phenotype from one area to the next
    - i. Skin colour gradually lightens
3. Individuals within one 'race' are not more similar to each other than to individuals of other 'races'

- a. 2 'white' students are no more genetically similar than 1 'white' and 1 'black' student
    - b. The traits we associate with race are a few superficial features, not connected to other genetic differences
  - 4. Africa contains most of the genetic variation in the world
    - a. The rest of the world contains a subset of that variation
- \*\* Understandingrace.org
- Visual way of understanding variation
- 5. Race is 'assigned' to people based on social criteria (e.g. ideas about 'inferiority')
    - a. In the U.S., Irish used to be viewed as a different 'race' from English
    - b. **Hypo-descent:** 'biracial' people are usually 'assigned' to the minority group
      - i. E.g. Barack Obama is always called a 'black' president despite having a black father and white mother

### E.g.,: Race in Japan – Assigned based on social criteria

#### Burakumin

- Descendants of historically low-status social class
- Genetically indistinguishable from other Japanese, but stigmatized as an inferior race
- Discriminated against similar to U.S. blacks
  - o Avoidance of intermarriage
  - o Less access to education, jobs, health care

### Consequences of Assuming Race is Biological

**Racism:** Discrimination/prejudice, violence based on assumption of superiority/inferiority

Assuming biological, racial talents/skills:

- E.g., African-Americans have athletic talent; Asians are smart (channels/excludes people)
- 

**Eugenics:** Assumption of superiority of certain groups = they should breed, others should not

- Nazi ideas came from U.S. race 'science'

## Ethnic Groups and Ethnicity

**Ethnic groups:** members share a common identity in contrast with others in same nation/region

Markers of ethnicity:

- Collective name
- Belief in common heritage/homeland
- Actual or perceived shared culture – e.g., values, language, religion, history, 'race'
- Sense of group solidity

Shifting Status:

- Situation negotiation of social identity: shifting one's status (e.g., ethnic identity) in different social contexts
- E.g., I'm Mexican-American in contrast to Cubans, but Hispanic in contrast to Anglos

## Ethnic Tolerance and Accommodation

Assimilation: When a minority group adopts the dominant culture

Plural society: a society with distinct ethnic groups that occupy separate 'niches' (e.g., jobs, subsistence activities) – exchange with each other

Multiculturalism: valuing of continuing ethnic traditions while also sharing a national culture

- E.g., idealistic view in Canada/Canadian government

## Ethnic Conflict

- Multicultural model increasingly prominent in North America, but ethnic conflict evident
  - o Some ethnic groups expect others to assimilate to a shared culture
  - o Groups compete, see others as rivals
- Prejudice: Devaluation of a group due to assumed behaviours, values, capabilities or attributes (stereotypes)
- Discrimination: policies/practices that harm a group
  - o de facto discrimination: practiced but not legally sanctioned (e.g., cops mistreating minorities)
  - o de jure discrimination: part of law (e.g. apartheid, US segregation)
- Overt forms of ethnic oppression
  - o Genocide: mass murder of an ethnic group
  - o Ethnocide: destruction of an ethnic group's culture (e.g. banning practices)

- Ethnic expulsion: removal of groups that are culturally different from a country
- Forms of ethnic oppression
  - Forced assimilation: forcing an ethnic group to adopt the dominant culture
  - Cultural colonialism: internal domination by one group and its culture or ideology over others (E.g., Soviet Union imposed Russian culture in colonies)

### **Subtle forms of ethnic oppression: Stereotyping in Mass media (TV., movies, news)**

- E.g., Jersey Shore – portrayals of Italian Americans on TV shows reinforce negative stereotypes
- E.g., Orientalism – 1978 book by Edward Said: Western stereotypes of the middle east portray Muslims as villains/terrorists
  - Film clip: Edward Said: On Orientalism (youtube)
    - Interview + media images of Muslims

# Applying Anthropology

---

- Use of anthropological perspectives and methods to assess and solve 'real world' problems
  - o Ethnographic method is a valuable tool
    - Anthropologists know that "the people" have information "the experts" lack
      - Interviewing, participant-observation reveal this info

## Role of Applied Anthropologist

- Anthropologists:
  - o Identify locally perceived needs for change
  - o Design culturally appropriate change
  - o Protect interests of local people
- Applied anthropologists work in:
  - o International organizations, government, businesses, hospitals, schools
  - o Universities: doing research that can be used for changes in policies, programs

## Areas of Applied Anthropology

- Development anthropology
- Educational anthropology
- Urban anthropology
- Business anthropology
- Medical anthropology

