MODULE 5: **CULTURE, RELIGION and MIGRATION**

CONTENT BLOCKS:

1. **IDENTITY and CULTURE**
2. **RELIGION**
3. **MIGRATION**

KEY CONCEPTS

CULTURE, IDENTITY AND IDENTITY POLITICS

Culture: a way of life of people, their beliefs, values, and practices; it embodies language, traditions, social norms, and moral principles.

Colonialism: a process of establishing control over foreign territory and turning it into a colony, it can also be understood as a particular form of imperialism.

Identity: refers to a relatively stable sense of selfhood; it may refer to a person (personal identity that is unique to an individual), society (social identity that is shared with a group) or humanity (human identity that is shared with all the people).

Ideology: a set of opinions or beliefs of an individual or a group; often it refers to a set of political beliefs or ideas that are particular to a culture, political or economic system.

Identity politics: political approaches wherein people of a particular culture, race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, social background, social class, or other identifying factors develop political agendas that are based upon these identities.

Interculturalism: a view or policy promoting international dialogue and interaction between different cultures and ethnic groups.

Multiculturalism: a situation in which different ethnic groups and cultures within a society or a state coexist and have equal rights and opportunities.

Orientalism: refers to stereotypical descriptions of Eastern cultures based on distorted ideas of Western assumptions.

Postcolonialism: a critical academic study of the cultural, political and economic legacy of colonialism and imperialism.

Racism: prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism by an individual, community, or institution against a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalised.

Values: a set of very broad ideas on what is acceptable in a certain society; they usually distinguish between right and wrong.

RELIGION

Fundamentalism: a style of thought stressing strict and literal adherence to a set of basic principles recognized as essential truths that is often associated with fanatical commitment.

Islamic fundamentalism: an intense and militant faith in Islamic beliefs and the implementation of an Islamic state through Islamic law (Shari'a).

Islamism or political Islam: a politico-religious ideology based on Islamic ideas and principles.

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Monotheistic religion: a religion which has a single or limited number of sacred texts and a clear authority system.

Pantheistic religion: a religion which has looser and plural structures (no single text and authority system).

Pentecostalism: a Protestant Christian Movement that emphasises direct personal experience of God through baptism with the Holy Spirit, stresses morality and emotional experience in worship rituals.

Religion: an organised community of people that are bound by a system of religious beliefs and practices.

Religious fundamentalism: a type of conservative religious movement that upholds the belief in strict conformity to sacred texts and seeks moral and political purification of society in line with religious principles; it rejects the distinction between religion and politics.

Secularism: a belief that religion should be separated from worldly (secular) affairs, usually reflected in the separation of church from state.

Theocracy: a belief that religious authority should prevail over political authority, usually through the domination of church over state.

MIGRATION

Migration: movement of people from one place to another.

Immigration: movement of people to a given destination, of which they are not natives or where they do not possess citizenship, in order to settle.

Emigration: movement of people from a place of residence with the intent to settle elsewhere.

Asylum: a juridical concept, under which people persecuted or fear persecution for reasons of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group in their own country might be protected by another country.

Refugee: a displaced person who has been forced to flee his or her country due to war, violence, or (fear of) persecution.

Freedom of movement: a human rights concept of the individual's right to move freely within a country, to leave any country or to enter a country of citizenship.

Labour markets: a place where workers and employers interact; usually signifying the availability of employment and labour in terms of supply and demand.

Economic inequality: unequal distribution of wealth among people or countries; usually expressed in terms of income inequality.

Social contract: a theory of political philosophy which provides a justification of the authority of the state over the individual according to which individuals have consented to surrender some of their freedoms in exchange for the protection of their remaining rights.

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Chapter 1: CULTURE, IDENTITY AND IDENTITY POLITICS

Culture has many meanings and is usually defined depending on the context and circumstances in which it is used. Culture can be understood in a very normative way, that is when we try to differentiate between cultural and non-cultural behaviour. It can also be understood as the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively, or the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society. More broadly, culture usually consists of certain norms, values and symbols (also language), that are specific to particular societies and their culture (Heywood, 2011, p. 188). As such, culture is often associated with identity, cultural identity, and identity politics. Similarly, the meaning of **identity** is context-dependent and can be used to signify ‘a relatively stable and enduring self-hood' (Heywood, 2011, p. 183) or refer to a person (personal identity that is unique to a person) or a social group (common identity shared within a group). **Cultural identity** refers to identification with, or sense of belonging to a particular group based on various cultural categories, including nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, and religion. Cultural identity is constructed and maintained through the process of sharing collective knowledge such as traditions, heritage, language, aesthetics, norms, and customs (Murden, 2008, p. 420). Cultural identity can also be understood as part of identity politics.

Identity politics is a political approach in which people of a particular culture, race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, social background, social class, or other identifying factors develop political agendas based on these identities. Different manifestations of identity politics include second-wave feminism and the gay and lesbian movement, multiculturalism, ethnic nationalism, and religious fundamentalism (Heywood, 2014, p. 190). There are a few reasons why identity politics emerged particularly in the 20th century. The first reason is the **opposition to the social, economic and political heritage of colonialism**. The so-called postcolonial project has focused on reclaiming and rethinking the history and agency of people subordinated under various forms of imperialism not only in political terms (by gaining political interdependence) but in developing a specific cultural identity that is different from the ‘western’ or even the anti-western (Murden, 2008) one.

The second reason for the increase in identity politics is the process of globalisation. In this respect identity politics is seen as **resistance against cultural homogenization**. Globalisation has facilitated cross-border trade in goods and services, technology and information transfer, and increased flows of capital and people. As a result, the world's economies, cultures, and populations became more interdependent and less different from each other (McGrew, 2023). However, as some critics of globalisation point out, this process has also often been seen as one-sided, i.e., not as cooperation and exchange between cultures on an equal basis, but rather as a tendency of one specific ‘common’ culture to be adopted universally (all over the world). Therefore, for many societies in the world, globalisation also represents a danger of losing specific cultural traditions and identities (Heywood, 2011, p. 185).

