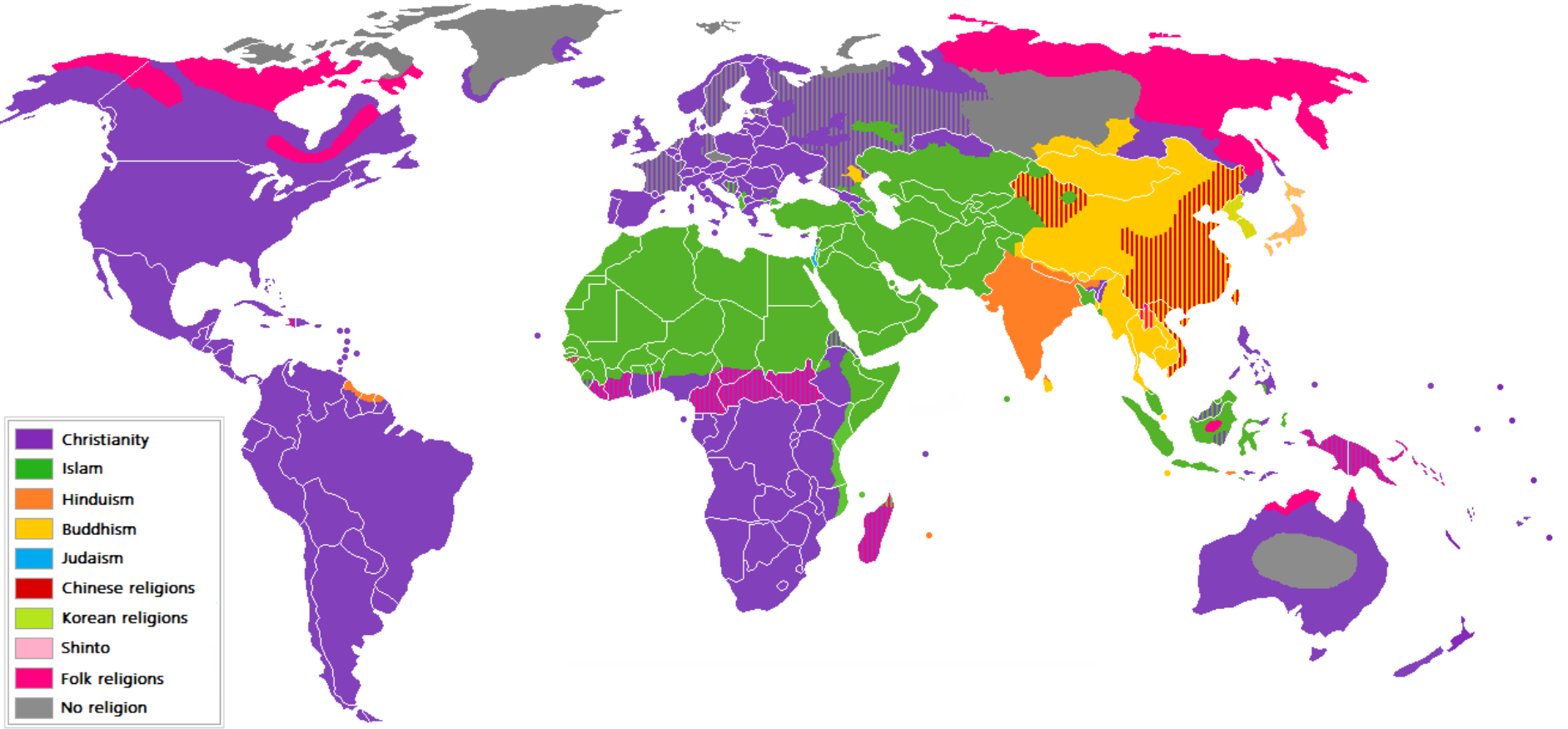


Geography of Belief: Sacred & Profane



The Religions of the World



**“Your god is good for you,
Our gods are good for us.”**

**What is
religion?**

```
graph LR; A((What is religion?)) --> B(How do we observe it?); B --> C[How do beliefs & behaviors correlate?];
```

**How do we
observe it?**

**How do beliefs
& behaviors correlate?**

What is religion?

Belief

Supernatural

Faith

Comfort

Explanation

Non-functional

Truth

Tradition

**Knowledge
Production**

TERROR MANAGEMENT THEORY



TERROR MANAGEMENT THEORY



How to cope with the built-in unknowability of
DEATH?

DEATH is scary because (despite many efforts)
it cannot be satisfactorily symbolized.

No one can report back on what the experience
of death is like (like they can with stories of
distant, fruitful lands).

TERROR MANAGEMENT THEORY



Terror of ultimate uncertainty is more horrifying than that of corporeally dying?

What are large-scale social institutions that are designed to mediate this terror?

Funerary practices, religions, ancestor worship?

What is religion?

Something that groups do.

What is religion?

**Something that groups do.
No one-person religions.**

What is religion?

Something that groups do.

No one-person religions.

A product of interaction.

What is religion?

Something that groups do.

No one-person religions.

A product of interaction.

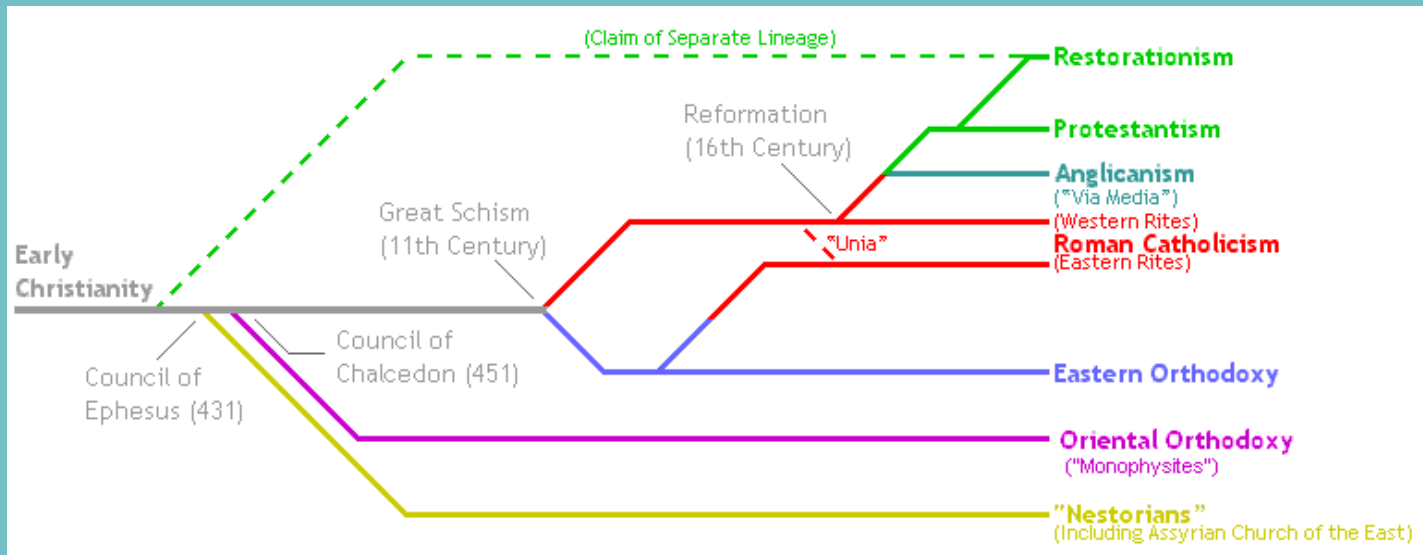
What comes from interaction?

What is religion?

I D E A S !

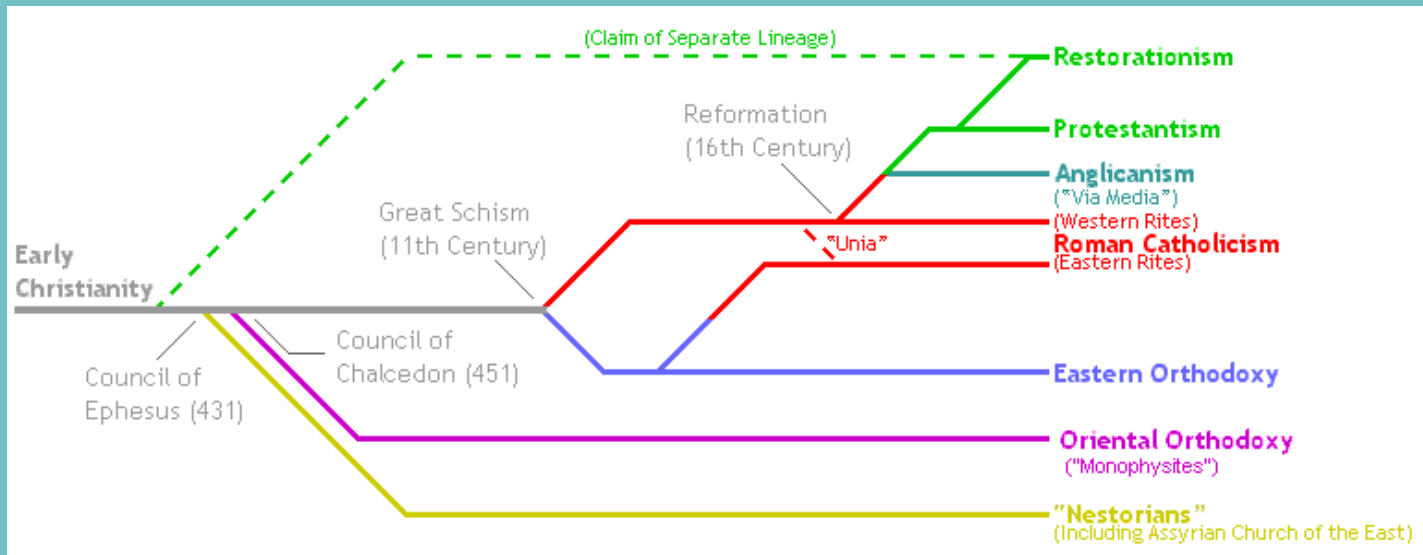
What is religion?

- Belief systems are not static! They move and change through space and time.
- Christianity has meant several different things at different times.

