Plx 4 Test #02

SOC 201
202
203

11.1 RELIGION AND SOCIETY

Social Groups and Religiosity, Including class, gender, ethnicity and age

Prepared by TAs Huda Amir and Annan Shah

1 GENDER:

Gender refers to the culturally and socially constructed differences between men and women that vary from place to place and time to time. It is not biologically fixed but is rather culturally learned.

Worship is a form of a religious practice performed in order to honor or respect God or a sacred person. Thus, it is the feeling or the expression used while addressing supernatural beings or an important high ranking person.

Some sociologists argue that gender is the most important religious group influenced by religion, for example, Miller and Hoffman. However, other sociologists, for example, Marxists, suggest that social class is the most significant factor in determining patterns of worship.
Thus, the topic is debatable and controversial.

BRIERLEY:

According to the statistics, women are more religiously active than men. **Brierley (2006)** conducted a research and found out that according to the **2001 Church Consensus**, **57%** of those attending one of the main Churches or denominations were women. Women attended the Church more often than men, being more likely to attend once a week. An opinion poll conducted in **1990** found that **84% of the women** believed in God, compared to **64% of men**. And **57% of women** but only **39% of men** believed in life after death. Evidence concerning New Age beliefs are most practiced by women.

Hence, statistics suggest that women are overwhelmingly more religious than men and so supporting the importance of gender in determining patterns of worship.

MODOOD ET AL:

Modood et al found that Muslim women were more likely to say that religion is very important' as compared to Muslim men. Also; many women were involved in New Age Movements. Women generally participate more in sects than men. Also,

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many sects and New Religious Movements were established by women, for example, the Seventh Day Adventist Church which was founded by **Ellen White**; and the Christian Science movement was founded by **Mary Barkes Eddy. Glock and Stark** have argued that the gender difference in membership of these movements is because of social, physical and mental deprivation which is disproportionately experienced by women. This shows that gender may be one of the major determinants of religiosity and in shaping patterns of worship.

MILLER & HOFFMAN:

Allan S. Miller and John P. Hoffman (1995) examine the reasons for women' s greater religiosity. They argue that it is so, because of the **differences of socialisation** between men and women that makes women more religiously active.

Females are taught to be more submissive, passive and obedient and nurturing than males and these attributes are associated with higher levels of religiosity. These characteristics are more often found in traditional religious beliefs. For example, in Christianity, obedience to God or being loving are emphasized which are more associated with female gender roles. Male roles play less emphasis on these characteristics to backup their claim, they gave reference to a obedient research as evidence from USA which showed that men who were taught to be submissive and obedient, were more religious than men who were not. Thus, supporting the view that religiosity is directly linked with socialisation.

The second explanation argues that the differences result from **structural locations** of men and women in society. Women are more involved in bringing up children and are less involved in labour force than men. Apart from attending Churches, their lack of paid work, also gives them a greater need for the sense of personal identity which religion can provide. Research from US suggests that religion is seen as a household activity. Hence, Miller and Hoffman conclude that the socialisation of men and women tends to lead them to occupying different social locations which in turn, reinforce gender differences, in terms of religiosity.

Along with these lines, a further explanation provided by Miller and Hoffman for religiosity is the **'risk-taking' factor.** Not being religious can be seen as a risk taking behaviour because it could lead to hell in life after death. Survey Research from USA had suggested that men tend to be less averse to risk than women and that both men and women who are more averse to taking risks have higher levels of religiosity thereby, women's greater concern about risk is an important additional factor alongside socialisation and structural location in explaining women' s greater religiosity. Thus, Miller and Hoffman support the importance of gender in determining patterns of worship.

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BRUCE:

However, Steve Bruce (1996) does not agree with Miller and Hoffman in seeing attitudes to risk as being significant in explaining gender differences in religiosity. He suggests that certain aspects of religion that have a direct link with femininity, for example, "less aggressive, more caring etc" . It does not just apply to traditional religion and is particularly strong with spiritual beliefs such as those of the New Age.

Bruce believes that women are more interested in religions because the churches have always been interested in the control of sexuality. He argues that religion is now more confined within the private sphere of life (of the domestic world of the family and personal life) and since women are more involved with the private sphere than men, women have tended to become more religious than men.

Bruce maintains that with the overall decline in religion, religion has declined less amongst women than amongst men. However, appeal for religion rates with the social class. Working class women tend to retain a belief in forms of religion and spirituality in which they are more passive. They maintain their belief in fortune-telling and superstitions. Middle class women, on the other hand, have more experience of controlling and improving their own lives, consequently, they tend to follow religions, which allow more individual autonomy and forms of spirituality, which allows more personal development. Hence, they feel attracted to New-Age beliefs, which promotes the growth and development of the self. Thus, because of the confinement of the religion in women's sphere, Bruce supports the importance of gender in determining patterns of worship.