Identity politics can also be understood as an **opposition to universal liberalism**, which is perceived as a source of oppression and discrimination against certain groups or people. The 'universal culture' is structured in a way that over-represents certain dominant groups in society such as men, whites, the wealthy, the upper class, etc. The subordinate groups are encouraged or even forced to adapt and identify with the values and interests of the dominant group or are simply perceived as inferior (Murden, 2008, p. 421).

Another reason for the rise of identity politics is also the fact that identity politics can also be perceived as a **source of liberation and empowerment**. Accordingly, social and political power can be reached through social self-assertion, with an authentic sense of identity, such

as the first black consciousness movements from the early 1920s and more recent 'Black Lives Matter' (Shilliam, 2023), or by reshaping the identity to give a certain group of people a new sense of self-respect and pride, such as 'gay pride', 'black is beautiful' or 'MeToo' movement (Heywood, 2014, p. 189–190).

Box 1: Cultural capital

French social theorist Bourdieu argued that capital forms the foundation of social lives and dictates one's position within the social order. The more capital a person has, the more powerful the position that person occupies. Although the idea itself originated in Marx's class division based on economic capital, Bourdieu extended the idea beyond the economic to the more symbolic realm of culture. Bourdieu's understanding of cultural capital refers to the whole scale of symbolic elements, such as values, norms, taste, manners, material possessions, and the way of life, that a person acquires through the socialisation process by being part of a particular social class in a certain culture or society (Bourdieu, 2021). Sharing similar cultural capital with others forms special cultural collective identities that refer to 'people like us'. According to Bourdieu, the cultural capital of certain groups (middle and upper class) is presented as a universal model of cultural capital of the society as such and completely marginalises the people or groups with a different cultural capital as inferior or inadequate.

COLONIALISM, POSTCOLONIALISM, AND IDENTITY POLITICS

The intensity of **cross-cultural interactions** has increased since the beginning of colonialism in the 15th century. **Colonialism** (as a theory or practice) means the establishment of control over a foreign territory and turning it into a colony of an already existing state. Colonialism can also be understood as a particular form of **imperialism** (Heywood, 2011, p. 181). Since then cross-cultural interactions have significantly changed the lives of people (and countries), especially the ones that were colonised. In most of the cases, natives were exposed to different forms of submission, oppression or complete reorganisation of their way of life.

The first centuries of cross-cultural interactions often resulted in **ethnocide** (the term was first coined by Raphael Lemkin in 1944), which means an attempt at the complete destruction of the culture of indigenous people, such as prohibition to speak and use their own language or practise their own religion. The typical ethnocide would occur when European colonisers prevented Africans from speaking their languages and practising their religions, and systematically severed African communal and familial bonds.

More radical violence appeared in the form of **genocide**, which in a broader understanding means any intention to physically destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. When European settlers arrived in the Americas, historians estimate that more than 10 million Native Americans were living there. By 1900, their estimated population was under 300,000. Native Americans were subjected to many different forms of violence, all with the intention of destroying the community, such as in the late 1800s where blankets from smallpox patients were distributed to Native Americans to spread disease which decimated their populations.

Colonialism does not represent violence only on physical, economic, and political levels by placing 'colonisers' above natives, but it also involves psychological and cultural destruction through different forms of racism and cultural imperialism (see Box 2 on Orientalism). Therefore, the question of the relationship between cultures is also raised at the level of different ideologies that are made and spread by members of a certain ethnic group about the other ethnic group(s). By **ideology,** we understand a set of opinions or beliefs of a group or

an individual, in our case of a certain ethnic group, that are merely opinions or just distorted ideas that have no grounds in truth in most cases, but can be used to harm certain culture or ethnic group and can lead to discrimination (Heywood, 2011, p. 182). In this way, colonialism gave the ground to identity politics that emerged later in the 20th century and continues ever since be it as postcolonial forms of dependency and exploitation (some sort of neo-imperialism) or by discrimination and marginalisation of certain societal groups based on sex, sexual orientation, language or religion (Murden, 2008, p. 425).

Box 2: Orientalism

One of the most influential postcolonial theorists, Edvard Said, examined how Western thinkers of the 19th century who studied the Middle East (the Orient) served to establish western political and cultural hegemony over the rest of the world. By portraying Europeans as liberal, enlightened, and rational, while presenting non-Europeans as barbaric, irrational, and weak (Heywood, 2011, p. 182), such representations of the world justified European imperialism and the universality of Western values, in particular human rights (Heywood, 2014, p. 323–324). In his critique, Said reveals how such cultural biases and demeaning stereotypes that no longer only apply to the Middle East but include all non-Western peoples continue to impact the behaviour of Western states in world politics. Assuming the mantle of international community Western states often claim the authority to intervene or interfere in the non-Western world allegedly for humanitarian and developmental reasons.

MODERNIZATION, GLOBALISATION, AND IDENTITY POLITICS

After the Second World War, cross-cultural interactions took on a completely new dimension. The increasing processes of globalisation, the start of the decolonization process in the 1960s (when former colonies achieved their political independence) and modern migration flows led to the formation of a new society, stretched between **multiculturalism, interculturalism, and post-colonialism**. Multiculturalism is understood as the coexistence of different ethnic groups and cultures within the same society or state, and with the same rights and recognition from official politics (Heywood, 2011, p. 177). In addition, multiculturalism is the way in which a society deals with its cultural diversity, both at the national and community levels. Sociologically, multiculturalism assumes that society as a whole benefits from increased diversity through the harmonious coexistence of different cultures (Heywood, 2014, p. 192). From the perspective of cultural differences, the idea of multiculturalism is a step forward, although it has some issues on the theoretical and practical level that need to be addressed (see Box 2).