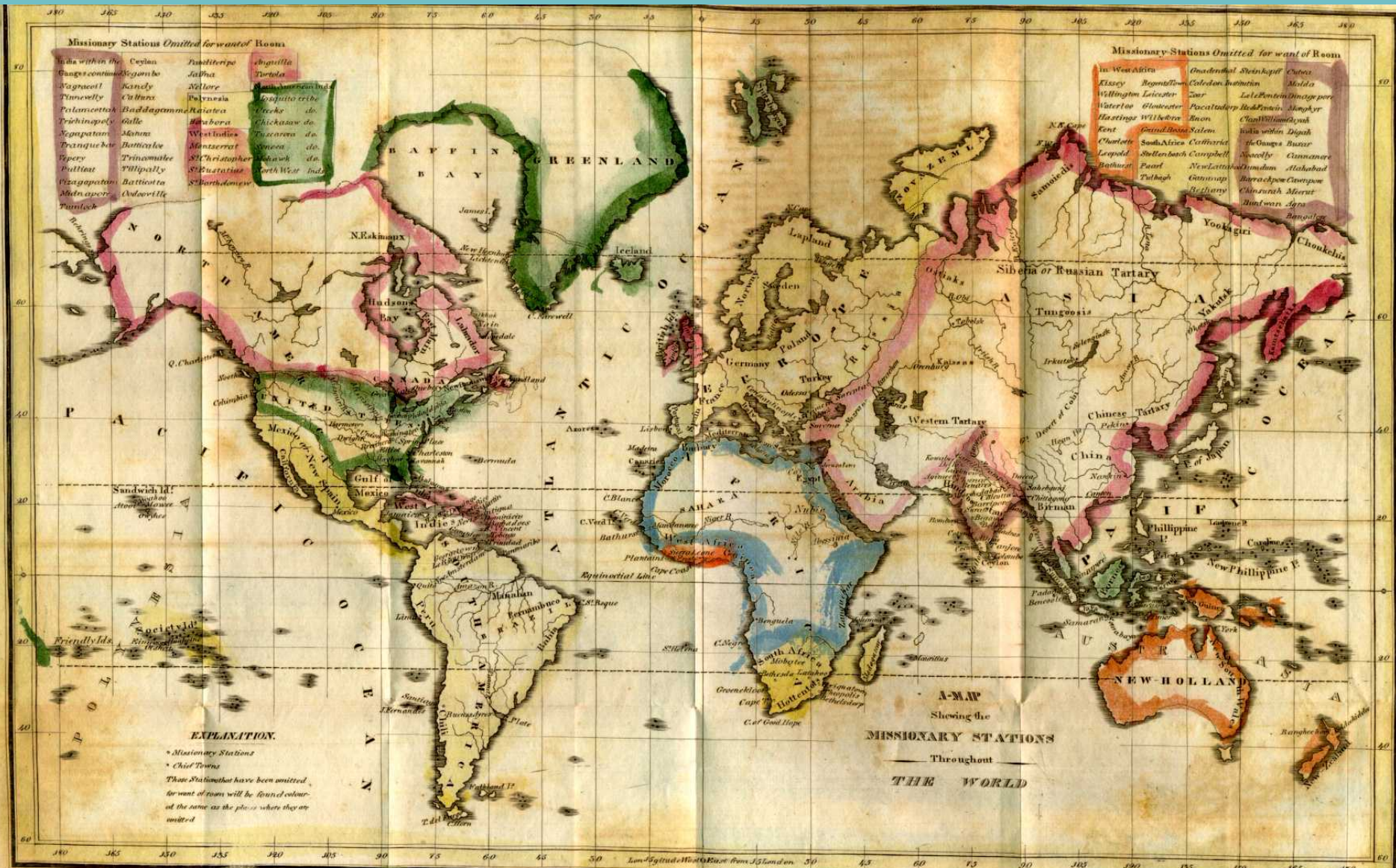


What is religion?

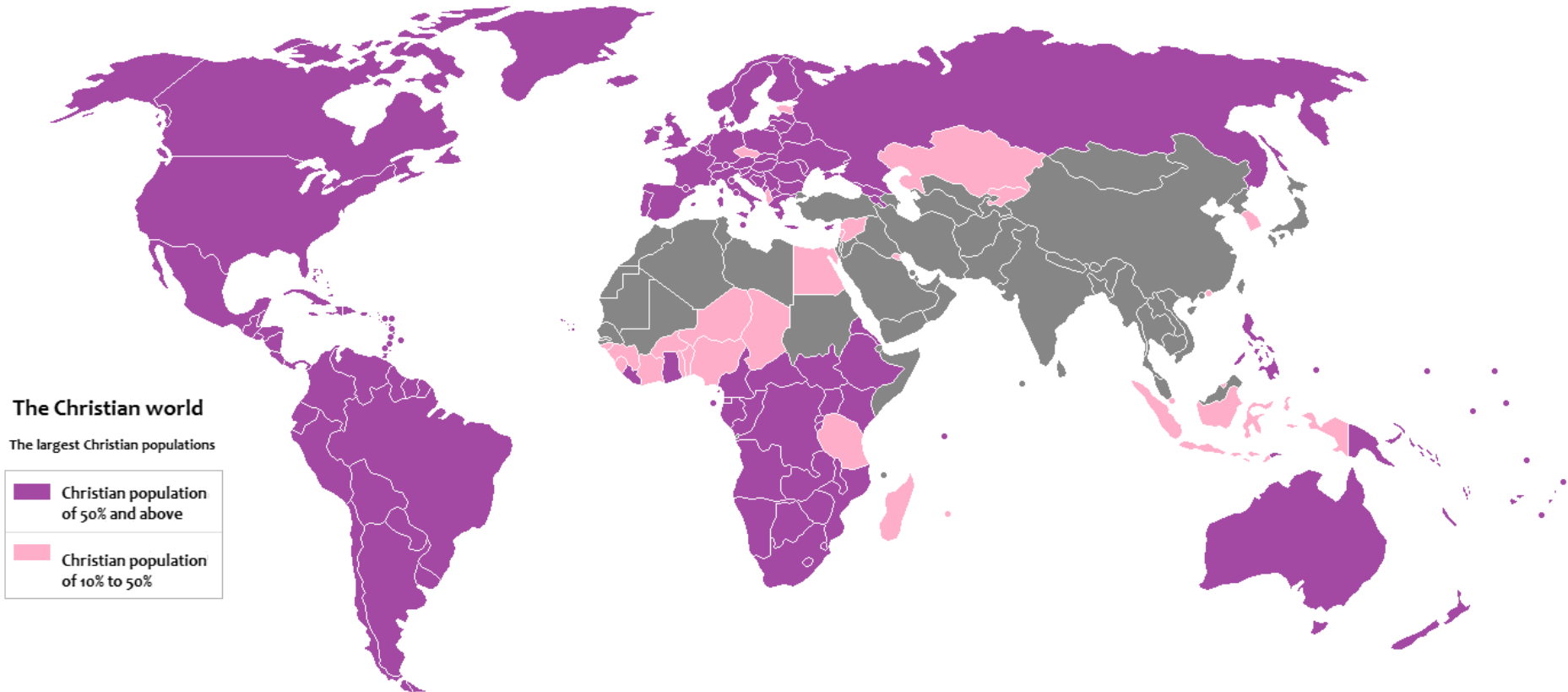
- **Proselytize**: Some belief systems have a built-in cosmology of spreading, and converting others – Christianity, Islam...
- **Missionary work**: spreading of Christian ideals, enlightenment...
OR European economic power and political normativity?



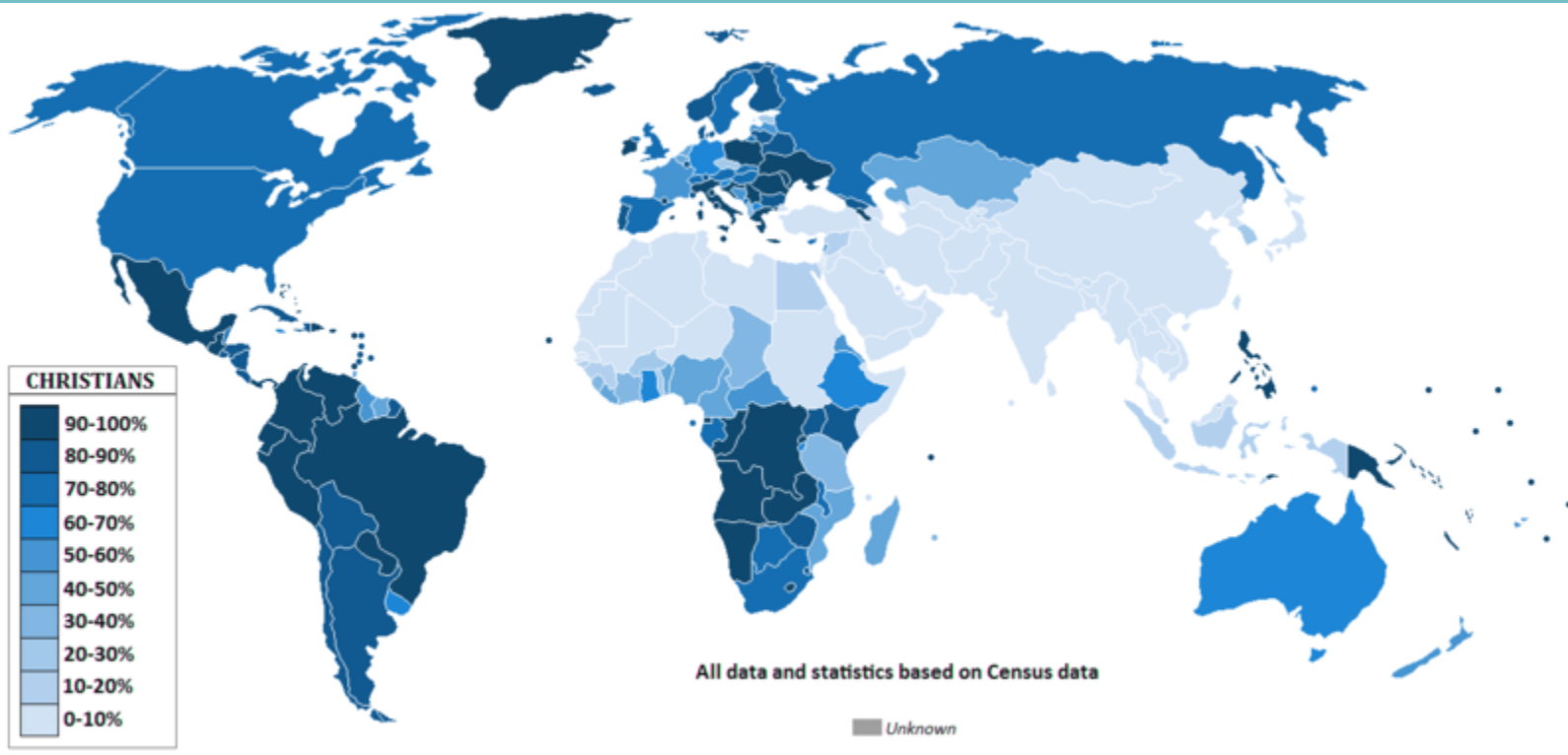
Spreading the word...