Steve Bruce argues that the feminine aspects of religion make women less confrontational, less aggressive, less goal oriented, less domineering, more-cooperative and more caring. This does not just apply to traditional religions but also is a part of the New Age Movements that promote healing, challenging and spirituality (aspects of female gender roles). The minority of men in these are interested in para psychology, Also, churches have been more interested in the control over sexuality and the instruction of the next generation, both of which are factors concerning women. Religion due to secularization has become less important in the public sphere and more confined to the private sphere (where females dominate). This is why men's religious beliefs are declining.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS:

However, Bruce has been criticized by **Casanova (1994)** for assuming that religion is more involved within the private sphere and is increasingly declining from the public life. He argued that there has been a rather **'deprivatisation'** of religion and increasing attention was paid to religion politicians, general public and social scientists.

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Various political conflicts occurred due to religion, for example, conflicts between Jews and Muslim Arabs in the Middle East. Thus, he believed that religion was no longer a matter of private life and so was not increasingly popular among women, condemning the support for the importance of gender in determining the patterns of worship.

LINDA WOODHEAD:

Religion is declining faster for men than women. As can be seen from the factors listed, gender is a pretty strong factor determining one's religious/worship levels.

Linda Woodhead (2005) had argued that female religiosity and secularization can only be understood by considering gender. According to Uleber the 19th century had modernization, which led to rationalization, which mostly affected the public sphere not the private sphere. The house wife role was important to women and this led them to be disillusioned by rationalization. Male church going reduced but female church going did not because the churches became more feminized and even zero males offended it (as it had a lot of prestige to them). These churches still portrayed God as a male, loving father; but it had passed more views of love and care and relationships which were important to women. In the 1970s, women started working, and they got exposed to rationalization and this reduced their church attendance. However, female church attendance levels were still higher than males. As this explanation takes secularization into account; it provides further evidence for the vitality of gender in determining the pattern of worship.

According to Linda Woodhead (2005), the process of **"rationalization"** largely affected men, while women were isolated from its teachings consequently, male-church going declined, but female church-going did not, leading to women becoming the majority of those involved in Church. Churches became feminized and became less appealing for men. Further, she examined the reasons that accounts for women' s interest in religion.

- First, women are still less involved in the public work and still have the main responsibility for children, as compared to men.
- Second, societies have increasingly categorized religion into the secondary "sphere of lives" . Since women are also categorized under the secondary sphere in majority of the societies, they are more likely than men to be involved in Churches and denominations.
- Last, the New Age beliefs were also dominated by females. The "traditional" female roles and the roles they play at paid work places are often contradictory. However, the New Age Belief resolves this clash by providing an overall sense of self and offers a promise of discouraging a true self, which is not contradictory but reflects a whole person.

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Thus according to Woodhead, women are more attracted to religion because of **feminized Churches, New Age Movements** and because they are associated with the **secondary sphere of life,** supporting the importance of gender in determining patterns of worship.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS:

However, on the other side of the debate are sociologists, who argue that Woodhead's research is limited because she does not take 'ethnicity' into account. The statistics provided by **Modood et al,** based on the **Policy Studies Institute's Fourth National Survey of ethnic minorities** shows the variations between ethnic minorities of being religious or not in Britain. **52.6%** of Chinese, **15.45%** of White British, **0.43 %** of Bangladeshis, **11.23 %** of Black Caribbean and very few Asians had no religion.

However, some of the ethnic groups claimed to have a religious identity. Over 90% of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis said they were Muslims; over three quarters of Unites and Most Black British regarded themselves as Christians. Significant minorities of Black Africans were Muslims and those Chinese who said they had religion were mostly Christians or Buddhists. Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were the biggest groups amongst Indians. More importance was given to religion by certain ethnic groups namely Muslims (**74%**), **43 %** of Hindus and **32 %** of White Roman Catholics compared to only **4 %** white members of the Church of England. These figures indicated that most ethnic minority groups are more religious than the White majority in Britain. Thus, Modood et al argued that ethnicity was more important than gender in determining patterns of worship.

2 ETHNICITY:

Ethnicity is about shared cultural traditions and history which are distinct from other groups in society. It is said that one' s ethnicity has a great impact on their patterns of worship, and how religious they are (this is called 'religiously').

Religiosity can be defined as the state of being excessively religious. It is said the ones level of religiosity depends on their ethnicity; but various sociologists seem to disagree with this and attribute religiosity levels to other groups such as class, gender and age. The proposition of the question is subject to heated sociological debate and in order to arrive to a conclusion; we must further explore this debate.