Box 3: Unintended consequences of multiculturalism

On the theoretical level, multiculturalism can over-exceedingly emphasise the cultural differences between the cultures living in the same society, to the detriment of the unification of common values that are crucial for the coexistence of different cultural and ethnic groups under the same roof. This means that theoretically, different ethnic groups can develop a very strong ethnic identity, which makes it very difficult for them to integrate into a wider society; at the same time, this also means that it is difficult to achieve any kind of social agreement within multicultural societies.

On the practical level, the reality remains that even in multicultural societies, different cultures and ethnic groups are not equally represented, accepted, or treated. Namely, the theoretical definition of multiculturalism differs from its manifestation in reality because there is always one dominant culture that is the most influential and powerful and other marginal cultures that are influenced by the

dominant. As such, multicultural societies in combination with economic tensions caused by globalisation have been proven to be fractured and more conflict-laden (Heywood, 2014, p. 192–193).

Another dimension of intercultural interaction in the modern world can also be the idea of **interculturalism** that assumes more than mere passive acceptance of a multicultural society and instead promotes dialogue and interaction between different cultures and ethnic groups. That was the idea of the European Union, where some unification processes actually have elements of interculturalism, but in most cases, it is again more an ideal than a reality. The positive impact that cultures should have on one another is usually the same as with multiculturalism, where impact and cultural influences are one-sided (from dominant to marginal culture). Therefore, the key issue to be able to understand how multiculturalism and interculturalism are linked to the new wave of identity politics, is to elaborate on the relations between dominant and marginal cultures (Levrau and Loobuyck, 2018).

Modernization has been traditionally linked to Western societies (at first especially to Western European societies), portraying them as more developed with a model of modernization, which was presented as a model that in time will be accepted as such. European states were the first in trade, leading industrial revolution and first in colonialism. Western modernization (with later globalisation) had a significant impact on economic, political, and cultural fields. In an economic sense, it meant a capitalistic society or capitalism, based on private property that gave rise to industrialization and urbanisation, as well as a new structure of social stratification. Expanding the middle class with business and different professions on the one hand, but also an increasingly large working class on the other (Heywood, 2011, p. 182). From the mainstream Western perspective, market capitalism was a way to ensure prosperity and wealth. From a political perspective, the western model of modernization (also called westernisation) adopted a certain model of liberal democracy, where the key features are competitive and open elections, followed by universal values, such as personal autonomy and freedom of choice.

As for the cultural aspect of modernisation, cultures that adapted liberal democracy as a political system tend to privatise culture as such, meaning that certain parts of culture, such as moral principles of an individual or religious beliefs, are thought to be more a thing of an individual than the society. Some authors, like Ferdinand Tonnies, pointed this out as problematic because it can weaken cultural bonds and identities, and it is harder to achieve any social agreement in society as such. As an illustration of that problem, he distinguished the difference between ***Gemeinschaft*** and ***Gesellschaft***. *Gemeinschaft* means society with strong cultural bonds, mutual respect, and a sense of community and is typically found in traditional societies. *Gesellschaft* refers to an association that allows people to adapt values and norms more in their personal preferences and is more closely related to modern and urban industrialised societies (Tonnies, 2001).

With the process of globalisation, the western model of modernisation was largely spread throughout the world as the only viable model for modern societies with its values and consumer capitalism and was widely accepted as universal liberalism. However, especially in the last decades of the 20th century, it seems like the whole idea of homogenization of the culture experienced backlash of fear of losing a unique cultural identity or simply not accepting the cultural identity that the western model proposed. This **anti-modernisation** appeared in numerous forms, one of which was social conservatism. Social conservatism is based on a belief that societies should be built on shared values and common culture that provides necessary social ground. It was hostile against permissive values and social norms and defended values often rooted in traditional societies or religion (see Chapter 2 on religion). Additionally, loud critiques of liberalism came from communitarian theorists that

defend the thesis that prioritisation of an individual over community leads to selfish behaviour, upgrades the individual rights, and downgrades the reciprocal duties and moral responsibilities to the community. All this opposition creates opportunities for new forms of identity politics, where identity is linked to gender, sexual orientation, language, ethnicity, or religion. Examples of identity-laden conflicts include the ethnic conflicts in Rwanda and Yugoslavia during the 1990s, persecution and discrimination of Uyghurs in China and Rohingya in Myanmar on religious grounds, and war in Ukraine where culture and language have been identified amongst others as drivers of the conflict.

DISCUSSION POINTS/QUESTIONS:

Why is identity politics lately being popularised?

Where in the world does identity politics occur?

Is multiculturalism compatible with the preservation of national identity/unity?

Chapter 2: RELIGION

One other aspect of the growing importance of culture in world politics has been the **revival of religion and religious movements** in the late 20th century. Although religion has always been a frame of reference and has "helped humans deal with uncertainty and fear, clarifying the purpose of human life and regulating the behaviour of individuals, families, and groups in worldly society" (Murden, 2008, p. 424), one of the most characteristic features of the Western and particularly European societies has been **secularism**, i.e., the separation of state and church, and **modernisation** understood as the victory of reason over religious and spiritual values. Secularism does not necessarily imply the decline of religion but rather that religion, according to the liberal-democratic principles, belongs to the so-called private sphere "in which people are free to do as they like, leaving public life to be organised on a strictly secular basis" (Heywood, 2014, p. 195). However, the separation of state and church has not been a universal feature of all states nor equally strong across the world. New and more assertive forms of religious movements also emerged globally, some of which are closely interwoven with politics. Examples include political Islamism in Afghanistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia, the 'new Christian Right' in the USA, Orthodox Christianity in Russia, Ultra-Orthodox Judaism in Israel, Falun Gong in China, radical Hinduism and Sikhism in India, Aum Shinrikyo sect in Japan, and Pentecostalism in Latin America and Africa.