Spreading the word...



Spreading the word...



Spreading the word...

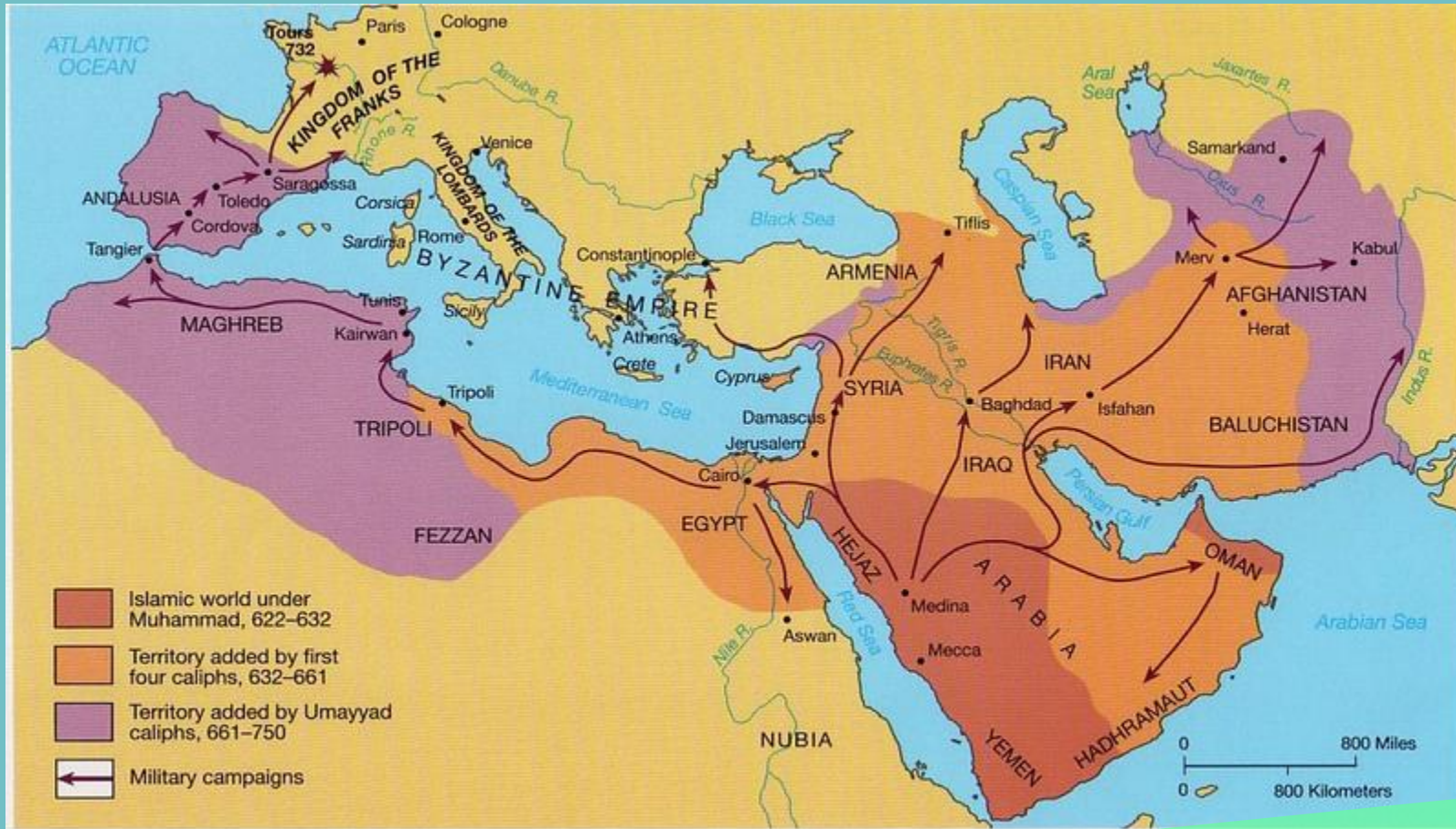


Colonization

&

Christianity

Spreading the word...



▲ The Spread of Islam

Islam on the move.

Gender(s) around the world

“Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?”

- Lila Abu-Lughod



Gender(s) around the world

- History of women being used towards colonial/political ends (Afghanistan, French Algiers, Turn-of-the-century Egypt).
- “White men saving brown women from brown men...”??? – Chakravorty
- English colonists in Egypt pointed to the veil as a sign of oppression but opposed women’s suffrage at home.

Gender(s) around the world

- **Overwhelming concern to liberate Afghan women from being forced to wear a veil (notably after 9/11)**
- **But little concern over empowering them through education.**

Hypocrisy?

- **Using women as symbols. Not giving them a voice.**

Gender(s) around the world

- Overwhelming concern to liberate women from being forced into prostitution

What about the oppression of women in areas in which we are not at war?

Hypocrisy?

- Using women as symbols. Not giving them a voice.

Gender(s) around the world



Stop the oppression of women in
the Islamic world: www.ishr.org



Gender(s) around the world

- The burqa has been noted as liberating by some, as it allows “portable seclusion” and the ability to leave the home.
- Burqa was so ubiquitous “that most women gave little thought to their meaning.”

Makes you question the ‘taken for granted’?

Gender(s) around the world

The burqa has been noted as liberating by some

“Veiling must not be confused with a lack of agency... They **decide** for whom they feel it is appropriate to veil.”

thought to their meaning.”

Makes you question the 'taken for granted'?

Gender(s) around the world

- The burqa has been noted as little more than a fashion statement as it allows “women to have the opportunity to

You don't get to see my face!

- Burqa so ubiquitous “that most women gave little thought to their meaning.”

Makes you question the 'taken for granted'?

Gender(s) around the world

Do U.S. women have free choice regarding clothing?

“The tyranny of fashion”

Get (a) around the

Do U.S. wear
clothing?



ng

Gender(s) around the world

Does the liberation of Afghan women just mean making them like women in the U.S.?

Are liberating tendencies and Westernization necessarily associated?

Is the desire for liberation itself historically situated? – A product of the post-Enlightenment world?

Ge

around the
rld

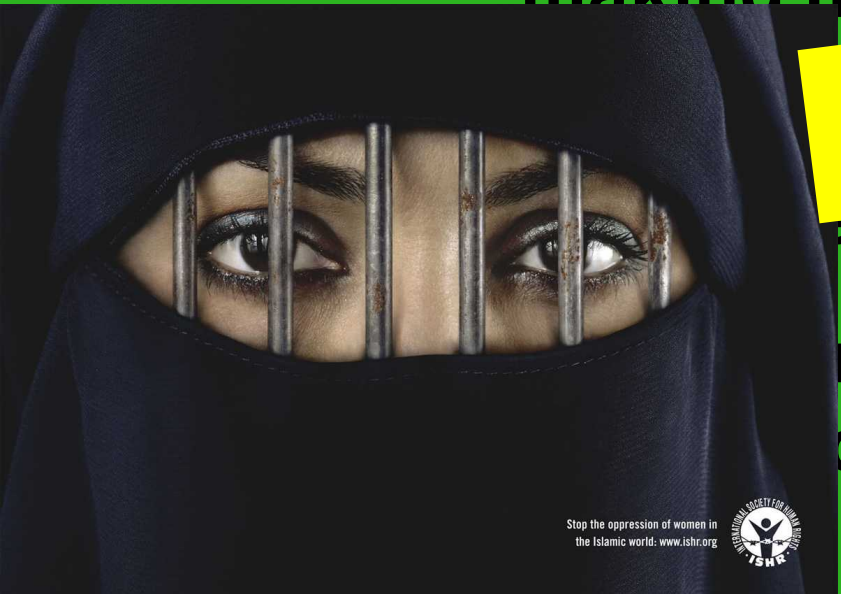
What does
mean?

Structural Violence

Does th

Afghan wo
making them like wo

???



Gender(s) around the world

What does salvation mean?

**Are concepts like solidarity,
alliance, coalition, empathy more
useful?**

Structure v. Agency



What category does the wearing of the veil among certain groups of Islamic women fall under?

Structure v. Agency

Should anthropologists advocate against the wearing of the veil because it is a structural oppression that Muslim women 'think' they are doing voluntarily, but are actually forced into doing it by the structure of their society?

OR

Should anthropologists respect the wearing of the veil as a cultural difference unique to non-Western societies? And respect that social actors are capable of drawing their own conclusions?

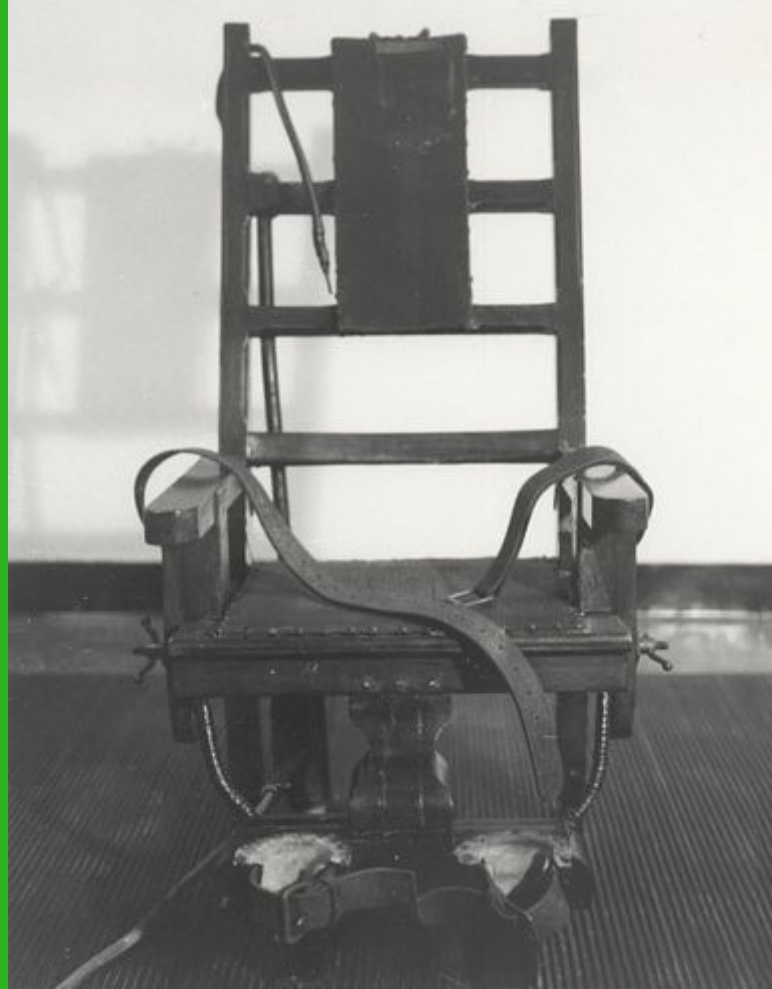
Structure v. Agency

If anthropologists pursue the first, are they hubristically over-estimating their ability to understand a population better than it understands itself? Not being sensitive to how other cultures developed, and enforcing their world view on a culture?

