



LECTURE 5

HEGEMONY, NEOLIBERALISM, AND ANTHROPOLOGY TODAY

LECTURE 5

- Egalitarianism
- Hegemony
- Neoliberalism
- Contemporary ethnographic examples

GOVIER 2017

- Anthropologist James Woodburn argues that equality in egalitarian communities is always in tension with the potential for individuals or groups to try to assert more power, acquire more wealth, or claim more status (1982: 432).
- Egalitarianism is not an accidental form of social organisation but often actively asserted by individuals (Woodburn 1982: 431). Woodburn contends “equality is repeatedly acted out, publicly demonstrated, in opposition to possible inequality” (1982: 432).

EGALITARIANISM

- Egalitarianism is a complex social system and egalitarian communities can value equality in several different ways (Moss 2009).
- Philosopher Jeremy Moss (2009) describes Parfait's distinction between telic and deontic egalitarianism, telic egalitarians value equality intrinsically whereas deontic egalitarians value equality for instrumental reasons like unfairness or injustice; for example, it would be unfair for a resource to be shared unequally between individuals who have identical claims to it (Moss 2009: 1). Thus, inequality is a moral issue because it produces the 'wrong way' (Moss 2009: 1).

EGALITARIANISM

- Woodburn's (1982) ethnographic survey of egalitarian communities (both delayed-return and immediate-return system) provides examples that synthesise with telic and deontic categories.
- Deontic egalitarianism is displayed by certain communities in Papua New Guinea where equality is sustained through equal exchange, thus individuals assert their equality through their ability to meet the demands of the exchange system, and not because they are intrinsically entitled to it; this is a form of competitive egalitarianism (Woodburn 1982: 446).

EGALITARIANISM

- Whereas for the !Kung equality is “an automatic entitlement that does not have to be validated” (Woodburn 1982: 446), thus this form of egalitarianism could be described as telic.
- Following Boehm (1993) it is important to remember that in an egalitarian community expressions of power would be constantly appraised by vigilant co-present individuals. The prolonged assertion of an individual or a particular group’s authority would challenge the social system and potentially contest social values and/or aspects of the social organisation, and this might lead to the deployment of leveling techniques

EGALITARIANISM

- Boehm discusses sociopolitical 'leveling' techniques employed in egalitarian societies such as public opinion, criticism, ridicule, disobedience, and even extreme sanctions such as execution (1993: 230).

HEGEMONY

- Gramsci (1971): defined hegemony as a form of ideological domination based on the consent of the dominated a consent which is secured through the diffusion of the worldview of the dominant class

HEGEMONY (BARRETT 1992)

- Gramsci's understanding of hegemony as a struggle for consent leads him to propose a theory of the role of intellectuals
- Intellectuals have a broader political significance
- Gramsci argues that we can distinguish between traditional and organic intellectuals
- Former (traditional) are the voices of the ruling bloc
- Latter (organic) speak for progressive class forces in their struggle against hegemonic domination

GRAMSCI (BARRETT 1992)

Hegemony, the dominance of one group over another, often supported by legitimating norms and ideas. Inhibits the dissemination of alternative ideas.

- Gramsci sees winning of hegemony as something that must take place as a precondition to a revolutionary seizure of power
- Ideological struggle politically effective and significant in its own right
- Theory of intellectual work that is far removed from the usual 'historicist' assumptions

HEGEMONY (BARRETT 1992)

- Gramsci's work raises the following issues:
 - What is the relationship between hegemony and ideology
 - Is ideology a specifically political concept
 - Hegemony a broader cultural concept
 - Is ideology or hegemony explicitly tied to class analysis or also relevant to other political conflicts and movements

HEGEMONY

- Hegemonic forces: the social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence exerted by a dominant group
- Hegemony Greek root: 'to lead' word first used in mid-16th century in reference to ancient Greek states, reapplied as other nations rose to power, by 20th century used to refer to social or cultural influence wielded by a dominant group
- Inequities - lack of fairness or justice

NEOLIBERALISM

- Political philosophy
- Economic Liberalisation
 - Free Trade
 - Removal of barriers and restrictions
- The market should be self-regulating
- Withdrawal – the rolling back – of the state
- Privatization
- Deregulation
- Cutting of public expenditure

LIBERATING THE INDIVIDUAL (HARVEY 2005)

- Human wellbeing can be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms
 - Private property rights
 - Free markets
 - Free Trade
- The state isn't invisible, but creates the environment for markets to thrive
 - Securing property rights
 - Creating Markets
- But state interventions should be minimal
 - They distort
 - Can't second guess 'the market'

NEOLIBERALISM

- Neoliberalism represents the geopolitical practice of using capitalism, trade globalization, and cultural imperialism to control or influence (Sartre, J, 2001. *Colonialism and Neocolonialism*. New York: Routledge)
- see: St-Amant, Ward-Griffin, Berman, Vainio-Mattila. 2018. 'Client or Volunteer? Understanding Neoliberalism and Neocolonialism within International Volunteer Health Work. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*. 5: 1-16.

