

MODULE

3

Leadership and Religion

"God is dead."

- Friedrich Nietzsche, 1882

"Nietzsche is dead."

- God, 1900

Introduction

The purpose of this module is to encourage students to take a step back from their personal lives and their own religion in order to analyze religion as a whole and how it affects leadership, community, an individual's decision making, etc. The module also focuses on the ways self-discipline is part of religion by tying the skill into the characteristics of religion and analyzing its presence in religious groups.

Objectives

1. Students will be able to develop an objective understanding of religion as a whole.
2. Students will be able to define religion and its connection to leadership.
3. Students will be able to understand self-discipline and understand its role in leadership.

Agenda

1. Self-Discipline
2. Characteristics of Religion
3. Rajneesh Movement
4. Religion, Morality, and Ethics
5. Religion and Community
6. Religion and Government

Leadership Connections

1. LMX, and ingroup and outgroup are discussed in a religion and morality section. There is a study that shows that the in-group members are more moral.

2. Authentic and Transformational leadership both draw on the idea that a good leader must be moral/ethical.
 - a. Religious leaders have been observed to exhibit transformational leadership.

Skill(s)

Self-Discipline

Resources:

1. [Obesity and The Pope](#)
 - a. This source describes the role of religious leaders in the battle against the obesity epidemic.
2. <http://www.sigmaassessmentssystem.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Leadership-Series-Self-Discipline.pdf>
 - a. This source contains a lot of supporting resources that support claims that self-discipline does positively affect leadership development.
3. Yam, K. C., Fehr, R., Keng-Highberger, F. T., Klotz, A. C., & Reynolds, S. J. (2016). Out of control: A self-control perspective on the link between surface acting and abusive supervision. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 101(2), 292-301. [Self-Discipline and Leadership Tendencies](#)
 - a. This source describes the correlation between low levels. This source describes the correlation between low levels of self-discipline and high levels of abusive leadership
4. [Duke University - History and Meaning of Buddhism](#)
 - a. This article discusses the history of Buddhism and how self-discipline is a vital and important first step in becoming enlightened.
5. [Notes for Class Twenty-Three: Stoicism, Buddhism, and the Meaning of Life](#)
 - a. This source both explains the meaning of self-discipline in the context of Buddhism and Stoicism and the importance of consistency when developing and maintaining self-discipline

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

Self-discipline is the ability of an individual to restrict and control their own thoughts, actions, and desires to fulfill a purpose greater than his/herself. Specifically, this involves resisting impulses and maintaining willpower to stay dedicated on the goal at hand. There are several methods of attaining this skill including: reducing temptations, taking breaks, mindful meditation, etc.

Topics

Characteristics of Religion

Resources:

- Clark, H. (2009). *Preliminary Studies of Religion*. Science Press:
https://sciencepress.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/dotpoint_prelimstudyofreligion.pdf
- Rubenstein, James M. (2002). *The cultural landscape : an introduction to human geography*. Upper Saddle River, NJ :Prentice Hall.
 - Here's a photocopy (not by me) of the religion chapter, describing what religions are, different types of religions, and how they diffuse.
https://www.scribd.com/document/366516138/ch-6-ruben-11e?secret_password=OL2A8bkmsqkmNDvtDKqB#fullscreen&from_embed

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

Ethics/Beliefs: People care deeply about their religions, causing the morals and values derived from it to become a part of them, influencing their culture.

Believers (Community): In order for a religion to be a religion, there needs to be people following and believing. For many religions, there is a designated place of worship. The nature of this develops a community within a religion.

Rituals and Ceremonies: Rituals or routines done by followers of a religion to connect with the respective member(s) of their higher power.

>>>**Self-Discipline:** Self-discipline is something that is practiced in many religions, and is present in good (religious) leaders as well.

Sacred Texts and Writings: Many religions have a way to document their beliefs, practices, and how their religion came to be. For example: Christianity: The 10 Commandments and the bible, Judaism: The Torah, the Bhagavad Gita

Rajneesh Movement

Resources:

Realization (1999). Osho. *Realization*.

- <https://realization.org/p/osho/osho.html>

Carlin, Shannon. "What is the Rajneesh Movement? This Cult is the Focus of Netflix's 'Wild Wild Country'" *Bustle*.

- <https://www.bustle.com/p/what-is-the-rajneesh-movement-this-cult-is-the-focus-of-netflixs-wild-wild-country-8438151>

What Happened to the Rajneesh After 'Wild Wild Country'?