OR

If they choose the second option are we approaching the slippery slope of cultural relativism that looks the other way at practices such as coerced female circumcision, ritual suicide, cult behavior. Are these just “cultural differences” or structural forms of oppression?

Structure v. Agency



ANSWERS???

There isn't a good one. Yet...

במחנה

מוסף נשים במדים • מארס 2008



הקודקודיות
הנשים הבכירות בצה"ל
התכנסו לשיחה משותפת



לי
מונות
בצה"ל



במחנה

השבועון של צה"ל



“Combat Cuties?”

מהשב
בית
194
58 מע

רצועה הדוקה

“Combat Cuties?”

What is equality?

Is it possible?

How is it inhibited?

Do we want it?

“Combat Cuties?”

**Is the deployment of women
into combat a step toward
greater equality in gender
relations?**

“Combat Cuties?”

Is the deployment of women into combat a step toward

Yes. “It is women’s right and even responsibility to perform martial service, because the military is the essential condition for full citizenship and thus equality.”

“Combat Cuties?”

**Is the deployment of women
into combat a step toward**

**No. “The military’s use of violence is
associated with the culture of virulent
masculinity that depends on the
oppression of women. Militarism
fundamentally impedes justice and
equality.”**

“Combat Cuties?”

What do you think?

men
ward
is
er
s?
on the
oppression of women. Militarism
fundamentally impedes justice and
equality.”

“Combat Cuties?”

Why do you
think that?

men
ward
is
er
s?
on the
oppression of women. Militarism
fundamentally impedes justice and
equality.”

“Combat Cuties?”

**Representing female
soldiers...**

במחנה

מוסף נשים במדים • מארס 2008



הקודקודיות
הנשים הבכירות בצה"ל
התכנסו לשיחה משותפת



מבט נשי

חיילות מצלמות: הצצה לתמונות
נבחרות המתעדות הווי נשי בצה"ל

Staged Photo

Smiling

Make-up

No background

Not serious

Not “masculine”

Sexualized?



במחנה

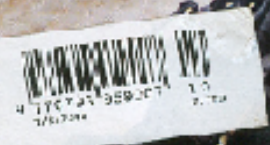
השבועון של צה"ל



חוט נשוי
לביטחון מוגבר
מוסף משיב מימזד



התחנות של ג'רי
יגור 38



מהשבוע מדור חדש:
בית שני



56 ש"ח

רצועה הדוקה



‘Live-action’ Photo

Intense

‘Finger on the trigger’

Specific setting

Serious

“Masculine”

Violent?

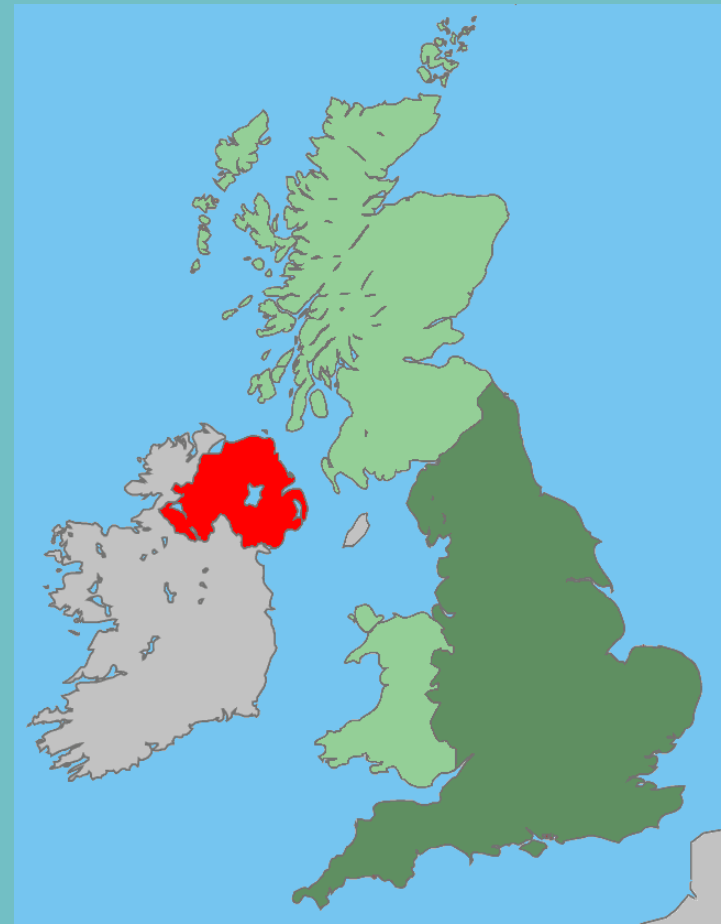
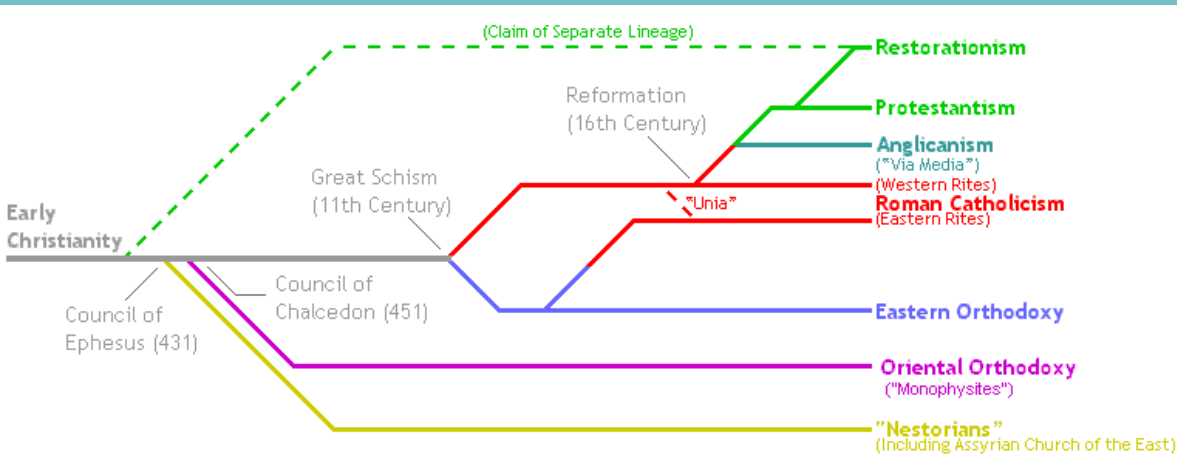


Politics & Faith

Sectarian violence:

Conflict between different sects of one religion.

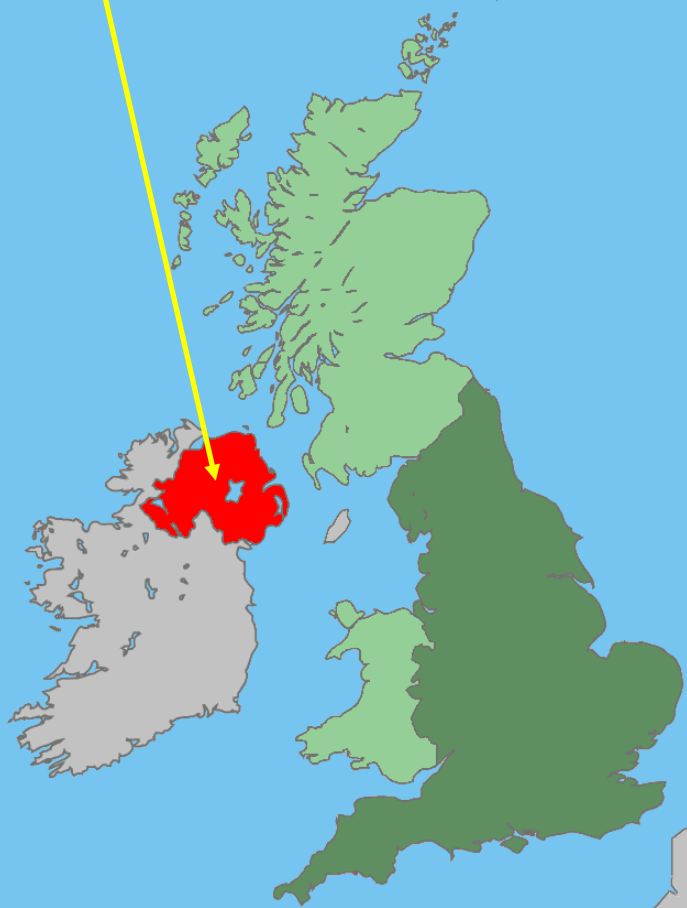
- Catholics v. Protestants
- Sunnis v. Shiites