In these instances, religion has taken a more fundamental and in certain cases even extreme forms. **Religious fundamentalism** formulated interpretations of faith that allowed for political and social violence to be used for a variety of (political) purposes (see Case study 1: Islamic revolution in Iran). Three of them seem particularly relevant. Firstly, religion has been a component of **social conservatism** aimed at regenerating morality in society by the return of religious values and practices (for example the role of women, education of youth, punishment of deviancy, personal responsibility, and bodily integrity such as the right to abortion). Secondly, religion has been used as the main source in the formation of political and national identity in (ethnic) nationalist movements across the world that discriminate between believers and 'infidels'. And thirdly, religion has been used for politico-military purposes allowing for violence, acts of brutality and terrorism (Kiras, 2023). As such, religious fundamentalism should be understood not merely as a dogmatic and authoritarian form of religious beliefs and practices but as a religious-political movement that rejects the separation of religion and politics. Religious principles are not restricted to personal or

private life but are permeating the entirety of public, social, legal, economic and political life of a country (Heywood, 2014, p. 198).

Case study 1: Iranian Islamic revolution

Iran became an Islamic republic in 1979 with the support of a popular uprising and the overthrow of the monarchy. Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was forced into exile and former left-wing nationalists and intellectuals were removed from power. The central figure of the Islamic revolution and the supreme leader of the first Islamic state in the world was Iranian cleric and scholar Ayatollah Khomeini (1900–1989). His return to Iran from exile in 1979 sparked the revolution and ended the tradition that the clergy is separated from politics (Heywood, 2014, p. 198). Instead, conservative clerical forces established a **theocratic system of government**. The new constitution vested ultimate political authority in the clergy and created a religious government with extensive powers for the supreme leader.

Khomeini's vision of an Islamic republic was based on two premises. Firstly, the **return of conservative social values** which found resonance especially among the oppressed, poor, and excluded from development. Progressive laws that provided rights to women in marriage were abolished and codes of dress and behaviour were re-installed. Any kind of political opposition was oppressed and declared as enemies of the revolution. The second premise was external and was focused on the **suppression of the Western cultural influences in the Islamic world**, in particular in Iran (Kiras, 2023). The aim was to clear the country of foreign occupation and corruption, and to re-unite and revive the Islamic world. Both the US (capitalism) and the Soviet Union (communism) were perceived as oppressors and the regime's main enemies (the so-called "Satan twins"). The most blatant example of rising sentiments against the West was the 1979 seizure of 66 hostages at the US embassy in Tehran by a group of Iranian protesters.

ORIGINS OF RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM

It is difficult to generalise about the causes for the revival of religious fundamentalism, but it usually arises in deeply troubled societies (Ruthven, 2005) and is closely linked to the processes of **globalisation, secularisation and modernisation** (Kiras, 2023). Most of the fundamentalist movements were born in direct opposition to the perceived 'evils' of modernity, secularism, pluralism, and the alleged moral bankruptcy of the globalising world, and the West in particular (Murden, 2008). In this sense, religious fundamentalism usually occurs as a counter-revolutionary force to globalisation that seeks to restore religious order, morality, and the link between the human world and the divine. Popular culture and consumerism, as the most prominent feature of globalisation, has been the main target of such (cultural) counter-revolution. Religion-based regimes have sought to censor news, films, music, social media, and access to the Internet, and to re-install institutions of traditional culture on issues such as the role of women in society, gender equality, education, and the issue of veiling. etc.

Although fundamentalist movements first occurred in the Islamic world, they can be found in all other major religions such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Sikhism, and are not limited to only specific traditions, ideologies or geographical areas (Kiras, 2023). If anything, fundamentalism has been most potent in countries of the Global South that are still burdened by their colonial past and a weakened identity (see Case study 2 on the Kashmir conflict). In such a context religious fundamentalism is driven by a "search for meaning" and allows for non- or even anti-Western sentiments to thrive. Often this resistance is framed as the fight against the Western neo-imperialism and is closely tied to nationalism or liberation movements.

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Case study 2: The Kashmir conflict

In the 20th century, religious tensions between Hindus and Muslims played a vital role in the partition of British India in 1947 into two independent entities – India and Pakistan. The roots of this separation also lie in India's colonial past and the decision by Britain in 1909 to separate electorates for the Muslim minority. Muslim Indians dominated the western part of the region (what is now Pakistan) and belonged to the upper class of society, while Hindu-Indians dominated the central and eastern part of the Indian subcontinent and belonged to the lower classes.

After the partition, India and Pakistan engaged in a conflict over Kashmir, a majority Muslim region in the northernmost part of British India. At the time of partition, Kashmir was a princely state governed by a Hindu maharaja. Unlike other states it did not align with either India or Pakistan but opted for independence. However, as partition-related violence between Hindu and Muslim populations between the two nations grew, Kashmir was unable to withstand the pressure of non-alignment. After pro-Pakistani rebels and Pashtun tribes took western Kashmir, the Maharaja acceded Kashmir to India to gain military assistance. This decision ushered decades of conflict over the control of the region and caused two wars (in 1965 and 1971). To this day Kashmir remains a contested region divided by two nations, spurred by religion.

Source: BBC (2022).

POLITICAL ISLAM AND TERRORISM

Much of the debate about the growing importance of religion in the 21st century is directly linked to the rise of Islam because of the population explosion in the Muslim world. As a result, Islam is the second largest religion with 1.9 billion adherents, almost one quarter of the world's population, and is a majority religion in around 50 countries. This trend is likely to continue in the next decades since four out of ten most populous countries by 2100 will most likely be Muslim and geographically located in Asia and Africa (UN, 2017). Additionally, parts of the Muslim world have appeared as the source of conflict (in the Balkans, Middle East, West and East Africa, the Caucasus, Central Asia and Indonesia) and are particularly burdened by modernity, geopolitical and cultural hegemony of the West.