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdMg2-bQR94>

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

The Rajneesh Movement (in Oregon):

The Rajneesh movement is a religion started by Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (Osho) and had followers all over the world. However, they are most famous for Osho's commune in Oregon, one which a person had to give up all of their personal belongings to be a part of it. How was Osho (one guy) able to influence such a wide audience as well as convince those living in Oregon to hand over their entire lives for the sake of the religion? Osho was originally a teacher and had a lot of practice giving speeches (you can find these on YouTube) and preaching (outside of the classroom). He also has a series of books on his beliefs and practices that he has published.

Characteristics of Religion in the Rajneesh movement:

Ethics/Beliefs: Osho encouraged meditation, as well as promoting capitalism, technology, beliefs based in science, and open sexuality.

Believers (Community): After backlash from some of the Hindu community in India, Osho moved the group moved to Wasco County, Oregon where the group (around 7000 people) created a functioning city from an empty plot of land. Osho also had followers in Britain, Germany, Italy, the Philippines, Canada, Kenya, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Australia, Greece, Sweden, Norway, and Switzerland.

Rituals and Ceremonies: Rajneesh preached meditation to achieve spiritual enlightenment. His groups were also known to perform kirtan and all wear colors of the sunrise (pink, red, orange, and yellow).

Self-Discipline: Debatably giving up everything you own to become part of Rajneeshpuram demonstrates self-discipline. It's also debatable that giving up everything you own to Rajneesh means that you're giving up all of your responsibilities to achieve a complete lack of self-discipline. It could go either way.

Sacred Texts and Writings: Rajneesh wrote his teachings in multiple books and documented speeches (on Amazon and YouTube, if you're interested).

Religion and Morality

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

Morals and Ethics:

Ethics are rules that society impose on one versus **morals** which refer to one's own beliefs. The differentiation is not clear cut similar to the Dexter example. In the show Dexter, the main character, Dexter, murders serial killers. The discussion is about how ethics and morals apply to this example and what is the general difference between the two.

Religion and Morality:

Religion and morality are correlated. Many studies have shown that religion itself is linked to prosocial behaviors. Prosocial behavior is defined as any action intended to help others. However, just because religion and morality are linked, this is not the only link. Religion is a major source through which people get their morals, however it is not the only one. Some people behave morals out of an internal code or out of the laws set by a nation. So, it is essential that one does not assume that another cannot be moral because they cannot follow their own religion, or a religion at all. Yet, atheists and agnostics continue to receive harsh criticism from society, and are still cast out from highly religious communities. This hatred has been shown to come from moral grounds, in that those who are religious morally believe that atheism is wrong.

Religion and Community

Resources:

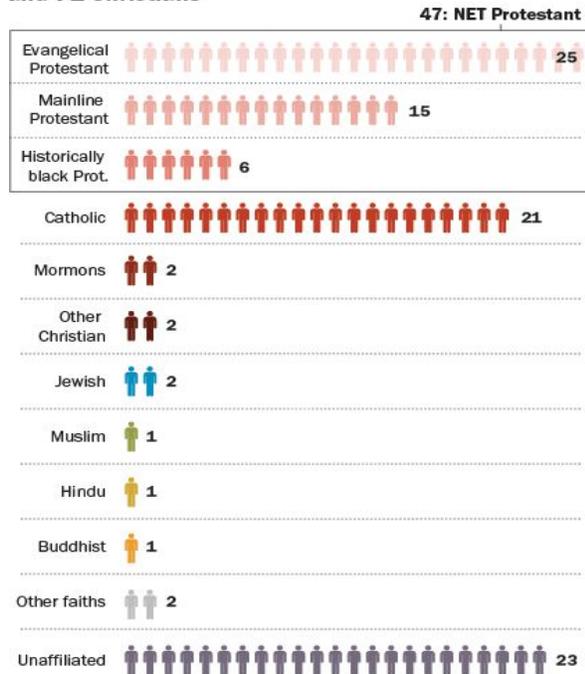
- Cornwall, Marie (1988). The Religion and Family Connection: Social Science Perspectives. *Brigham Young University Religious Education*.
 - Chapter 11: The Influence of Three Agents of Religious Socialization: Family, Church, and Peers discusses the relationship between religion and community
 - <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/religion-and-family-connection-social-science-perspectives/chapter-11-influence-three>

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

In many religions, going to a service (going to church, the synagogue, etc.) or celebrating holidays brings people together to form a community. Because these communities are based around religion, the people in these communities will have, or at least think they have, the same set of morals and beliefs. Because of this, some decisions made by the people in these communities will be highly influenced by the peers and leaders in their religion (group think).