Politics & Faith



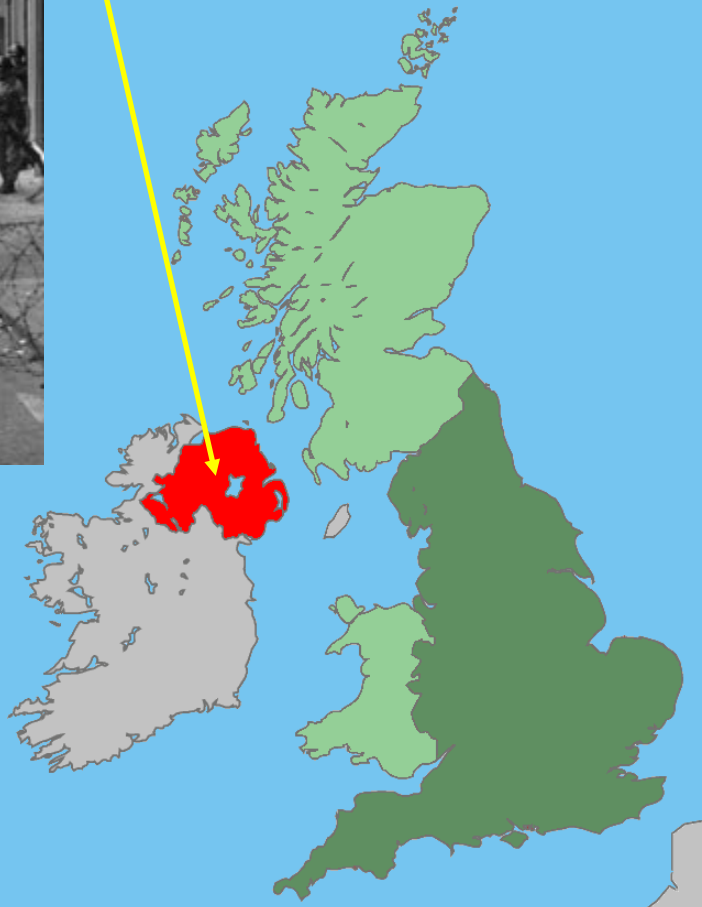
Northern Ireland



Politics & Faith



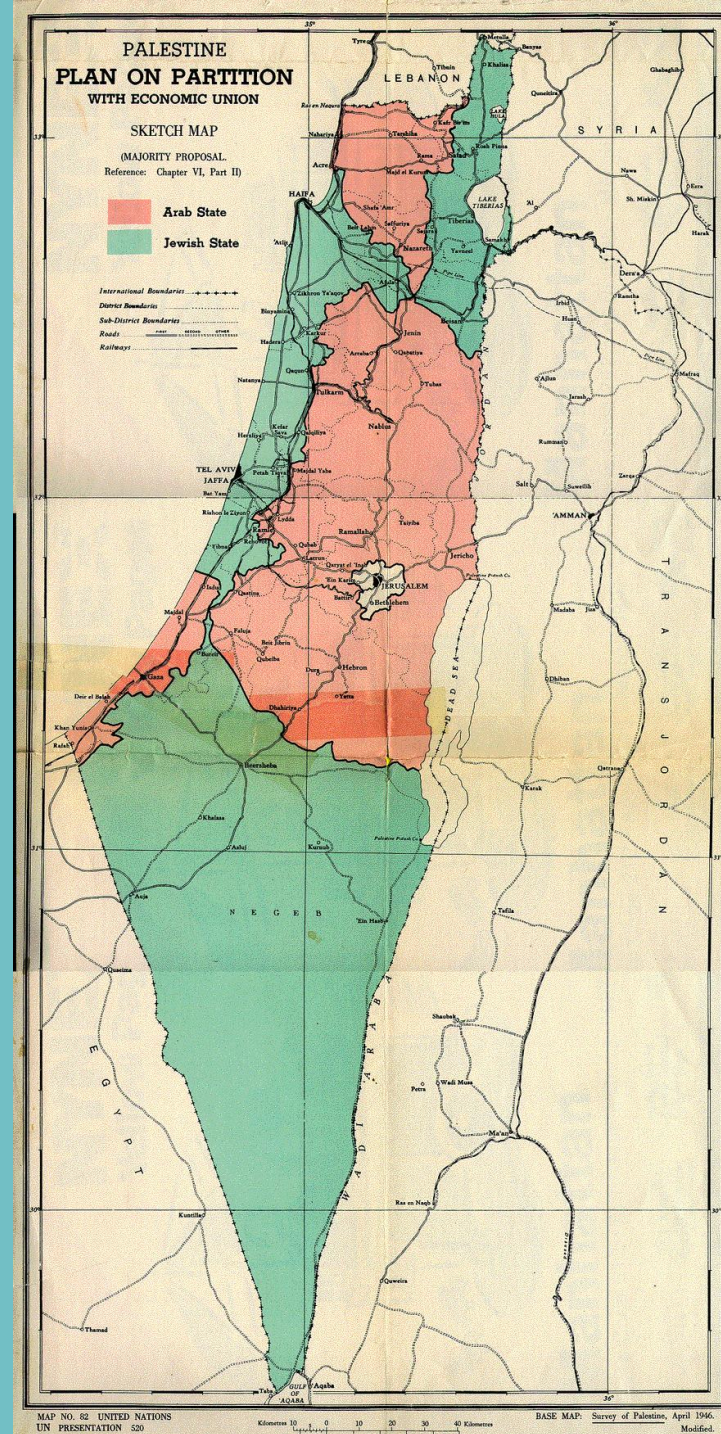
Northern Ireland



Politics & Faith

Israel & Palestine

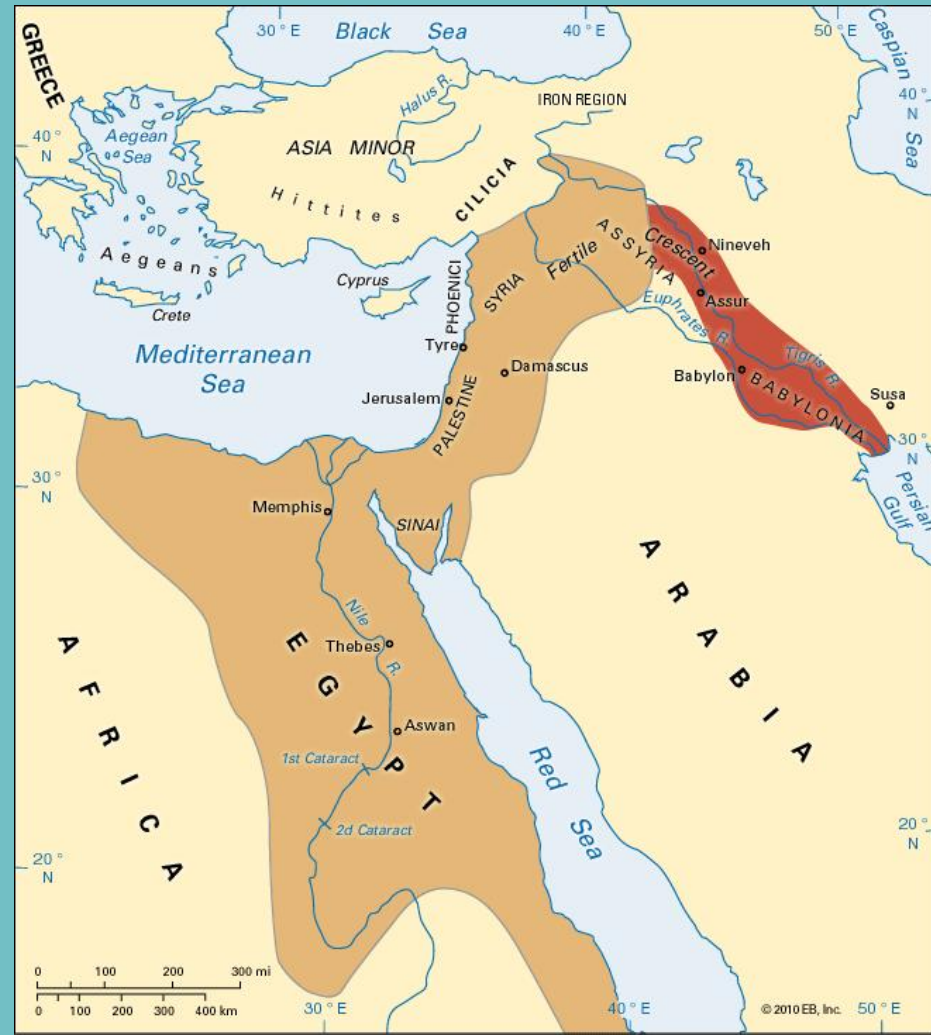
- U.N. along with British and U.S. support outline possible Jewish state in 1947 (following WW2).
- Settlement by Jewish emigrants, displaces many prior Arab residents.



Politics & Faith

Israel & Palestine

- Jewish settlement brings largely European influenced economic and cultural ideas to a region unaccustomed to them.
- Similar to colonialism, a group is forcibly occupying a space in which its ideas are dissonant with those of the current population.



The State of Israel...



The State of Israel...

Hope?

- Does hope sustain people bound by the Jewish faith through centuries (millennia) of oppression and abuse?
- The hope that one day they would be able to return their homeland?
- Has this aspiration been realized?
- If so, what is left to hope for?



The State of Israel...

Hope?

- The first Jewish settlers in the land of Palestine had abandoned hope?
- They were radical, non-religious, socialists, oppressed workers, hoping to establish a utopian space for themselves and other workers facing discrimination based on their religious upbringing.
- First kibbutz established around Sea of Galilee – 1908.



The State of Israel...

Hope?

- After World War II (and the Holocaust) mass immigration is undertaken by Jewish citizens of Europe.
- Newly arrived Jewish population declares the state of Israel
- Gains international recognition.
- Partly in sympathy for the atrocities endured during World War II?



The State of Israel...

Zionism...

- There's nothing wrong with wanting to return to a native land (Zionism)?
- It is when there is a lack of respect for the historical contingencies and alternative claims on the land that one must question the results of the Zionist urge.
- When does Zionism become colonialism?



The State of Israel...

Zionism ...

- Does any group have a RIGHT to live on a certain piece of land?
- Can anyone claim to be the FIRST group to live in an area (Iceland)?
- Like all humans, Europeans were originally from Africa. Does this give them the right to colonize and steal African lands from its current residents?



The State of Israel...

Zionism...

- Did Zionists treat the area of Palestine similar to the Europeans who came to the 'New World'?
- ... A blank slate, a desert for them to build up? Palestinians systematically rendered invisible?
- "There were some inhabitants, but they were mostly nomadic and had no permanent relationship to the land."



The State of Israel...

Zionism...

- This is a very ethnocentric view that considers the European notions of land use strategies as inherently good or better than others – which is of course not true.
- How much do we have a habit of associating the unfamiliar with the inferior?



Conflict in Israel...



- “The giving up of certain ideas is one of the most difficult changes to endure.”
- How much has the animosity between Israel & Palestine (Jews & Arabs?) been bred by the maneuverings of imperial powers?



Conflict in Israel...



- You can't wish away hate or distrust...
- But you can isolate these sentiments and examine the historical circumstances which gave rise to them...



- There is nothing natural about the hatred between Israelis and Palestinians...

Conflict in Israel...



- Israelis and Palestinians are not NATURAL enemies...
- This animosity has been engineered by socio-historical circumstances (and can thus be reverse engineered)?



- “Continued tyranny does not break the will or the back of a people, and popular resistance grows, rather than lessens, with every blow...”

Conflict in Israel...



Israeli Realism:

- Is the wish for peace naïve?
- Should a nation base its policies on the idea that surrounding groups are intent on wiping them off the face of the Earth?
- How “realist” is this?
- Is it insecure? Paranoid?
- Is it safe to be in constant preparedness for the worst case scenario?



