The Dutch Canadians

K. Ishwaran’s Holland Marsh Study.
Family, Kinship and Community

- The Dutch of the Holland Marsh by K. ISHWARAN.

- YORK UNIVERSITY 1965
Family Kinship and Community

• A study of Dutch Canadians, a developmental approach
• by Ishwaran, Dr. K.
• This 1970s study attempts to trace the social and political culture of the Dutch Canadian in the Holland Marsh area (North of Toronto, for decades the vegetable garden of Ontario).
Family Kinship and Community

• With the help of questionnaires, the author examines a range of sociological and anthropological aspects of the community.
THE WEBER THESIS

• In his seminal study, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*,

• And in his follow up studies of religions throughout the world, Weber developed three conclusions.
• First, that every major religious group develops distinctive value orientations.
• Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish etc…
• Second, that these **value orientations** influence all aspects of the lives of members of religious communities.

• Weber’s notion is that **religion produces ethics for life**…influences other spheres – political, economic, educational..)

•
• Third, that the value orientations serve as guides to conduct

• They help individuals shape their environment in accordance with their religious ethics.
i.e. The Protestant Ethic

- Protestant Ethic, Weber finds that modern western capitalism was partly influenced by Calvinistic concepts:
  1. Salvation
  2. Predestination
  3. The Calling
• These religious concepts influenced followers to be more thrifty, rational, and hard working which served as an impetus to the rise of capitalism. (1958:64)
Continuum of religious ethics

- From otherworldly mysticism to innerworldly asceticism
- **Classification** of religions which flee from the world in contrast to those which believe the path to heaven is through the world. (1958:95)
Otherwordly mysticism

• The otherwordly mystic for example
• Seeks immediate relief from the pains of life through mystical contemplation.
• The most extreme case is the Buddhist monk
• Who seeks a state of `Nirvana'.
Innerworldly asceticism,

- The innerworldly ascetic, such as the Calvinistic Protestant, believes self-denial is in this world.
American Gothic Painting 1930
The INNER WORDLY ASCETIC

1. Believes that Salvation can only be achieved through denial of immediate gratification

2. Believes in hard work and rational conduct in the world.

3. It is up to the individual to prove oneself worthy of God
Ishwaran’s study

• A study focusing upon a traditional Protestant community is *Family, Kinship and Community* by Ishwaran (1977).
• This study of Holland Marsh north of Toronto
• Illustration of the innerworldly ascetic orientation of the orthodox Dutch Protestant.
Dutch Calvinists

- The study is of Dutch Calvinists, their orientation to life is similar to English Canadians Protestants. (WASPS)
- Protestants tend to follow churches such as the Anglican, United and Presbyterian.
- Different value orientation compared to Italian, Irish and French Roman Catholics.
Innerworldly ascetism

- All of these religions promote in varying degrees, the *innerworldly ascetic orientation* to life which
- Weber found to be an important *stimulus to the rise of capitalism*. 
The Holland Marsh

- Ishwaran- Extensively explores the traditional Dutch Calvinistic
- "ascetic lifestyle of self-discipline and self-denial".
- (1977:94) Through questionnaires, through qualitative methods- participant observation, interviews.
The Elect

• As an ascetic Protestant…. the traditional Dutch Calvinist was strongly opposed to a life of excess and conspicuous consumption.

• This path was chosen to show God one is elected by God….
Farmers of the Marsh

- The farmer of the Marsh saw:
  - 1. Simplicity, 2. hard work and 3. rational conduct as a means of achieving salvation
  - Proving that he was one of the `elect' predestined to live with God in everlasting life.
Toiling and trusting

• TRUST IN THE LORD
• That the Dutch Calvinist was able to overcome the mosquitoes, wild animals and swampish terrain
• This created the highly productive Holland Marsh market garden
Three phases of development - Ishwaran (1977)

1. Exploratory Pioneering, (formative)

2. Consolidatory, (Maintenance)

3. Ramifactory (Actualization)
Pioneers of the Marsh

• In the early 20thc Dutch immigrants were scattered over southern Ontario

• The Depression was very difficult for this group—they found work in farming but they were essentially in labour camps.

• They contended with “all different sorts of morality until 1934.” (Ishwaran, 1977)
I. Exploratory phase begins

- During the **Exploratory phase** the Marsh comes together, more and more Dutch Calvinist move into the area
- They begin the long arduous process of **making the Swampy land marketable.**
Many families leave their previous homes throughout Southern Ontario to join in a cooperative effort lead by the Dutch Reformed Church.
II. The Consolidatory Phase

• **Two forces** familial and interfamilial come together.

• Whereas the Protestant orientation is **individualistic**, the **need for cooperation** grew.