Religion and Government

The U.S. as 100 people: Two Jews, one Muslim and 71 Christians



Note: Estimates of U.S. adults. Figures may not add to 100 or subtotals indicated due to rounding and because don't know/refused responses are not shown. Other Christian includes Orthodox Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses and a number of smaller Christian groups.
Source: 2014 Religious Landscape Study, conducted June 4-Sept. 30, 2014.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Image from Source 5 | Religion and Government

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

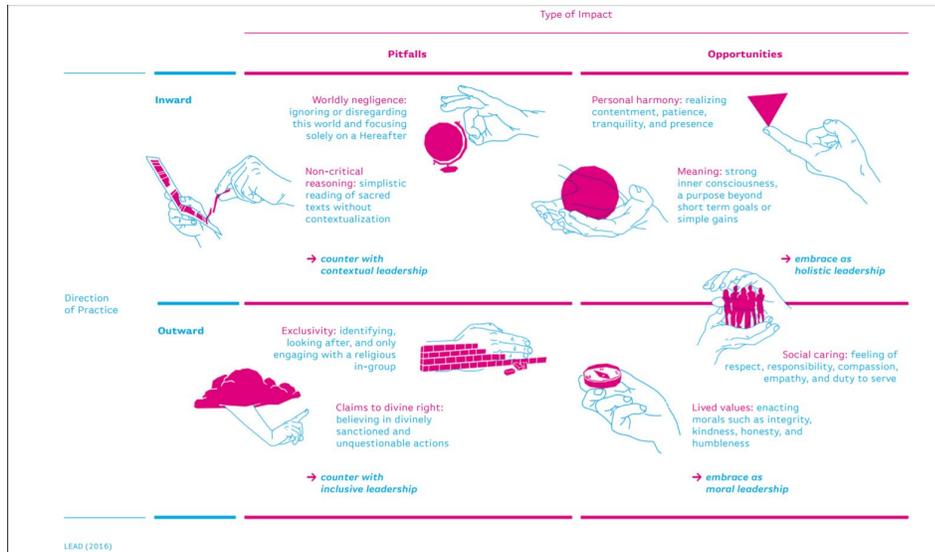
In America's representative democracy, citizens demonstrate a bias for religious candidates (for example, only about half of Americans would support an atheist or Muslim president). Similar surveys found that a majority of Americans would support a Jewish or female president. Additionally, Christians have a strong majority in the United States (70.6%), which poses other issues, because however religion influences government, that influence is overwhelmingly Christian.

This conflicts with the secular ideals that the government was founded on—the idea that faith is a matter of individual practice and should be left out of public affairs. Secularism provides an essential framework for governments to provide rights to their citizens regardless of their individual religious beliefs. It gives freedom *of* religion and freedom *from* religion to its citizens. For example, the Constitution forbids any sort of religious test for public office.

Facilitators will lead discussion based on religion’s impact on secular governments, and what that means for effective function of our secular government. Target questions will have students consider the presence of religion in government.

Supplemental Content

Graph and Leadership Content (Supplemental)



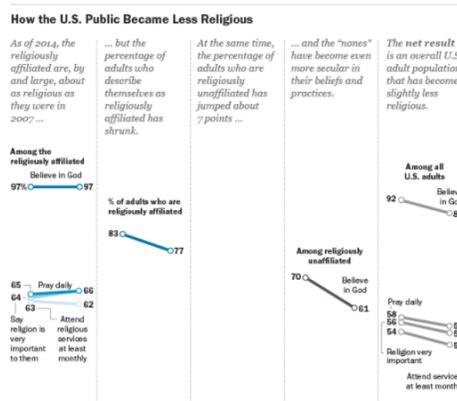
CORE Crash Course (CCC):

Religion has the ability to affect leadership in both a positive and negative manner. There are internal and external pitfalls and opportunities of religion in leadership. For positivity, one feels at peace and develops a strong relationship within themselves and others. For negativity, a religious background could result in arrogance with knowledge and certain methodology for completing tasks. Also, for members outside of the same religious community, there could be social exclusivity and enforcement of a restriction on questioning the leader.