Conflict in Israel...



Israeli Realism:

- ... Maybe...
- BUT, it is no way to improve relations or conditions...
- Improvements in relations cannot be made if each side expects and assumes the absolute worst of the other.
- Violence (war), through its culmination with a declared 'winner or loser', engenders the illusion of a resolution, conflicting interests being solved.



Religion // Statehood



Religion // Statehood

- The nation state of Israel IS NOT the Jewish religion.
- Just like the nation states of Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Saudi Arabia, et. al are not Islam.
- Governmental policies of nation states should not be conflated with the tenets, beliefs and mechanisms of religion.



Religion // Statehood

- Sometimes states invoke religious ideas to JUSTIFY their actions.
- But political ends must be separated from spiritual ends.
- How much should (or could) the forms and struggles for power be connected to religious?

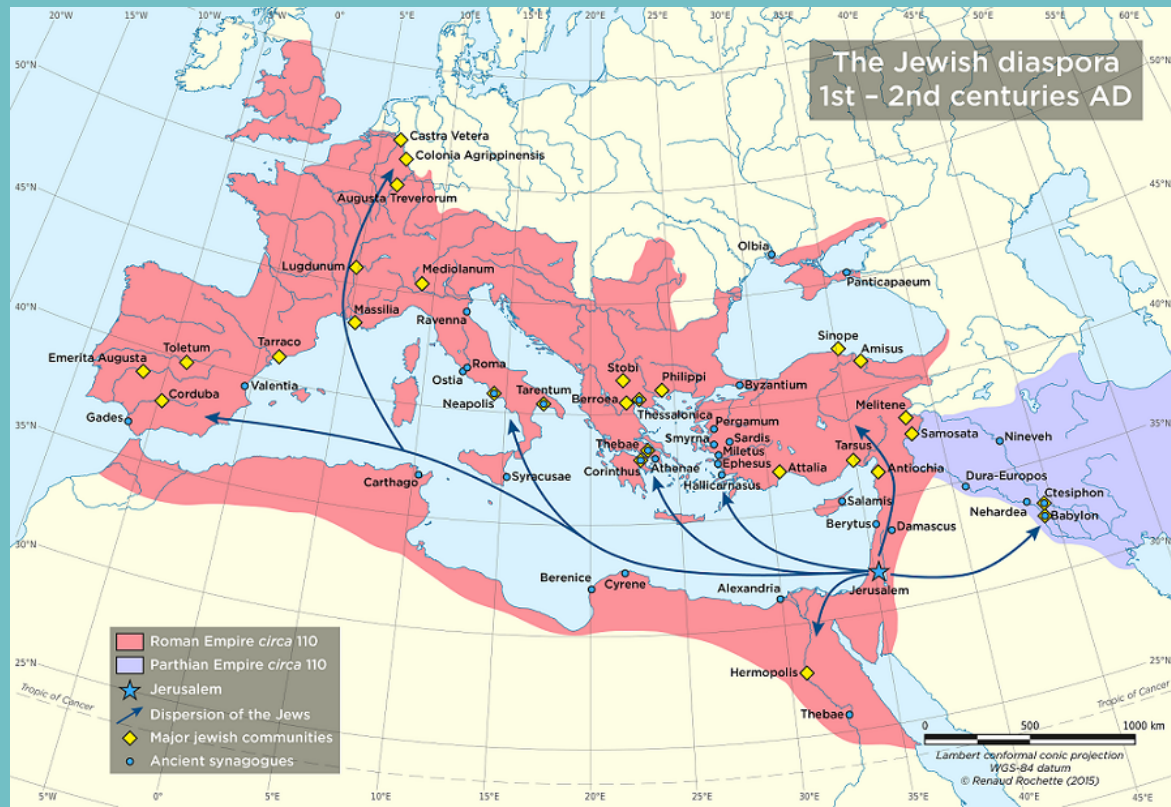


Politics & Faith

Diaspora:

- The dispersion of any people from its original homeland.
- Jewish Diaspora: Jews dispersed from their homeland circa 2,000 years ago.

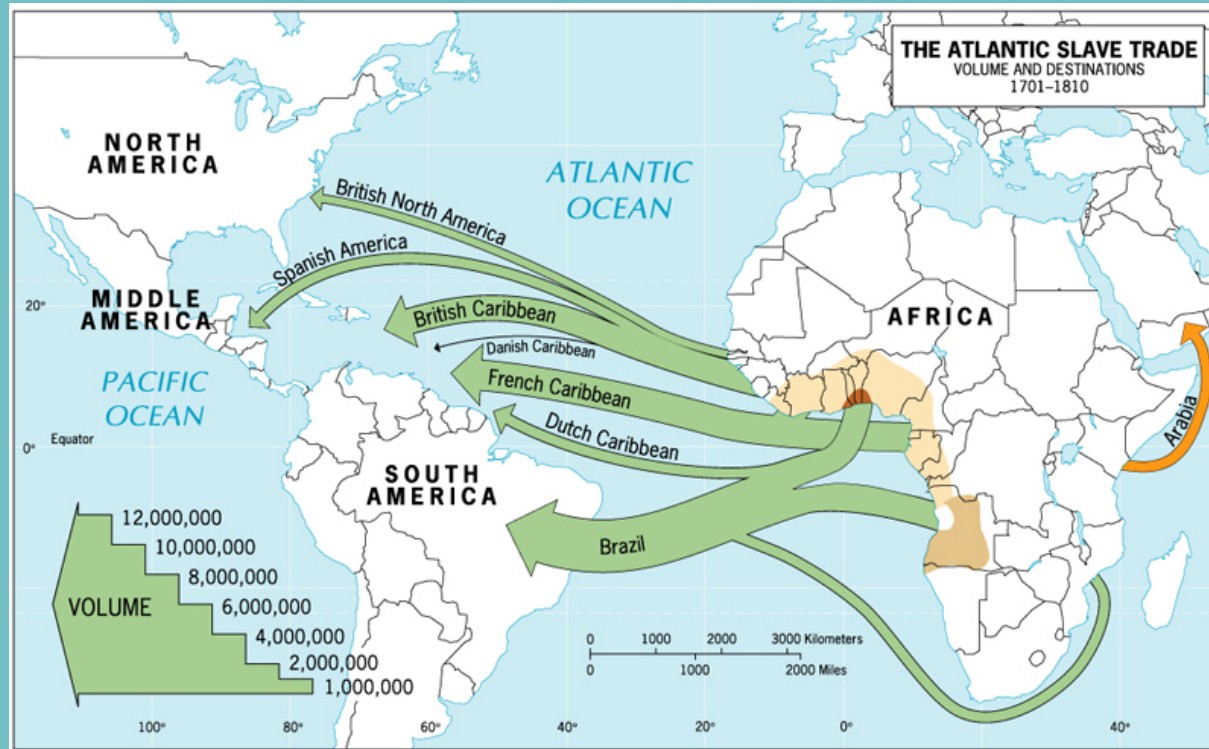
They are forcibly dispersed (into Europe primarily), not by choice. They are exiled, refugees.



Politics & Faith

Diaspora:

- The dispersion of any people from its original homeland.
- African Diaspora: Approximately 200 million forcibly removed from African continent during slave trade.



Politics & Faith

Diaspora:

- The dispersion of any people from its original homeland.
- Tibetan Diaspora: Approximately 150,000 Tibetans living in exile.



Politics & Faith

Islamic immigration into Europe today...



Syrian Refugees

4,087,139 people

Syrian Internally Displaced People

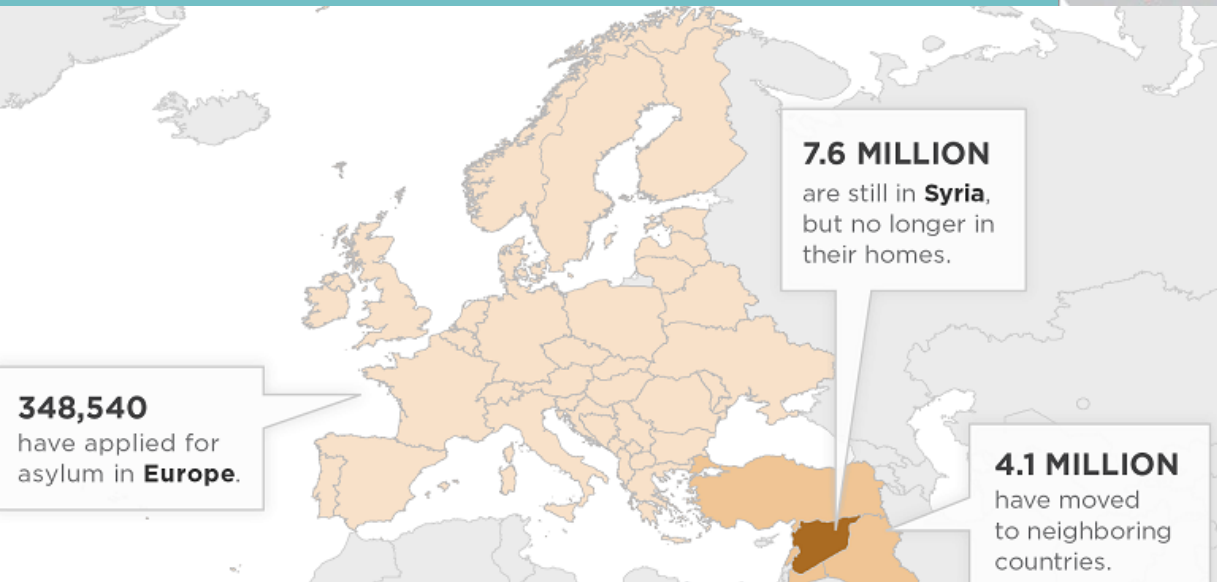
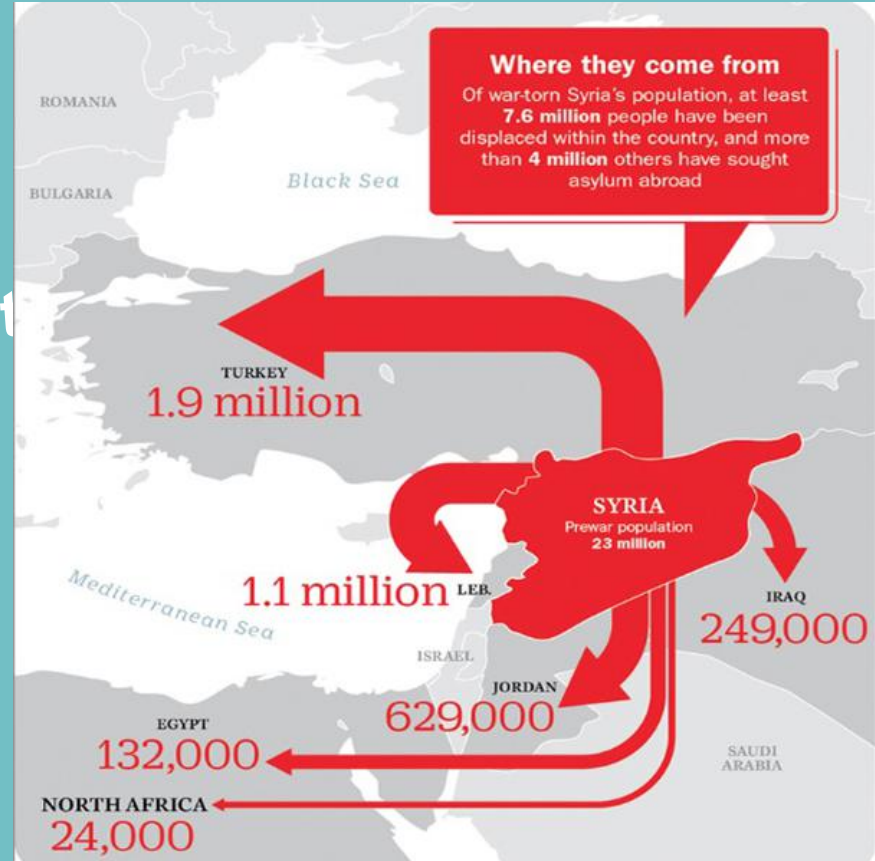
7,632,500 people

