



Extra credit: Evil Spirits

The video we watched in class was linked to **sociology** because it was about evil spirits and the people and **cultures** that believed in them. One of the cultures that practiced exorcism was an African religion called Umbanda. These evil spirit believers and exorcism followers are defined as **symbolic interaction** because some believed that even the statues posed evil / good spirits. In some cultures chickens were being used to remove evil spirits. For example, black chickens were used to absorb the evil spirits and the white chickens were used to cleanse the person. Not only is the chickens themselves a form of symbolic interaction but the symbols of the colors also mean something (black: bad/evil vs. White: good/ pure). In the video there were also known spiritual healers in these communities, and the spiritual healers claimed that their healing powers were a gift from God, **ascribed status**. The evil corrupted people went to the spiritual healer to rid themselves of the demons or spirits in their bodies, this effort is an **achieved status** because ridding these spirits can take lots of working and praying.

Watching this video I quickly realized that exorcism to fix evil spirits, using chicken blood for purification were all **norms** in this culture. Watching this I made **background assumptions** that the people with these evil spirits must have a psychological illness or maybe the evil comes from unresolved psychological trauma. The video also showed people using exorcism/ spiritual rituals to kill people in their life for many different reasons. In the American culture, these practices are considered extreme **taboos** but in this culture it's merely a **folkway**. Also in the American culture getting someone killed or wishing the death of someone is like hiring a "hit man" which is a **mores** that can result in, the negative sanction, of several years in prison. Overall, religion was the main motivation of this culture and that also is one big symbolic interaction.