## Development Anthropology

- Working with development agencies (government or non-governmental) to guide economic development in poor nations
  - o Foreign aid often does not go where most needed
  - o Anthropologists: try to put forward needs of local people
    - Increase equity: make development benefit poor as well as rich business-people
- Kottak found:
  - o Culturally compatible economic projects twice as successful financially
  - o Projects must:
    - Be culturally appropriate

- Respond to locally perceived needs
  - Involve men and women in planning (in past, men usually targeted)
  - Harness traditional organizations
  - Be flexible
- Development projects must avoid:
  - Over-innovation: too much change
    - People generally resist major changes in their daily lives
  - Under-differentiation: tendency to view poor countries as all alike, suggest same solutions
    - Solutions need to draw on existing local ways of doing things
- Example: Over-innovation and under-differentiation
  - Rice agriculture in Bali (Indonesia):
    - Government and foreign experts tried to impose new 'green revolution' rice technologies'
      - New rice types, fertilizers, pesticides
    - Steve Lansing: Anthropologist
      - Studied traditional rice growing in Bali, managed by 'water temple priests'
      - Found their system more efficient than foreign experts' ideas
        - More rice, with pesticides or fertilizers
      - Over-innovation: new changes not needed
      - Under-differentiation: assumed changes that were better for one place were better for all
        - Didn't consider advantages of local system

### Anthropology and Business

- Anthropologists use ethnography to:
  - Study "organizational culture": problems, communication, in organizations like hospitals, businesses
    - Mediate between managers and workers
  - Support marketing: "corporate anthropology"
    - Observe how consumers choose and use products
    - Make marketing culturally relevant
- Culturally appropriate marketing
  - Each time McDonald's expands to a new nation, it must devise a culturally appropriate strategy
    - Initial Brazilian ad campaign failed
      - E.g., hamburgers as a 'quick lunch' at the office inappropriate where lunch is the long, main meal of the day
    - Most appropriate ads: targeted light dinners on Sunday, "on the cook's day off"

- Corporate Anthropology
  - The Atlantic Magazine: news story from February, 2013:
    - Anthropology Inc.
      - Microsoft is one of the world's largest employers of anthropologists
        - Study how people actually USE Microsoft products, what's important to them
        - People don't like marketing phone surveys
          - Anthropologists spend time with people
      - Ethnical challenges; Anthropologists ask:
        - Should we be helping companies sell more, unhealthy Coca-Cola?
          - Goal of "do no harm" to those we study

### Medical Anthropology – Studies:

- Cultural perceptions of illness
  - Disease: scientifically identified health problem
  - Illness: how people themselves think about illness
- How/when people use health care, traditional healers
- Effects of development on health
  - E.g., new irrigation projects spread schistosomiasis, a parasite found in snails that live in slow-moving water
- Effects of poverty on health
  - E.g., HIV/AIDS spreads where poverty leads to prostitution to survive
- Use of modern medicine
  - E.g., Over-prescription and overuse of drugs
- Impact of medical technology and social change
  - E.g., people seeking to pay for organs (e.g., kidney donors) from poor countries, or surrogate mothers

### Women's health project, rural Thailand, 1997+

- Team research project: Thai and North American researchers
- Studied women's reproductive tract infections (sexually transmitted, other)
  - What did they think caused the?
  - How did they treat them?
  - Was health care effective?
- Applied project: designed to help improve health services
- Unravelled a mystery:
  - Why were women using a lot of inappropriate drugs to treat RTIs?
  - Why weren't they getting good treatment at hospitals?
  - Why were they all afraid they would get cervical cancer, when their infections weren't related to cancer?

### **Cultural Views of 'Uterus problems'**

- Infections (RTIs) are part of a large group of problems called "uterus problems"
- "Uterus problems" are caused by infection, hard work, poor hygiene, etc.
- "Uterus problems" advance and turn into cervical cancer, which causes death

### **Intensive Health Education Program on Cervical Cancer**

- Goal: Get women to come for Pap smears (cervical cancer screening)
- Posters, loudspeaker announcements in villages, etc.
  - o Convinced women cervical cancer is really common
  - o Increased fear of it, especially given worries about 'uterus problems' turning into it

### **What happened when they went to Pap smear clinics**

- Hospitals had special clinics for cervical cancer screening (prevention)
  - o Women went there because they wanted treatment for 'uterus problems'
- Health staff didn't understand that's what they wanted (poor communication)
  - o Women got Pap smears, didn't get the treatment they needed