12.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria

SOURCE: European Commission, Reuters, BBC

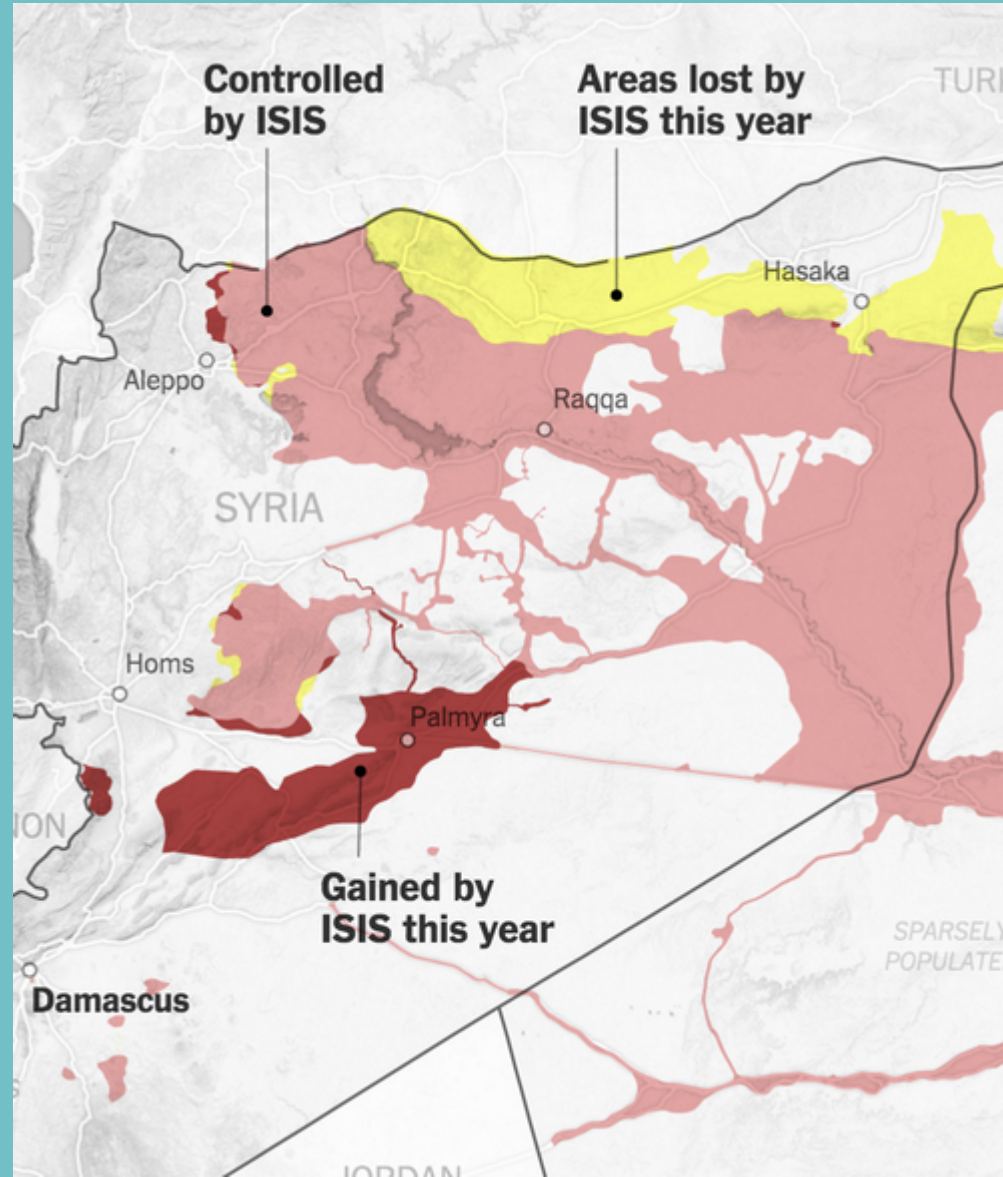
Politics & Faith

Islamic immigration into Europe 1



Politics & Faith

Territoriality of Islamic State?



Fundamentals

What is fundamentalism?



Fundamentals

What is fundamentalism?

Can any religion be fundamentalist?

Is fundamentalism a *way of believing*, not specific to the content of the beliefs?

“Fundamentalist groups despite holding opposing views (Christianity / Islam) share much in common in how they talk, and even look.”

TABLE 1 Nine characteristics of fundamentalists groups^a

Ideological

- 1. Reactivity to the marginalization of religion:** Fundamentalism is first and foremost a defense of a religious tradition, a tradition perceived to be eroding or under attack by the processes of modernization and secularization. Without this characteristic, a movement is not properly labeled fundamentalist.
- 2. Selectivity:** Fundamentalism is selective. Rather than simply defending a religious tradition, it selects and reshapes aspects of the tradition, particularly aspects that clearly distinguish the fundamentalists from the mainstream (see also Antoun 2001). What is more, such movements affirm and use some aspects of modernity, such as much of modern science and modern forms of communication and other technologies. Finally, certain consequences or processes of modernity are singled out for special attention and focused opposition (such as abortion for U.S. Christian fundamentalists).
- 3. Dualistic worldview:** Reality is clearly divided into the good and the evil, light and darkness, righteousness and unrighteousness.
- 4. Absolutism and inerrancy:** The text of the tradition (the Torah, Qur'an, or Bible, for example) "are of divine (inspired) origin and true and accurate in all particulars" (Almond et al. 2003, p. 96). Fundamentalist movements in religions that do not have a clear sacred text (such as Hinduism) often privilege one text (or set of texts) over others.
- 5. Millennialism and messianism:** History has a miraculous and holy end. At the end of time, at the entry or return of the hoped-for one (the messiah, the hidden Imam, etc.), suffering will end, evil will be vanquished, and believers will be victorious. The Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) offer the most certain assurances; non-Abrahamic traditions, although tending to borrow from Abrahamic religion's "end times" certainty, lack such fully elaborated assurances.

Organizational

- 1. Elect, chosen membership:** Those in fundamentalist movements view themselves as called, selected out, set apart for their mission to defend the religious tradition.
- 2. Sharp boundaries:** People are either in the fundamentalist group or they are not. The boundaries are clearly set; there is no confusion. One is saved, righteous, a follower of Allah, a defender of the faith, or one is not.
- 3. Authoritarian organization:** Fundamentalist movements are typically organized around charismatic leaders, with others the followers. The leader (or leaders) is viewed by the followers as specially chosen by their deity, someone with near supernatural qualities or special access to the deity, virtuous, a model for the followers, and one with special training and insight into the sacred texts.
- 4. Behavioral requirements:** As an extension of the dualistic worldview and creating sharp boundaries, behavioral requirements are both elaborate and specific. Rules about appropriate speech, dress, sexuality, drinking, eating, family formation, children, entertainment pursuits, and other behaviors are common.

Fundamentals

What is fundamentalism?

- The attitude that one's beliefs contain the fundamental, basic, intrinsic, essential, unerring truth about humanity (and deity).
- Any group that takes religion seriously, or thinks their religion is the only valid religion.
- Those that are too religiously confident or engage in any sort of action out of religious conviction.

Fundamentals

What is fundamentalism?

- Backlash against the rationalization of the world?
- A response to uncertainty and instability?
- A response to the flux of modernity?
- An ideology, rather than a theology?

Fundamentals

What is fundamentalism?

Violent?

Paranoid?

Fundamentals

The attitude that one's beliefs contain the fundamental, basic, intrinsic, essential, unerring truth about humanity (and deity).

... This suggests intolerance of the beliefs of Others.

... Intolerance of Others suggests exclusion.

... This suggests violence.

Fundamentals

Any group that takes religion seriously, or thinks their religion is the only valid religion.

... Well, if fundamentally religious just means believing in your own religion, the term becomes far too broad to have any relevance.

... Does secular modernity expect the religious to tacitly acknowledge their beliefs are fictional?

Fundamentals

What is fundamentalism?

Does the **Relativism** of modernity corrode the value of religion?

... If the multitude of religions are equally valid or correct, does it undercut the value of your own religion?

... The modern secular world is **pluralistic** and de-centered. There is no *Truth*, but rather multiple *truths*

Fundamentals

What is fundamentalism?

Relativism: the doctrine that knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute.

Pluralistic: a condition or system in which two or more states, groups, principles, sources of authority, etc., coexist.

Fundamentals

What is fundamentalism?

So, are religious fundamentalists an oppressed minority in the world today that is dominated by modernist secularism?

It's true the ideas of religious fundamentalists are threatened?

Fundamentalists are minority groups?

Fundamentalism is a logical lashing out of groups that have systematically had their well-being inhibited by more powerful agents?

Fundamentals

What do you think?

Is the current wave of fundamentalism around the globe one last gasp for religion?

Secularism will ultimately carry forward undeterred?

Religious authority is staging its final stand against its own annihilation?