Modern Britain is said to be a multi-cultural society, made-up of many different ethnic groups. When Hindu, Muslim and Sikh immigrants from South Asia came to the UK in the 1900's, they found few opportunities to practice their faith. They

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quickly established their religious organizations which allowed these groups to maintain their cultural identity in a new social setting. Steve Bruce calls this 'cultural transition' (adapting to new situations and recreating old communities).

JOHN BIRD:

John Bird argues that the greater religiosity of the ethnic minorities reflects the greater belief of the originating countries and he conducted a study on the British-Pakistanis. When the Hindus and Muslims went to the UK in the 1900s; they found that there were no places for them to worship; they did not have any temples or mosques to practice their religion in. They then built these from scratch and this acted as the basis of community solidarity. Davie agrees with John Bird and argues that the religious areas became community areas. So religion acts as an agency of socialization and this helps sustain religion across generations.

John Bird (1999) identifies five main reasons for high religiosity amongst minority ethnic groups.

- First, all ethnic groups, for example, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis originate from societies with higher levels of religiosity.
- Second, it acts as a mechanism for social solidarity amongst ethnic minority because of their limited numbers. This results in helping one another.
- Third, religious and cultural identity is maintained, such as, language.
- Fourth, the process of socialisation, makes the ethnic minority more religious since it reinforces religious commitment.
- Last, religion provides justifications for the social structure and helps them to cope with the oppression. For example, Rastafarianism practiced by Afro-Caribbean offers a promise of salvation through a return to Africa and is sometimes associated with radical political views.

Hence, according to Bird's view, religious beliefs were stronger among the ethnic minority, contradicting the importance of gender as the only influence in determining patterns of worship.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS; STEVE BRUCE:

However, **Steve Bruce** does not see religious commitment as the sole reason for stronger religious belief among the ethnic minority. He suggested that it was rather because of social reasons namely cultural defense i.e. where, ethnic minorities protect its sense of identity and maintains ethnic pride, and cultural transition, i.e. whereby an ethnic group uses religion to cope with the upheaval of migration, that ethnic minorities are more religious. Thus, ethnic minorities are the most influenced

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social group by religion, so contradicting the view and the importance of gender in determining patterns of worship.

Thus, Bruce rubbishes these views and says that the ethnic minorities are religious largely for social factors than having a strong belief. Bruce says that the people use religion as a **cultural defence** against racism. **Cultural defence** refers to the process whereby religious ideas and practices are used by social groups as a source of physical and psychological protection in a hostile and challenging society. People also use religion as a source of cultural transition; they use religion as a spring board which helps them to cope up with the upheavals of migration. They use religion as a 'means' and not as an 'end'. The young people are not as religious as their ethnic forbearers and much of this owes to secularization and globalization. South Asians have started inter-mingling with Caucasians and African-Americans. Bruce gives an example of The New Christian Right' in the South states of the USA, which is used as a means of a cultural defence, which ensures that their religion is purified, and protected from other cultures.

KEPEL:

Kepel gives a rebuttal, Bruce assumed that South Asians have less faith and actually use religion as a means of cultural defence and cultural transition, however the South Asian Muslims have revived the strength of their religion, and many younger South Asian Muslims are more religious and religiously knowledgeable because of the increased access to information via the internet.

GEORGE CHRYSSIDES:

A further complex view was adopted by George Chryssides (1994) who argued that the migrants to Britain are open to three options namely **apostasy**, **accommodation** and **renewed vigor**.

Apostasy, is when a certain set of beliefs i.e. religion is abandoned in a hostile environment. She gave an example of Morris Cerello, a Sikh who converted to Christianity.

Accommodation is when certain changes are adapted in one's religion to fit in the changed situation, for example, a Sikh who removed his turban because he thought that might improve his chances of getting a job.

Renewed vigor is when religion is used strongly as opposed to the hostile environment.

Chryssides argued that accommodation and renewed vigor is the most popular among immigrants. Buildings have also been converted into mosques and temples and religious beliefs have been retained rather than abandoned. For example, many

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Islamic women have found ways to dress modestly while incorporating Western elements into their clothing. She, therefore, maintains that immigrants have rather strengthened their religious beliefs and also condemning the importance of gender in determining patterns of worship

MODOOD ET AL:

Modood et al surveyed ethnic minorities and found that in England and Wales ethnic minority groups are more religious and practice more religion than white groups as it gives a sense of community and identity to them).

Johal found that that in a multi faith society such as the UK; religious identity has become of key importance to members of the ethnic minorities.

Modood et al found that Pakistanis and Bangladeshi Muslims in the UK; identified themselves as primarily Muslim. Many young Muslims have deep knowledge about Islam other than their parents.

Also, they found that Muslim women feel liberated and better by wearing head scarfs and dressing modestly because they are not subjected to the stereotypes faced by non-Muslim girls. South Asians had to establish their faith in a country which was radically different in terms of belief. Religion acted as a social mechanism in times of stress.