Source for Image/Content:

https://www.lead.ngo/fileadmin/lead/Ideas/Studies/2016_Religion_Leadership/LEAD_Research_Series_Religion_Leadership_16-11-24_Centerfold_spread.pdf

Religion and Society



Revised August 2018

CORE Crash Course (CCC):**Modern Perception of Religion**

In today's society, the number of religious people have dropped dramatically. Many studies have shown that the number of people who actively attend church and are religious has decreased. Moreover, the overall proportion of atheist- and agnostic- identifying individuals has increased. Increase in democracies around the world, economic wealth, and increased tolerance of others *may* be associated (correlation more-so than causation) with a decrease in religious faith. However, religion has been shown to provide social cohesion and social control to maintain society. The morals derived from religion help maintain control and comfort in society's rules; not only that, but it benefits the human mind by giving it answers to many existential questions. Modern society has been adjusting to the decline of religion, but the ethical standpoints derived from religions morals still remain.

Atheism and Religious Non-affiliation

In recent years, religion has become a much less prominent component of society. Since 1990, fewer and fewer people identify themselves as religious. While only 8% of people did not call themselves religious in 1990, by 2014 this number grew to 21%. Despite this increase in non-religious people, the number of self identifying agnostics and atheists has mostly remained the same at about 5% and 3% of the population. Millennials are less religious than any other age demographic. Research suggests this is because they are hesitant to put their trust in major institutions like religion, government, the economy, and marriage. This could also be a result of many millennials being raised with an emphasis on thinking for themselves leading them not to blindly follow religious practices.

Non-religiously affiliated people also tend to be more socially and politically liberal, and a majority of them are democratic.

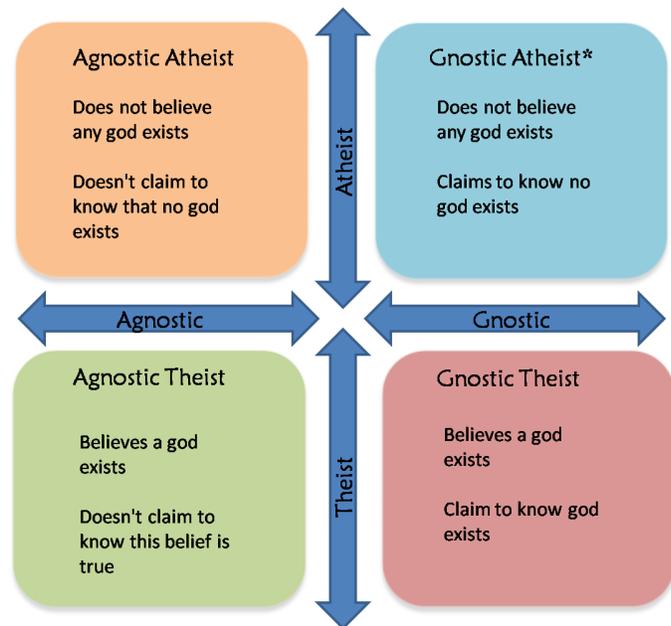
Finally, with fewer people identifying as religious, society has become more secular. This means less emphasis on religion in media, education, arts, and academia. Christian traditions that used to be widespread (e.g. not working Sundays) are no longer honored.

Spectrum of Theistic Probability

Richard Dawkins defines various levels of belief in God, from strong theist to strong atheist. A strong theist has 100% faith in god and does not question them. A strong atheist believes the opposite and is sure that there is no God. An agnostic strikes a balance, and believes that one cannot be certain of an existence of a God. Dawkin's scale is just one example of the interrelation of atheism, theism, and agnosticism. Some believe that agnosticism and atheism are not even on the same spectrum, and that theism is a scale which shows belief in god, where gnosticism is a scale which shows how much one is confident in their beliefs. Of course, there is no one correct scale, because the definitions of atheism and agnosticism are not rigidly defined, as they have come up throughout history.

THE DAWKINS SCALE

- 1. STRONG THEIST:**
I do not question the existence of God, I know he exists.
- 2. DE-FACTO THEIST:**
I cannot know for certain, but I strongly believe in God.
- 3. WEAK THEIST:**
I am very uncertain, but I am inclined to believe in God.
- 4. PURE AGNOSTIC:**
God's existence and non-existence are exactly equiprobable.
- 5. WEAK ATHEIST:**
I do not know whether God exists, but I'm inclined to be skeptical.
- 6. DE-FACTO ATHEIST:**
I cannot know for certain, but I think God is very improbable.
- 7. STRONG ATHEIST:**
I'm 100% sure that there is no God.