Fundamentals

What do you think?

Is the current wave of fundamentalism around the globe one last gasp for religion?

Secularism will ultimately carry forward undeterred?,

Religious authority is staging its final stand against its own annihilation?

OR

Fundamentals

What do you think?

The last 250 years of secular “Enlightenment” are an anomaly?

On the long scale, the modern secular liberal whom religion has little influence over, is actually the more peculiar weirdo than the firmly faithful?

Humans need the eternal truths of religion?

The constant “progress” and novelty of modernity are constructions of capitalist industrialization and efficiency?

The Architecture of Religion

Do humans *need* a sense of meaning,
purpose, hope, or relevance?

Does this make us *better*?

Or are we okay with our nihilistic
meaninglessness?

Fundamentalism & Violence



Fundamentalism & Violence

Is fundamentalism inherently violent?

Well, it does seem inherently exclusive and intolerant.

Are intolerance and exclusivity inherently violent?

Fundamentalism & Violence

Well, not all religiously based violence is fundamentalist?



“Sometimes religion is used as justification for violence by people not specifically religious.”

Fundamentalism & Violence

Many fundamentalist groups in the U.S. appear to be non-violent...

Most fundamentalist violence in the U.S. has been the work of individuals not organized group efforts.

But do they perpetuate more subtle forms of violence, such as the repression of sexual or reproductive freedom?

Fundamentalism & Violence

Fundamentalists increasingly see religion as in a cosmic war with the secular state

War suggests that one group or the other will “win”

This perpetuates the perception (illusion) that violence will provide resolution to an impasse.

Fundamentalism & Violence

Fundamentalism embraces rigid and dualistic thinking...

Is totalistic and absolutist...

Moves easily toward paranoia, paints the Other as evil...

Fundamentalism & Violence

Paranoia



PARANOIA

That unmistakable feeling everyone is out to get you!

by MotivatedPhotos.



PARANOIA

I'm telling you, man, he's planning something...
The way he just sits and stares, doesn't even blink...
Damn goldfish freaks me out, man...

motifake.com

Fundamentalism & Violence

Paranoia

Living with heated exaggerations, lacking empathy, lacking humor, lacking creativity?

Living in a world of shame, humiliation, suspiciousness, aggression,

Living with dualisms that separate all good from all evil.

Fundamentalism & Violence

Paranoia

Is very self-centered, egotistic, self-absorbed...

Feeds feelings of extreme victimization...

Which leads to the portrayal of the Other as evil...

“The paranoid knows the ‘evil other’ very well, because the evil other is in fact a construction of the paranoid, the evil other doesn’t actually exist.

Fundamentalism & Violence

Is there a correlation between violence and *religion* itself?

Can we say phrases like “Islamic terrorism”?

Fundamentalism & Violence

Can we say phrases like “Islamic terrorism”?

“Fundamentalism is anti-modern, anti-female, apocalyptic, and **alters the faith from which it springs?**

Sacrilegious Representation

Violence in Europe...



Sacrilegious Representation

Freedom of speech

Or

Religious provocation

?

Sacrilegious Representation

Conflicting Values

Secular states hold Freedom of Speech and expression up as one of its most unshakable values.

As much as the hate speech of groups like the KKK is detestable, and directly contradicts the project of secular modernism, it is permitted because free speech is given privilege.

Sacrilegious Representation

Conflicting Values

The value of free speech is that it allows multiple voices to be heard.

The ideology of free speech accepts that no one group or belief system may have all the answers to problems that may arise.

Sacrilegious Representation

Conflicting Values

A fundamentalist group's ideology believes that whatever belief system it subscribes to has all the answers, thus free speech is not valued as greatly.

Free speech can be offensive, but if a belief system is durable enough it can absorb these offenses?

A fundamentalist cosmology is inherently weak if it cannot absorb offensive representations or the practice of abortion?

Sacrilegious Representation

Conflicting Values

A fundamentalist group's ideology believes that whatever belief system it subscribes to has all the answers, to which it adheres as greatly.

Is this true?

Free speech can be offensive, but if a belief system is durable enough it can absorb these offenses?

A fundamentalist cosmology is inherently weak if it cannot absorb offensive representations or the practice of abortion?

Sacrilegious Representation

Religion

~~=~~

Fundamentalism

Control & Modernity

Does Religion have a place in the modern world?

Control & Modernity

What is modernity?

Are we living in it?

Control & Modernity

Definitions of Modernity...

The idea of the world as open to transformation, by human intervention; It is a society which, unlike any preceding culture, lives in the future, rather than the past (Giddens).

Increased movement of goods, capital, people, and information among formerly discrete populations, and consequent influence beyond the local area.

The loss of certainty, and the realization that certainty can never be established, once and for all. (Delanty)


The processes of rationalization and disenchantment of the world. (Larraín)

Alienating and dehumanizing (Adorno).

Control & Modernity

Is modernity a form of control?

- Reason
- Logic
- Enlightenment
- Science
- Secularization
- Industrialization



What is the role of religion among these?

Religion & Modernity

Secular: denoting attitudes, activities, or other things that have no religious or spiritual basis.

Secularism has meant: “the coercive universalization of modern morality, knowledge, law and nation-statehood.”

Reason & Power

- Secularism is more than just the divide of religion and state.

-Is it the “coercive universalization of modern morality, knowledge, law, and statehood?”

Reason & Power

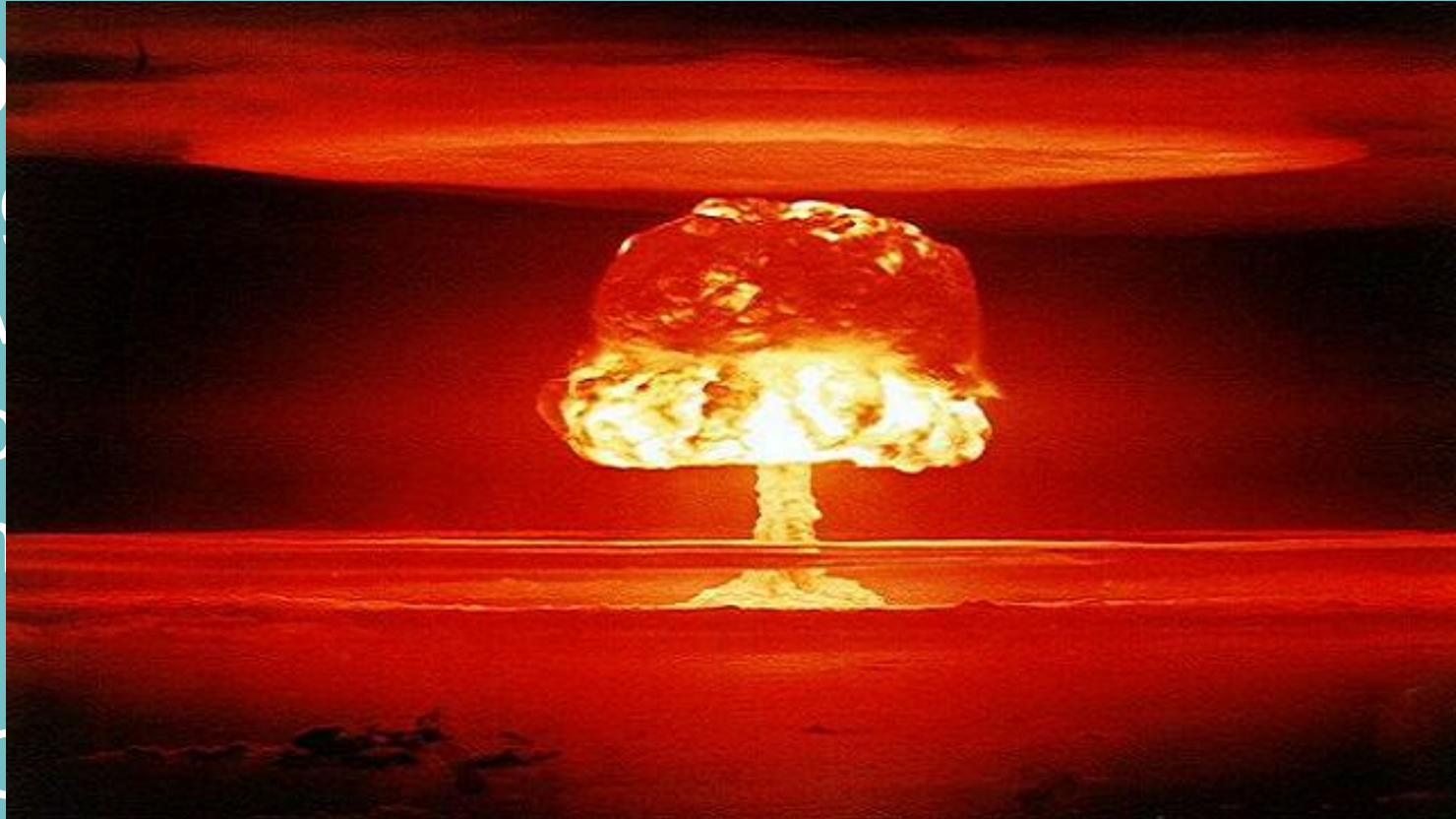
-Does greater danger lie in the organizational/technological powers of civilized states, and the impersonal opportunistic character of modern war and politics?

- Or the religious convictions of fringe fundamentalists?

Reason & Power

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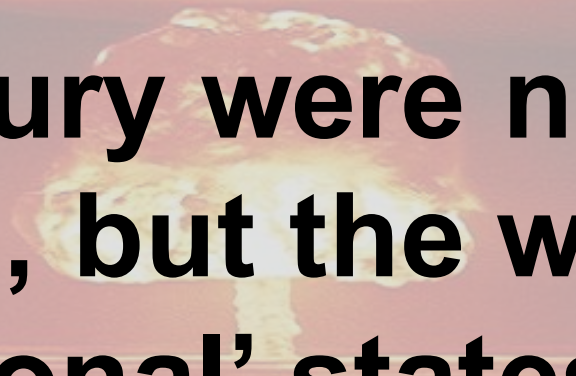
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Reason & Power

A photograph of a nuclear mushroom cloud, showing a bright fireball at the base of a large, billowing white cloud that tapers to a point at the top. The background is a clear blue sky.

Greatest atrocities of 20th century were not religious, but the work of 'rational' states.

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Reason & Power

A photograph of a nuclear mushroom cloud, showing a bright, glowing base with a large, billowing white and yellow cloud rising from it, set against a dark, reddish-brown background. The image is centered and serves as a background for the text.

**Fascism, Stalinism, etc.
all derive from *modern*
processes of reasoning**