Ever since the collapse of the Ottoman empire in 1922 a battle between **modernisers** (propagating secularism and the need for imitation of Western forms of political, economic and social organisation) and the **conservatives** (defending Islamic revivalism) has been a dominant feature of world politics (Heywood, 2014). Although secular nationalism has had some success (most notably in Turkey and Iran until the Iranian revolution in 1979), it failed elsewhere (e.g. Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan) where modernization did not lead to economic and social progress. In this context Islam became the voice of abandoned masses,

mostly the urban poor and the lower middle class, and appeared as a political movement based on Islamic ideas.

Political Islam or Islamism has a number of core aims. It promotes **pan-Islamic unity** (based on religion and not nationalism), the idea that the Islamic world should be governed by clergy (and not by secular leaders) and that all Western-influence (political, economic and cultural) should be removed from the Muslim world (Heywood, 2014, p. 204). There are two distinct forms of political Islam – the Sunni and the Shi'a sect. The **Sunni sect** is the official version of Islam in most of the Muslim world (up to 90 percent). It finds its most well-known form in Salafism, the official version of Islam in Saudi Arabia, which is the world's first fundamental Islamic state. Salafism adheres to a particularly strict and austere interpretation of Islam (banning almost all modern inventions such as pictures, photographs, music, singing and television) and supports the evolution of more militant and extreme forms of Islam, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, the Taliban regime and al-Qaeda. The **Shi'a sect** stems from a doctrine of the arrival of Mahdi, a leader directly guided by God, and offering the prospect of an imminent salvation. Shi'a is the majority form of Islam in Azerbaijan, Lebanon, Iraq and Iran (ibid.).

The earliest examples of such new **militant religion-based politics** include the establishment of Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928, the Iranian revolution in 1979, the Soviet war in Afghanistan (1979-1989) that led to the growth of Mujahideen, the predecessors of the Taliban that ruled in Afghanistan (1996-2001). Islamists have also temporarily seized power in Somalia, Sudan, Pakistan and Lebanon. They all advocate the return to the basic texts of Islam and the implementation of the Islamic state (fundamentalism) through Islamic law often using the extreme language of **jihad** (Holy struggle) and **martyrdom** (militant or radical Islamism) (Murden, 2014, p. 426–427).

The more recent revival of political Islam can be attributed to the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and Pentagon in Washington on 11 September 2001 and the '**war on terror**' (Haynes et al., 2011; Kiras, 2023). Al-Qaeda, a terrorist organisation under the leadership of Osama bin Laden, was created as a response to the invasion of the West and its modernity in the Middle East after Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Gulf War. It supported various kinds of militant movements globally even prior to 9/11 (e.g. attacks on US interests in Saudi Arabia and East Africa in 1990s) and fostered the cult of a suicide bomber (Murden, 2014). The events of 9/11 awakened the image of a **civilizational clash**. The world was divided in two civilizations only it was no longer the clash between the West against the East but between the civilised and uncivilised nations, where the first were described as free and democratic, and the latter as the "axis of evil" (composed of states such as Iraq, Iran and North Korea). Under the leadership of the US the civilised had a mission to bring peace, democracy and human rights to the uncivilised. This opened the door for further interventions by the West in the Muslim world (Afghanistan in 2001, Iraq in 2003) and contributed to a global proliferation of extreme acts of terror known as the **global terrorism** (Haynes et al., 2011), for example Al Qaeda bombings in Bali, Indonesia (2002); in Madrid, Spain (2004), in London, UK (2005), in Moscow, Russia (2010), and in Paris, France (2015).

Box 4: Three explanations of global terrorism

CULTURAL

Culture can be used to explain the success and proliferation of global terrorism. Western values and materialist culture are opposed by conservative movements trying to preserve their own unique cultural identity and values. This leads to cultural frictions and divisions where acts of extreme

violence are perceived as legitimate means of fighting the perceived threats from the West. However, this explanation assumes a high degree of homogeneity among the Islamic world, which can be disputed. There are deep fault lines within Islam itself (between Sunni and Shi'a) and the majority of victims of terrorist attacks have been other Muslims (Haynes, 2011, p. 406).

ECONOMIC

Economic considerations are the main driver of global terrorism and use of violence for political change. Free market and consumerism are perceived as the main symbols of Western economic imperialism that are unfavourable to the Global South. Underdevelopment, deprivation, alienation and a lack of opportunity then lead to a more frequent use of (extreme) violence to fight these global inequalities. However, the link between terrorism and poverty varies considerably among reasons and empirical evidence does not indisputably confirm economic factors as the main cause of terrorism.

RELIGIOUS

Since the main target of extremist terrorists are non-believers and unfaithful, i.e., those from different religions or those Muslims that do not share the same interpretation of Koran, religion is often portrayed as the main driver of global terrorism. Global Jihad is seen as the legitimate reaction to the bankruptcy of the West and the oppression of Muslim around the world. However, while religion can explain individuals' motivations to commit terrorist acts, it is not the ultimate purpose for which violence is being used. This is in most cases political power (Kiras, 2023).

These events have had two important and at times mutually exclusive implications for world politics in the 21st century. Firstly, Islam was portrayed as being anti-western and a major threat to the West that must be combatted by defeating (all) fundamentalist ideas, doctrines as well as terrorist organisations supporting them therefore justifying global war on terror (Kiras, 2023). And secondly, the West (not Islam) was to be blamed for this clash due to its (failed) interventions in the Arab world (most notably in the Middle East and in the Arab-Israeli conflict). Islamophobic sentiments against the world's Muslim population also gave rise to the tightening of borders and the backsliding of liberal values (limitations on freedom, democracy and human rights for more security) in the West itself.

Case study 3: The Arab spring and the failure of democratisation

The trigger for what is known as the Arab Spring was an incident that happened in Tunisia in 2011, where Mohamed Bouazizi, a market trader, set himself on fire to protest against the way the police treated him and the unbearable political and economic situation in the country. This incident sparked a wave of revolutionary protest and demonstrations throughout North Africa and the Middle East. It led to the removal of four dictators (in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen) and started the protest in Syria.