### **Drug Companies/Pharmaceutical Companies**

- Advertised antibiotics inappropriately for 'uterus problems' (sold at village shops)

### **Interventions: What we did**

- Improved communication at hospitals, treatment of infections at Pap smear clinics
- Improved education about 'uterus problems' at community clinics
- Campaign to target drug companies, discourage informal sale of antibiotics in shops

# Anthropology and Globalization

---

## Globalization

A series of processes that are making nations and people increasingly interlinked and dependent on each other

- Globalization as fact:
  - o Actual spread of production, communication and technology
- Globalization as ideology/policy:
  - o Efforts by global powers (e.g., IMF, World Bank) to promote global free market in goods/services

## Growth in Globalization Increasing

- Speed of global communication
- Scale of global networks
- Volume of international transactions

Movement of:

- Information
- Products
- People
- Economic Policies

## Globalization of Risk

- Ecological risks are globalized: use of fossil fuels in one place = climate change everywhere

## Globalization: Impacts

On:

- Environment
- Culture
- Indigenous People

## Globalization: Environmental Impacts

- Climate Change:
  - o Burning fossil fuels in one place (e.g., US is largest CO<sub>2</sub> emitter) causes impact in others (globalized/localized risk)
    - E.g., coastal communities in Alaska, entire Pacific islands must be relocated
- Deforestation

- Causes increase in CO<sub>2</sub> (globalized risk)
- Caused by many global forces: population pressure logging, cash cropping, livestock raising for export
- Ethnoecology:
  - Cultural practices through which people adapt to environments
    - Indigenous ethnoecologies increasingly challenged by globalization
      - E.g., Ancestral Lines: Logging companies and PNG governments tried to take control of Maisin lands for logging
        - Both may ignore local needs (e.g., use of forests for subsistence)

### Globalization: Cultural Impacts

Cultural Imperialism: Spread of one culture at the expense of others, which it modifies/replaces

- Usually “Westernization”
  - May erase cultural differences

BUT: Globalization may also allow local culture greater expression

- E.g., T.V and YouTube broadcast of traditional ceremonies
- E.g., Global spread of culture results in tourism, maintenance of local festivals

People assign own meanings and value to imported global products and ideas

- Indigenization: Modifying to fit the local culture
  - E.g., Rambo interpreted by Australian aborigines as an example of the third world

Mass media (TV, Internet, etc.)

- Can help create national and ethnic identities
  - E.g., Pan-Aboriginal identity in Canada
- Can help maintain national and ethnic identities when people cross borders
  - E.g., Diasporas (ethnic communities abroad): maintain ties through Internet, TV networks abroad

Global Culture of Consumption

- English t-shirts, Thai food, Brazilian music are consumed everywhere
- Indigenous products are consumed globally
  - E.g., Maisin tapa cloth sold in the West

CULTURAL IMPACTS ARE COMPLEX.

### Globalization: Impacts on Indigenous Peoples

- Indigenous people = ‘original’ people affected by external colonizers
  - A self-identifying label used in fights for social, cultural and political rights
- Term and concept of indigenous people:
  - Gained legitimacy through 1982 UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations, their “Declaration of Indigenous Rights”

- Indigenous Rights Movements
  - o Focused on human rights, women's rights, environmental rights
- NGO
  - o Cooperates with indigenous groups to promote rights
    - E.g., Ancestral Lines: NGOs and Maisin worked together to oppose logging

#### Negative Impacts of Globalization:

- o Logging companies invasion of rainforest was environmentally very destructive in parts of PNG
- o PNG government and logging companies tried to take Maisin lands out of community control

#### Positive Impacts of Globalization:

- Brought NGOs (e.g., Greenpeace) and Maisin together to prevent deforestation, loss of Maisin land
- NGOs supported "sustainable development" through tapa cloth sales globally
  - o Some mixed success
  - o One problem: placed more work burden on women (who made cloth, hosted international visitors)

#### Ancestral Lines

BARKER: Globalization is neither simplistically good nor bad

- Can damage environments and cultures
- Can also lead to expanded experiences, cultural revival (reaffirming traditions in face of outside influence), and new opportunities (economics, etc.)

#### Film: Changing Ground (2001)

(Series: The Nature of Things)

- Documents the visit in 2000 of a delegation of Sto:lo from BC to Maisin (an exchange – Maisin later visited Sto:lo in BC)
- Partly arranged by John Barker
- Barker:
  - o Critiques this film
    - Not very informative about culture and history of Maisin