

Interaction Paper - Rynkiewich Chapter 10 “Colonialism, Neocolonialism, and Postcolonialism”

This chapter discussed the history of colonialism, and the critiques through anthropology’s perspective. Colonialism refers to the practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically. Neocolonialism is the use of economic, political, or cultural pressures to control or influence other countries, especially former dependencies. Postcolonialism is the critical academic study of the cultural, political, and economic legacy of colonialism and imperialism, focusing on the impact of human control and exploitation of colonized people and their lands.

The author discussed colonialism and missions. Unlike anthropologists, missionaries have been slow to be self-reflective and to rethink what missionaries are doing. Why do Christians sometimes help in the colonialism project? Some Christians held biblical narratives to support colonial projects, such as in Gen 1:26-28, God’s instruction of ‘dominion’ means exploitation.

In the postcolonial critique I am alerted that the colonization moves beyond the land and resource exploitation, to the body (slavery) and its commodification, and to the colonization of the mind. What the colonials needed was to colonize not just the land and the bodies, but the minds of the people. That is, colonizers succeed if they convince the colonized to accept the worldview, values, motives, goals, and outcomes that they desire. The process of colonizing the mind causes me to think about the missionary’s process of conversion with unbeliever.

Two questions for further engaging this topic: 1. What did missionary movements impact on colonialism? 2. What is the postcolonialism theory and its application?