The implications of the Arab Spring show a rather mixed result. The idea of the Arab Spring was to end authoritarianism and introduce democratic reforms (free and fair elections, the rule of law, protection of civil liberties). While this undermined the perception of the Arab world as a 'backward' culture based on religious beliefs and opened the possibility for democracy, it also gave rise to political Islam. Namely, the Arab Spring lifted restrictions on political activities of several militant/radical groups and allowed them to participate in the elections. In Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist revivalist movement, got hold of power in 2012 and advocated the Islamist agenda. However, after massive demonstrations and civil unrest, the military returned to power and reimposed itself as the only reliable source of power, therefore de facto reinstalling dictatorship. Although democratically elected, the Muslim Brotherhood was banned and later declared a terrorist organisation. Similarly, regime change and the attempt to impose democracy in Libya ended in political instability, whereas the attempts to change the regime in Syria caused an ongoing civil war. The Arab spring has deepened tensions within the Muslim world, especially between the two forms of Islam – Sunni and Shi'a.

MODULE 5: **CULTURE, RELIGION and MIGRATION**

IS THERE A CLASH OF RELIGIONS?

In the context of the growing importance of religion in world politics, Samuel Huntington developed his famous **"clash of civilization**" thesis. According to this thesis, the principal patterns of conflict and cooperation in the 21st century world politics will be shaped by culture or civilization, and less by ideology, politics or economy (Haynes, 2023)). According to Huntington (1993) this clash is the result of historic development and the changed post-Cold War context in which the West is no longer the (only) dominant region. Additionally, the rise of Asian economies (especially China), the population explosion in Africa and the impact of globalisation on transnational flows of trade, people, and information, have the tendency to forge a new international order that will be characterised by growing tensions and conflicts. Since religion is a defining characteristic of civilizations, the thesis ultimately implies a **clash between religions** as well (Haynes, 2023, p. 406–407). West's (Christianity) dominance is and will remain to be challenged by non-Western civilizations and religions (African, Confucian, Hindu, Islamic, Latin American, Slavic-Orthodox) over issues such as freedom of faith, gender equality, notions of rights, authority and justice, human rights, and other liberal values (personal freedom, democracy, free trade, private property etc.) (Murden, 2008). Although the differences between civilizations and world's religions run deep, such a view is difficult to sustain given that there are considerable overlaps and parallels amongst them such as common heritage and beliefs (Haywood, 2014). Moreover, there are also other defining features of culture and conflict that are not directly linked to religion, such as scientific doctrines, advance of (enlightened) rationalism and in technology and global economics that affect relations between states and societies (Simpson, 2018; Kiras, 2023). For a more detailed analysis see Box 5.

Box 5 : Is there a clash of religions?	
YES	**NO**
Rising awareness of religious differences With globalisation the world is becoming smaller and more interdependent (economy, travel, media). People are more aware of the cultural differences and are faced with competing loyalties (local, national, regional, global). They define themselves more in terms of their religion, where countries and societies of the same religious background support each other and oppose influences from other religions.	***Religions are changing*** Religions are not rigid and are constantly changing. Certain sets of traditions, values and understandings are also common to all religions (peace, security, prosperity, care, solidarity etc.). Religions are not isolated anymore but influence one another (for example Islam or Hinduism in the West and vice versa).
Conflicting worldviews Religious differences (in values, norms, and beliefs) lead to diverging worldviews of individuals, groups, societies and states that can cause disputes over which interpretations of the world prevail. People and states tend to divide the world into two categories - 'us' and 'them'. 'Us' is associated with positive attributes (civilised, modern, developed, familiar and righteous), while 'them' is associated with negative attributes (barbaric, underdeveloped, unknown and wrong).	***Peaceful coexistence*** Religious differences are not the only cause of conflict; peaceful coexistence is possible. Historically, most conflicts (wars) happened within the same civilization/religion and not between them. Even when conflicts between different religions arise they are mostly the consequence of political, economic and social forces and factors (such as the distribution of power and/or wealth, population explosion, environment or climate change etc.).
Multipolar character of the world The liberal ideas of individualism, secularism, pluralism, democracy and human rights only have limited resonance	***Globalisation and homogenisation*** Globalisation has blurred the lines between different cultures and even religions. Different parts of the world

in non-Western cultures (such as Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, Orthodox or Sinic). The West and the USA are no longer dominant, so these values cannot be so easily imposed on others, which creates tensions between the West and 'the Rest'.	apply similar patterns of behaviour, beliefs and values in different issue areas. Economic interdependence, consumerism, popular culture, transnational travel and communication are an element of (cultural) homogenization and as such prevent religious clashes from happening.

DISCUSSION POINTS/QUESTIONS

1. How does globalisation affect different forms of fundamentalisms?
2. Is there a link between religion and the tendency towards conflict?
3. Given that terrorisms has been a global phenomenon, why is it still perceived to be closely linked to Islam and the Muslim world?
4. How persuasive is the clash of civilizations thesis in the 21st century?