NEOLIBERALISM

- It refers to the political-economic governance premised on market relationships often at the expense of social goods
- Larner, W. 2000. Neo-liberalism policy, ideology, governmentality. *Studies in Political Economy*. 63: 5-25.

NEOCOLONIALISM

- Neocolonialism refers to the form of control embedded in policy and practice that allow for colonialism in present-day conditions (Reimer-Kirkham and Browne 2006)

FREE MARKET

- Some argue the efficiency of free markets depends on moral parameters such as fair play, self-restraint, competition among equal parties, cooperation
- Some argue that certain market failures require government intervention
- Prices might not reflect costs or benefits of certain goods / services esp. costs to the environment
- Need government regulation to ensure things aren't exploited esp. to protect future generations

NEOLIBERALISM

- Belief in sustained economic growth
- Means to achieve human 'progress'
- Confident in free markets as the most efficient allocation of resources
- Emphasis on minimal state intervention in economic and social affairs
- Commitment to the freedom of trade and capital

NEOLIBERALISM

- Neoliberalism distinct from modern liberalism
- Both have ideological roots in the classical liberalism of the 19th century
- Championed the freedom of individuals against excessive power of government
- Adam Smith (1776): markets should be subject to minimal government interference

NEOLIBERALISM

- In the 1970s economic stagnation and increasing public debt prompted a return to classical liberalism which in its revived form became known as neoliberalism
- Friedrich von Hayek: argued interventionist measures aimed at the redistribution of wealth led to totalitarianism
- Milton Friedman: rejected government fiscal policy as a means of influencing the business cycle
- These ideas were embraced by Thatcher (1979-90) and Reagan (1981-1989)

FREE TRADE

- A policy
- Government does not discriminate against imports / exports
- Does not necessarily mean that a country abandons all control and taxation of imports and exports

- Financial crisis / recession
- Call for greater government regulation of the financial and banking industries.

NEOLIBERALISM

- The term is now used mainly by those who are critical of legislative initiatives that push for free trade, deregulation, enhanced privatization, and an overall reduction in government control of the economy

- Ethnographic case study discussed next:
- St-Amant, Ward-Griffin, Berman, Vainio-Mattila. 2018. 'Client or Volunteer? Understanding Neoliberalism and Neocolonialism within International Volunteer Health Work. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*. 5: 1-16.
- Scheper-Hughes, N. 2000. 'The Global Traffic in Human Organs. *Current Anthropology*. 41(2). pp. 191-224.

CLIENT OR VOLUNTEER?

- Examines Canadian NGOs in the provision of health work in Tanzania
- Volunteers became the 'client' over the local community
- Resulted in asymmetrical relationships
- Neoliberalism and neocolonialism pervasive in international volunteer health work
- Social inequities embedded in international volunteer health work

VOLUNTOURISM

- Highly skilled professionals and students
- Placements offer opportunity to gain experience and expertise in a country 'in need' (as considered by volunteers)
- Experiences: placements in medical caravans or teaching health promotion
- 'Voluntourism' (Harteveltdt 2007)

- Concern regarding the benefits of these 'intercultural' experiences have on communities and volunteers
- Issues regarding: power imbalances that potentially reinforce colonial legacies
- Conceptualization of 'global citizenship' (Tiessen 2011)
- Want to create a more equitable world but potentially reinforce paternalism, othering, neocolonialism, objectification

- How do we explore these issues
- Researchers note that there has been a focus on curative measures as good practice with little attention to local practices
- What are the implications of volunteerism beyond the benefits for the volunteer
- Ethical implications of 'medical tourism' in vulnerable communities

- Uses a Marxian lens to acknowledge the influence of market forces of supply and demand
- Influence of corporate giants on the free market today
- Looks at how economic process is enacted through power and political inequities
- How do agents (deliberate / intentional action) navigate their way through the structure (complex social institutions)

VOLUNTEER AS CLIENT

- Interestingly in this case, the individual providing work rather than receiving care
- Volunteer: 'we are giving our time and money'
- This is given in return for an opportunity to be valued as a clinical expert
- Time has a monetary measurement in this context

CONSUMER

- Feeling valued = compensation for their contribution
- Due to the expense to the volunteer they felt their time should be more valued than local health care workers
- 'Client' status affords status and power
- The NGO coordinates the experience for the consumer (volunteer) and failure to provide clinical experience means that the consumer questions the value of the experience

MARKETPLACE VALUE

- The market is the ruling relation: the participants were engaged in exchange
- Market allows buyers and sellers to exchange goods and services for money
- The market influences the volunteer
 - In terms of marketplace values

VOLUNTEER EXCERPT:

- “Over and above every other cost for the volunteering, but for a specific medical placement, was \$80, and when we spoke to Matron about it, there was no difference whether you stayed for a year or two weeks. I mean . . . it was \$80 . . . and then we asked her, we said well, because of the experience we’ve had [a perceived negative experience] and how we’re not going to be here, I think this is my fourth day here and we have two more days and then we’re going home. So, I said well, where’s the money going? Or we said, is it refundable if we’re only here for four days? No [the Matron replied], non-refundable, so well where does the money go? She said she allocates the money herself and the money goes towards supplies like gloves and syringes and things like that, and then we sort of piped in and said well, we haven’t really seen many supplies here. We brought our own gloves, we brought our own supplies, so we’re just curious where that money goes, and she said it’s her discretion”

INEQUITABLE RELATIONSHIP

- Relationship negotiated as an economic transaction
- Western ideology: demand transparency in the name of accountability
- Capitalist principle: 'the client is always right'
- 'Refund'
- Privileges the volunteer over the community hospital
- Inequitable relationship

COLONIAL LEGACIES

- Focus on accumulating skills and experience as payment
- Community vulnerable to volunteers feeling entitled to opportunities to skills bank (skills banking)
- Asymmetrical relationship reinforces colonial legacies privileging 'Western lives'
- Memorable events transformed into profitable products - tourism, leisure, hospitality etc

EXPLOITATION

- Pressure on community hospital to provide high intensity experiences
- Disconnect between visiting and local nurses
- Potential exploitation of local community members that can occur by way of health practices
- Issues over monitoring of the practices, argue that it is the consumers who test, judge, consider, and perform due diligence on their 'purchases'

NEOLIBERALISM INFLUENCES

- Influence of neoliberalism on the volunteer sector
- NGOs held to the same processes of evaluation as private industry
- Need to think about how we conceptualise volunteer work in global contexts
- At the time of study it was permissible for health workers to bring donated medications for which the expiry date had passed - this practice is no longer allowed through Tanzania customs

NEOLIBERALISM 'ENACTED'

- Argue neoliberalism is enacted in delivering volunteer health work in Tanzania which includes a reliance on principles of free economy to evaluate health work
- Power imbalances, volunteers position exempted them from accountability within the local community and provision of health care services
- Volunteer is a client
- Argue for a shift from service-orientation to a mode of development that empowers the local community and acknowledges their expertise

- 'Western' notions of progress and technical knowledge associated with 'modern' which gave the volunteer's cultural capital
- Adaptations to maintain their status and legitimise their actions
- Temporary international volunteer might burden the host rather than provide sustainable developments

SCHEPER-HUGHES (2000)

- Surgeons, patients, organ donors, recipients, brokers, intermediaries - some with criminal connections
- 'Following new paths of capital and technology'
- Global economy

CAPITALISM AND BODY 'PARTS'

- Global traffic in human organs
- Maps 20th century global trade in bodies, body parts, desires, and invented scarcities
- Organ transplant takes place in transnational space

- Artificial needs, scarcities, and new commodities - actual fresh organs!
- The movement of these 'new commodities' in neoliberalism
- Anthropology concerns: global dominations and local resistances
- Reordering of relations between individual bodies and the state
- Between gifts and commodities
- Between medicine and magic in postmodernity

- Need for new international ethical standards for human transplant surgery
- Abuses against bodies of socially disadvantaged members of society
- Potential human rights abuses regarding procurement and distribution of organs to supply growing markets

- e.g. Use of organs from executed prisoners in China for commercial transactions
- The traffic in organs in India
- Trading kidneys from living donors
- Argues no long term study into the social effects of kidney sales on the sellers, their families, or their communities

'KULA RING' OF BODIES

- Markets are indiscriminate and reduce everything including humans to their labour and their reproductivity to the status of commodities
- Describes the movement of fresh body organs and sick bodies as a kind of 'kula ring' of bodies and body parts
- Transfer of organ transplant technology to countries in the east

- Experimental procedures have now become commonplace surgeries throughout the world
- Kidney transplantation, today, virtually universal
- Survival rates increased, although vary by country, region, type and quality of organ
- In parts of the 'third world' where morbidity rates from infection and hepatitis are higher there is a preference for a living donor whose health status can be documented before

FLOW OF ORGANS

- The flow of organs follows the modern routes of capital
- From South to North, from Third to First
- From poor to rich
- Intersection of class, gender and race
- Some places do not permit organ donation

CONCLUSION

- “While for transplant specialists an organ is just a “thing,” a commodity better used than wasted, to a great many people an organ is something else—a lively, animate, and spiritualized part of the self which most would still like to take with them when they die”.

SUMMARY

- Today we have explored:
 - Egalitarianism
 - Hegemony
 - Neoliberalism
- Explored two ethnographic examples, and considered inequitable social relations, particularly between the global North and South.