*Stronger than strong atheism, since it includes a claim of *knowledge*

Religion and Ethics

Many different factors have affected the values of societies around the world, and one of the biggest factors is religion. Historically speaking, religion was the concept that guided almost all of the important parts of a society, including civil expectation, policy, and how people live with each other. As time went on, however, more and more factors were introduced that affected the values of society, and in this day and age, there are plenty. These factors include religion, accessible information, the power of one, blending of cultures, and progressive interests.

It should be noted that the differences in ethics and morality lie in the scale. Ethics deals with the value system of society while morality deals with the value system of the individual.

Religion and Society (cont.)

- Drops in overall rates of beliefs and practices in America
 - Decline over the past decade
- People who are considered “moderate to extremely” committed have dropped in measure of religious to commitment
- Number of people who still believe in God is still remarkably high in US compared to other countries
- Overall atheists or agnostic group has increased by almost 7% of the population
- Decline in overall number of absolute believers in God
- Millennials appear to be less religious than their elders
- Changing attitude to homosexuality

- Overall, the article displays data going over general US public view on religion and the trends over a ten year period
- Religion provides social cohesion and social control to maintain society
- can cause violence, downfall by taking functionalist approach
- Social cohesion is provided by having similar rituals and beliefs as others
- Morals derived from religion help maintain control and comfort in society's rules
- Benefits the human mind by giving it answers to many existential questions
- One person believing in a religion does not make it legitimate
- A collective consciousness therefore creates a religion, as a collective group of ideas that have similar beliefs creates a reality
- Most modern countries' youth have decreased religiosity
- Increase in democracies have lowered the rate of people who have a faith
- Increase in education and tolerance in others lowers absolutism
- Economic wealth in many countries
- Increase in wealth has been associated with a decrease in faith and belief in religion
- impoverity decrease means religiosity decrease
- However, religion will not "die", it will continue on
- Steady decline in number of religious-affiliated people in many countries, however, the religious have stronger beliefs now
- US is becoming more secular
- Society used to be based upon christianity in the US, many things changed schedules and time for prayers and service

Atheism and Religious Non-affiliation

- Significant growth in people without religious affiliation (8% in 1990, 21% in 2014) in recent years
 - Populations of Atheists and Agnostics have stayed the same at 3% and 5%
 - Younger generations tend to be less religiously affiliated
 - 32% of Millennials are unaffiliated
 - Millennials often raised with emphasis on thinking for oneself, not blindly accepting the moral compass of religion
 - Millennials also lost trust in other institutions like the government, the economy, marriage, the media, and other generations.
 - Rise of mass media, internet have exposed scandals, flaws in major institutions like religion, government, and marriage.
 - 21% of GenX
- Non-religiously affiliated people tend to be more socially and politically liberal
 - 61% of non-religious people are democratic
 - 71% support abortion, 74% support marriage equality

- Non-religiously affiliated people concur churches should remain separate from politics by a margin of 39%, religiously people agree with a margin of 7%
- With a greater percentage of the population not identifying as religious, society has become more secular
 - Christian traditions no longer honored by society:
 - Stores open on sundays
 - Wednesday nights not left open for church
 - Christian values no longer taught in schools/practiced
 - Less emphasis on religion in media, education, arts, academia

Religiocentrism

Resources:

<http://www.bookpump.com/dps/pdf-b/9422948b.pdf>

- A study about military leaders biased by religious affiliations.

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

Study observes the impact from decision making that is biased by religious affiliations, looking at United States Armed Forces in Europe Religious beliefs help guide decisions from leaders; influences outcomes, with morals being afflicted into the decisions made Bias can influence leaders without them knowing (implicit bias), making both positive and negative outcomes. It is important to look at these biases before reaching a decision on any action. Becoming more aware of this bias and looking over biased information allows the leader to make better decisions and conclusions.

Religiocentrism is the idea that one views their religion as superior or the “true religion” compared to another religion. It’s a very real concept that is actually taught in most theist religions when they express that the God (or gods) are the true ones and the others are fake. Religiocentrism is a powerful concept because of this, and also because of the fact that it can subconsciously influence how we treat members of other religions or societies. Unlike ethnocentrism, religiocentrism is self-validating and can affect anyone, even non-religiously affiliated people.

References

1. **Benefiel, et. al. (2014) "Spirituality and Religion in the Workplace: History, Theory, and Research"**
 - a. Explains how religion impacts leaders in the workplace, specifically Islam and Christianity