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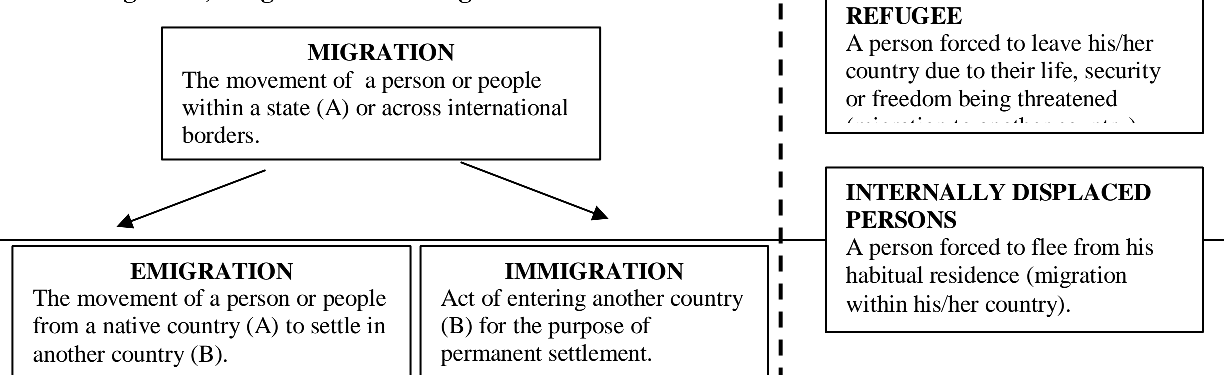
Chapter 3: MIGRATION

The issue of **border crossing and migration** is multi-faceted with factors such as national sovereignty, cultural identity, moral and economic considerations, and many more. Although not new, migration is a contemporary issue that can be expected to become even more relevant in the coming years due to the displacement of large quantities of people as a result of climate change and connected concerns such as economic hardship or political instability (Heywood, 2014). In this section, we wish to introduce these concepts by exploring the moral as well as the practical aspects of migration.

Migration of people has been happening all throughout history. For its majority, as freely moving communities of hunter and gatherers. Later, the emergence of agriculture created more stable human societies which may be considered settled. Nevertheless, this didn't stop the movement of people, with early empires expanding and causing cultural changes in nearby areas. Throughout most of history, migration has mainly been the result of conquest and colonisation, with examples such as the Viking invasions of northern Europe, the Spanish invasion of Mexico and Peru, or the colonisation of North America (Heywood, 2011, p. 168).



MODULE 5: **CULTURE, RELIGION and MIGRATION**

A person moves out of country A and moves to country B with the intent of settling. The movement of this person is called **migration**, and he/she is a **migrant**. He/she **emigrated** from country A, where he/she is called an **emigrant**. He/She **immigrated** to country B, where he/she is called an **immigrant**.

So what are the causes of migration? Migration has a plethora of causes and is, of course, affected by the ability of people to move, which, throughout history, has not stayed the same. But still, we can try to divide the causes of migration into two categories: internal, and external. **Internal causes** are causes that, all else being equal, are based on the individual's decision in the pursuit of self-interest. This implies that migration occurs because individuals are being 'pulled' by the likely benefits of migrating. **Pull factors** include better salaries, working conditions, socio-political reasons such as more freedoms and rights etc. **External causes** are based on external factors such as conflict, poverty, the political situation, and the state of the labour market. Migrants are either 'pushed' from their country by **push factors** such as poverty, conflict, limitations of freedoms and rights or 'pulled' by their country of settlement due to the abovementioned pull factors (Heywood, 2014, p. 173).

These two categories are not disjointed, and in most cases naturally influence each other. An exception to this are cases of **forced migration**, where the individual's choice plays no role, such as the ones caused by the slave trade, indentured labour or the effects of an armed conflict, violence or man-made disaster (Heywood, 2014, p. 172). With the advent of globalisation, the large international movement of goods, and more generally, the interconnectedness of the world has facilitated an increase in migration. On the other hand, it also increased attempts by countries to contain migration by either increasing the costs of migration (imposing of quotas, stricter border controls, building walls), reducing its benefits (imposing work restrictions, limiting access to social security, lowering wages), or by reducing global inequality and better global governance.

Case study 4: Immigration policy of Sweden

Sweden is attractive to migrants because of its high quality of life, extensive social welfare, and lax immigration restrictions. In the 1960s the ideology of multiculturalism became mainstream in Sweden. In 1975, the Swedish parliament voted in favour of an immigrant and minority policy which rejected the previous policy of assimilation in favour of state-sponsored multiculturalism (Wickström, 2015). Since the turn of the millennium, immigration numbers have been growing, having reached their peak in 2015 with over 163 000 persons immigrating in total that year (Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, 2021). This peak was caused by the 2015 European migrant crisis. At that time, Sweden's expenditures on refugees per capita were the largest out of the EU, with the cost making up 0.54% of GDP (Cosgrave et al., 2016). Those with an immigrant background are over-represented in Swedish crime statistics, although this is largely due to socioeconomic differences (Hällsten et al., 2013). Recent polls have found that the majority of people living in Sweden wanted fewer migrants (Connor & Krogstad, 2018).

MORAL ASPECTS OF MIGRATION

Migration raises the question "Should people be free to move wherever they want?" The **moral aspects of migration** provide the rationale for human action and identify some dilemmas linked to migration that affect the more practical aspects of migration. A general moral argument claims that, in principle, borders should be open. This argument considers

the **right to freedom of movement** and the **right to be free from harmful coercion** as fundamental human rights. Each and every person has the right to freedom of movement. When we refrain from thinking about border crossings, it certainly seems true that we enjoy the freedom of movement. We are free to walk in our city, and we are generally free to travel to any part of our country. The justification for this right is threefold. Firstly, we hold this right as an extension of our right to bodily autonomy and freedom of choice. We have the autonomy over our bodies to move, and we have the freedom to choose where we want to go. Secondly, we have the right to freedom of movement because it allows us to pursue our plans and goals, and lead the sort of life we wish to. If we want to move to the city to join a lucrative industry, or if we want to move to the country for cheaper housing, we should be free to do so. That means that we have this right in order to obtain an individual gain. And thirdly, since we have no way of deciding where we were born, we should not prevent others from moving elsewhere. Although there are certain limitations to this right that are linked to ownership and protection (e.g. it is possible to permit barring people from entering your home) it is illegitimate to completely bar people from entering other countries. If people have a right to freedom of movement, then people have the right to move freely between countries. The policy of **restricting immigration** and not having open borders violates a person's right to freedom of movement. If a policy violates a person's rights, it is as such morally wrong. Thus, restricting immigration is morally wrong. Also, restricting the movement of people is coercive in its nature because it disallows people from pursuing their own self-interest, effectively imposing the negative consequences that they would otherwise avoid by moving. This is particularly relevant in the event of forced migration where people are compelled to leave due to threats to their lives, freedoms or security.