• They gained **this strength** through their church.
The Church and the School

- The church *(Christian Reformed)* was established in 1938 provided a rallying point.
- It served to help the Dutch negotiate institutional norms and rules.
- It induced control through guilt.
The school

The school = symbiosis- family education and church:

a. Re-enforcing norms and values of the Dutch Reformed Church
b. Integrating and consolidating community system
c. Socializing younger children into the values and behavioural patterns of a distinctively Dutch style of life
The Consolidatory Phase sum

- The Consolidatory phase = integration

- The school and the church were devices for socio-cultural integration of families the Marsh community
III. The Ramificatory Stage

Characterized by the following:

- a. Further differentiation of community life

- b. Ever widening system of specialized relations-provincial, national, international
The Ramificatory Stage

- c. **More efficient** and **profitable** market gardening
- d. **Inter family** solidarity declines, increasing **hierarchy**, formalized and **segmented** and less egalitarian –
- e. Nuclear family predominates
- f. **More bureaucratized** church develops.
The Ramificatory Stage

• In other words, the community had undergone what Parsons refers to as structural differentiation cause by the forces of social change.
The Future of the Community

- Five features of Dutch Canadian Community - Continuity in Change

1. The pervasive role of religion and its octopus like grip on the community
2. The critical significance of family, particularly in socialization
• 3. The relevance of **kinship network** both in the Marsh and in the Netherlands

• 4. The idiom of **paternal authoritarianism** linked to the Protestant Ethnic- “A distinctive symbol of Dutchness” (Ishwaran, 1980)
Institutional Completeness

5. The Dutch find the family central to life in symbiotic relationship with:

- The church is an important source of support to the family.
- The school enforces the values of both of the above.
Symbiosis

• The family is then institutionally embedded with Specialized organizations such as:

1. Boy Scouts,
2. Girl Guides,
3. Football Clubs,
4. Dance Organizations.
Power and Identity

• The **Canadian Dutch** have not had a significant impact on Canada as a whole.
• Their **orientation** fits in well with Anglo capitalism.
• Remember, same people as **Afrikaners** who justified Apartheid.
“The community and Canadian Society

“The community has managed to have its cake and eat it too”....they have cultivated dual commitments to the Dutch culture and to the surrounding Canadian community.
Religion

- **Religion** is not just “an opiate of the masses” ....It can be an instrument of change in itself...

- **Ideological justification** for superiority?

- Ideology of achievement...God Helps those who helps themselves...
The Afrikaners

- Related ethno-linguistic groups
- The Afrikaners are descended from northwestern European settlers who first arrived in the Cape of Good Hope during the period of administration (1652 – 1795) by the Dutch East India Company
Summary

• Ishwaran demonstrates the symbiotic relationship between family and religion

• Demonstrates how a community inspired by religious ethics can overcome impossible odds

• Religion, economic activity interdependent.
Weber’s Definition

- We shall call ethnic groups those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type, custom or both....(1978:389)
• “memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exist. Ethnic membership differs from kinship group precisely by being a presumed identity...
Status Groups

- Are formed out of **affinity**
- Groups are drawn together around **symbols**
- **Symbols** define **in-group** and **out-group**
- **Social Closure** is how groups create **status hierarchies**
Ethnicity

- A concern for Weber, however, because many believe he was debating with the ghost of Marx,
- Marx believed proletariat (an economic class) would unite and create socialism.
- Weber, on the other hand, believed that the association formed in capitalism were more complex.
“Ethnic Groups”

- The outline shows that at the core of ethnic identity derives from other factors such as race, culture, tribe, nationality and religion

  1. Race and Biology = common descent
  2. Culture = Consciousness of the Kind
  3. Tribe
  4. Tribe solidified by religion
  5. Nationality
Ethnicity and Five Factors:

- **FOR MAX WEBER**: One cannot develop an analysis of ethnicity isolated from these other factors.

- **Each element** comprises the core of ethnic identity and ethnic understanding.

- Beginning from the biological.
Race and Biological Inheritance

- Weber contends that biological physical characteristics and difference can be the focus of consciousness of kind.

- (It is only human for individuals to emphasize and exaggerate differences.)
Affinity

- For Weber, different groups, bred in isolation can **induce an affinity or dis-affinity** that attracts or repels individuals to one another.

- Theory of Homogamy….Like attract to like.
Bio-geographical divisions

• Weber does maintain that bio-geographical divisions *Negroid* (Black), *Mongoloid* (Yellow) and *Caucasoid* (White) serve as a basis for a generalized consciousness of race....
For Weber

- the world is divided into three major geographical breeding ground of human population: Africa, Asia, Europe….these local reflect ideological, political, economic, and cultural biases. (World View)
2. **Culture and consciousness of kind**

Biology and geography then give rise to a consciousness of kind reinforced by religion and culture.

Culture = superficial, features of historical accident.
Cultural differences in clothing style, grooming habits, food and eating habits entrench notions of a “social circle”

• Any cultural trait—including beards, hats, hairdos etc—are differentiating symbols of the in-group vs. the outgroup.
3. **Tribe: Emergence of A People**

1. Tribes are formed out of families banded together for political action.
2. For Weber, it is interesting that many tribal groups refer to themselves as the People.
3. Native Canadian “the People” The twelve tribes of Israel ‘the People’, Americans ‘we the people’.
4. The notion of the people is political.
Lore and the Tribe

• Over time, stories of what the tribe does becomes lore passed on from generation to generation…

• Religion helps to sustain belief systems.
4. Nationality

- Not only is the tribe important for hunters and gatherers, or pre-industrial societies, also significant in urban human relations.
- The tribe is a foundation of nationhood.
- Nations are simply collections of tribes.
- See Tribalism, Balkinization.
5. Religion

Not only does ethnic group contain a sense of race and tribe, a consciousness of kind, nationalism, it also must contain a spiritual foundation.

For Weber “group interest without “spiritual wings are lame….. ” (Economy and Society, 1926)
Religion and Meaning

1. Religion helps to generate meaning, reinforcement and justification for group interest.

2. Religion helps to generate value orientations of the life process expressed in action.

3. Weber would contend that religious values orientations are a the core of ethnic group identity.