

Religious fundamentalism

- Emerged as a major area of media and political concern, notably in relation to international Islamic terrorism
- Arises only where traditional beliefs and values are threatened or challenged by modern society. Key features are:
 - An authoritative sacred text - every word of the bible is literal, Aldridge - no text speak for itself must be interpreted
 - An ‘us and them’ mentality - separate from the rest of the world and refuse to compromise
 - Aggressive reaction - draw attention to the threat to their beliefs and values, reactions are aggressive and intend to shock or cause harm
 - Use of modern technology - keen to use technology to achieve their aims
 - Patriarchy - Hawley - favour women’s control is fixed for all time
 - Prophecy - proclaim the relevance of biblical prophecies to new events
 - Conspiracy theories - powerful, hidden, evil forces are in control
- Davie - occurs where those who hold traditional beliefs and values are threatened by modernity and feel the need to defend
- Giddens - fundamentalism is a product of globalisation
- Cosmopolitanism - embraces modernity, in keeping with today’s globalising world, constantly modifying ‘reflective thinking’, self improvement
- Bauman - it’s a response to uncertainty, risk, choice of postmodernity
- Castells - two responses to postmodernity: resistance identity (defensive) and project identity (forward thinking)
- Criticism - lumps all types of fundamentalism together, ignores ‘hybrid movements’, defensive reaction ignores reinventing tradition is also ‘reflective’
- Fundamentalism is confined to monotheistic religion
- Different origins of fundamentalism, Bruce shows distinction: in the west (reaction to changes in society), in the third world (reaction to changes upon society from outside)
- Davie - emergence of secular forms of fundamentalism, two phases of modernity:
 - Phase 1 gave rise to religious fundamentalism - enlightenment philosophy held a belief in the certainty of progress
 - Phases 2 is giving rise to secular fundamentalism - enlightenment philosophy under attack, growing pessimism/ uncertainty, led to loss of faith in major secular enlightenment ideologies
- Secular ideologies struggling to survive, Davie - ‘past their sell by date’
- Religion has been at the centre of a number of global conflict, Huntington - symptoms of a ‘clash of civilisation’
- Seven civilisations: western, Islamic, Latin America, Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox
- Religious differences creating hostile ‘ascend them’ relationships
- Criticism: Huntington ignores important religious divisions with the ‘civilisations’ he identifies (Casanova), ‘clash of civilisation’ portrays the whole of Islam as an enemy (Horrie/ Chippindale)
- Inglehart and Norris - the division between the west and Islam is gender and sexuality

Cultural defence

- Bruce - one function of religion in today’s world is cultural defence religion seems to unite a community against an external threat, has significance for its followers
- Poland:
- From 1945 and 1989 Poland was under communist rule, the church served as a popular rallying point for opposition to the Soviet Union and polish communist party, church regained a public role
- Iran:
- Western capitalist powers and oil companies has influence on Iran - changes in policy of modernisation/ westernisation (banning veil, replacing Muslim calendar)
 - Changes imposed rapidly from above, great suffering
 - Haynes - Iranian revolution led by religious leaders

Religion in a global context

Religion and development

- Globalisation brought about rapid growth economically for India, -> Nanda - examines the role of Hinduism in legitimating the rise of new Hindu ‘ultra-nationalism’ and Indian middle class
- Globalisation has created a huge and prosperous educated urban middle class in India:
 - Nanda - vast majority continue to believe in the supernatural
 - Tension between traditional Hindu beliefs in renunciation of materialism and worldly desires and new middle class
 - However, new versions of Hinduism legitimate the position of the middle class and allow the, to adjust
- Nanda notes India’s success in the global market is attributed to the superiority of ‘Hindu values’
 - Become a civil religion, and has penetrated public life
- Success of capitalism in east Asia, some suggest religion has played a role similar to the one in Calvinism
- Berger argues that Pentecostalism in Latin America acts as a ‘functional equivalent’ to Weber’s Protestant Ethic, it encourages the capitalism today (demands ascetic)
- Christianity globalised by expanding out of Europe
 - Lehmann attributes the success of Pentecostalism as a global religion to its ability to incorporate local beliefs
 - It creates new local religious forms rather than simply replacing local beliefs