This argument also forces us to consider the difference between absolute and *prima facie* rights. Absolute rights are rights that cannot be overridden by other moral considerations, while *prima facie* (from Latin meaning 'at first sight') rights can be overridden by other considerations. Although absolute rights are a contested concept, there are some rights such as the right to freedom of thought, expression or the right to be free from inhumane treatment that come close to that. On the contrary, the right to freedom of movement and the right to be free from harmful coercion are considered as *prima facie* rights that can be overridden by other concerns. An example of such an overriding consideration of the right to freedom of movement can be health safety as was the case during Covid-19 pandemic and the quarantines. Similarly, the right to be free from harmful coercion was overridden by public or national security concerns in the context of the global war on terror.

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF MIGRATION

The stereotypical view is that open borders will lead to immigrants taking all the jobs, thus negatively affecting the labour market and income inequality, or what the fiscal effects of immigration are. Research suggests that in general the economic effects of immigration on the receiving country tend to be small and positive (Edo, 2019; Chassamboulli & Peri, 2015; Card, 2005). Migrants usually take less attractive jobs, accept lower wages and actually stimulate economic growth by reducing unemployment and reversing negative demographic trends (Heywood, 2014, p. 177–178). From the point of view of sending countries, the largest economic benefit are the remittances that can help reduce poverty, child labour and boost investment and entrepreneurship. Additionally, allowing migration may also decrease (youth) unemployment and welfare spending in countries of origin (Heywood, 2014, p, 177). However, even in cases of potential economic disadvantages such as brain-drain in countries of origin and the appearance of grey economy and fiscal burdens in receiving states due to

irregular migration and welfare expenses, restraining the freedom of movement would be highly questionable and in case of forced migration violate legally binding international humanitarian law that protects refugees and asylum seekers.

Case study 4: Borderly walls and fences

At the height of the 2015-16 migration crises in Europe, several European countries faced with the unprecedented inflow of immigrants started building walls or fences at their borders. Barriers were set up at Calais (between France and the UK) as well as at other borders between Hungary-Serbia, Slovenia-Croatia, Austria-Italy and Macedonia-Greece. At the same time, the United States of America was also pursuing an extension of existing border walls and fences at its southern border with Mexico (MEDAM, 2017).

Building a wall or fences at the national borders has been perceived to be the most efficient and appealing way by which countries could curb illegal immigration, improve security and regain control over entry. However, as empirical studies suggest (Vernon and Zimmermann, 2019) while the costs of fortifications are large the benefits are questionable since they do not effectively reduce migration, smuggling or terrorism. Although international migration is on the rise due to regional conflicts in the Middle East, rising inequality and natural disasters worldwide, still only 3% of the world population lives outside their country of birth. As studies suggest, less restrictive migration policies and open borders bring larger benefits to countries if accompanied by institutional changes that allow for the integration of migrants into the labour market and society.

Picture 1: Boundary walls and fences worldwide

Source: The Economist (2016).

STATE'S OBLIGATIONS TO ITS CITIZENS AND NON-CITIZENS

Primarily, states have an obligation towards their citizens. Citizens perform obligations they have toward the state (such as paying taxes, following the law, participating in political life etc.) and the state reciprocally performs its obligations towards the citizens by providing access to basic resources, upholding the law, protecting persons and property. As such, the state has a greater obligation towards its own citizens, since immigrants, as non-citizens, lack this reciprocal relationship with the state, and can therefore legitimately restrict immigration. However, states are, according to **international humanitarian law, also** obliged to help others, in particular forced migrants such as refugees and asylum seekers (see Box 6 on the International protection of refugees). In these cases, states should not prioritise their citizens and prevent immigration *per se*. Mass and sudden refugee flows as the result of war, ethnic strife or political upheaval provoke humanitarian emergencies and are as such the responsibility of the international community (Estevez, 2023).

MODULE 5: **CULTURE, RELIGION and MIGRATION**

Box 6: International protection of refugees

At the core of the international refugee regime is the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Accordingly, refugee is the status of a forced migrant who crosses international borders and seeks international protection from political persecution based on race, ethnicity, nationality, political opinion, religion or language. The status of a refugee is declaratory, meaning that everyone who qualifies as a refugee is a refugee, regardless of formal recognition of the host country. However, the acquisition of rights is only possible in the host country and even though states do not have the obligation to grant asylum or admit refugees, they have the obligation not to forcibly return them to the countries where they face persecution (this is known as the right to non-refoulement). Other reasons for migration such as economic crises or underdevelopment, environmental or natural disasters, and criminal violence are not automatically protected by refugee law, and fall under the category of 'economic migrants'. Given the diverse nature and drivers of contemporary migration such a narrow definition of forced migration seems outdated (Estevez, 2023).

However, granting international protection to individuals or groups of people has always been a political decision taken by nation-states. If during the Cold War the refugee regime was used by Western powers or developed states for political purposes (to punish political and economic enemies), the post-cold war model is characterised by deterrence, i.e., by non-admission, offshore processing, criminalization, and redirecting refugees to other countries (Estevez, 2023). This was most vividly seen in the aftermath of the 2015-2016 migration crisis when the EU made a deal with Turkey in which Turkey became an offshore asylum processing country and established detention centres for the EU. One additional measure was outsourcing asylum through safe third country agreements. More recently, the Covid-19 pandemic has seen states suspending refugees' rights to due non-refoulement on grounds of health emergencies and public safety concerns again prioritising concerns of rich countries over the one in need.

DISCUSSION POINTS/QUESTIONS

- Should borders be open?
- To what extent is migration a result of globalisation?
- Do individuals and governments have an obligation to help those in need?
- Should economic migrants be granted asylum?

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