Modood and **Saeed** found some evidence for a slight decline in overall religious beliefs in South Asians but this does not take away the fact that ethnic minorities are more religious than the majority religions, and hence ones ethnicity does shape their patterns of worship and this view is supported by Ramji.

Also put forward by Modood is another example, which is that of the Afro-Caribbean, who are mainly Christians. They wanted to incorporate themselves in the established churches in the UK; but were subject to racism within many congregations. One way to tackle this was to develop their own churches and ways of worship. The Afro-Caribbean identity is largely based on ethnicity rather than religion. The Rastafarian movement is a religious and political movement in which Black identity is key-based around resistance to racism. In this the Old Testament beliefs are mixed with the Back to Africa beliefs of Marcus Garvey (who was an activist). They believe that they are the lost tribe of Israel; they claim that Ethiopia is their home and they hope to return to it. All these factors show how important ethnicity is in shaping ones pattern of worship.

STATISTICS:

Studies have found that 90% of Bangladeshis and Pakistanis said that they were strong believers. 62% Muslims mentioned that they attend prayers places at least once a week. 53% of Afro-Caribbean said they did so too; as compared to 39% Sikhs; 29% Roman Catholics and 27% Hindus. The Protestants accounted for a mere 9%.

These statistics clearly indicate that the minority groups are more religious than those that hold the majority. However, these statistics can be criticized for their lack of depth. As with any form of social surveys, the results depend entirely on the extent to which the respondents answer truthfully and if not so then the study is said to lack validity and no overall claim can be made.

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1 GENDER:

BRIERLY:

- According to the statistics, women are more religiously active than men.
- Brierley (2006) conducted research and found out that according to the 2001 Church Consensus, 57% of those attending one of the main Churches or denominations were women.
- Women attended the Church more often than men, being more likely to attend once a week.
- An opinion poll conducted in 1990 found that 84% of the women believed in God, compared to 64% of men.
- And 57% of women but only 39% of men believed in life after death.

MODOOD ET AL:

- Modood et al found that Muslim women were more likely to say that religion is very important' as compared to Muslim men.
- Many women were involved in New Age Movements.
- Women generally participate more in sects than men.
- Also, many sects and New Religious Movements were established by women
- For example, the Seventh Day Adventist Church which was founded by Ellen White; and the Christian Science movement was founded by Mary Barkes Eddy.

Glock and Stark

- They argue that the gender difference in membership old New Religious Movements is because of social, physical and mental deprivation which is disproportionately experienced by women.

MILLER & HOFFMAN:

- Allan S. Miller and John P. Hoffman (1995) examine the reasons for women's greater religiosity.
- They argue that it is so, because of the differences of socialization between men and women that makes women more religiously active.
- Females are taught to be more submissive, passive and obedient and nurturing than males and these attributes are associated with higher levels of religiosity.
- These characteristics are more often found in traditionally religious beliefs.
- For example, in Christianity, obedience to God or being loving are emphasized which are more associated with female gender roles.
- Male roles play less emphasis on these characteristics
- To back uptheir claim, used research from USA which showed that men who were taught to be submissive and obedient, were more religious than men who were not.

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- Thus, supporting the view that religiosity is directly linked with socialization.
- The second explanation argues that the differences result from structural locations of men and women in society.
- Women are more involved in bringing up children and are less involved in the labor force than men.
- Apart from attending Churches, their lack of paid work also gives them a greater need for the sense of personal identity which religion can provide.
- Research from the US suggests that religion is seen as a household activity.
- Another explanation they provided for religiosity is the 'risk-taking' factor.
- Not being religious can be seen as a risk taking behaviour because it could lead to hell in life after death.
- Survey Research from USA had suggested that men tend to be less averse to risk than women
- Both men and women who are more averse to taking risks have higher levels of religiosity thereby, women's greater concern about risk is an important additional factor can explain women's greater religiosity.

Critical Analysis

- *However, Steve Bruce (1996) does not agree with Miller and Hoffman in seeing attitudes* to risk as being significant in explaining gender differences in religiosity.
- He suggests certain aspects of religion that have a direct link with femininity, for example, "less aggressive, more caring etc". It does not just apply to traditional religion and is particularly strong with spiritual beliefs such as those of the New Age.
- Bruce believes that women are more interested in religions because the churches have always been interested in the control of sexuality.
- He argues that religion is now more confined within the private sphere of life (of the domestic world of the family and personal life) and since women are more involved with the private sphere than men, women have tended to become more religious than men.
- Bruce maintains that with the overall decline in religion, religion has declined less amongst women than amongst men.
- *However, appeal for religion rates with the social class.*
- Working class women tend to retain a belief in forms of religion and spirituality in which they are more passive. They maintain their belief in fortune-telling and superstitions.
- Middle class women, on the other hand, have more experience of controlling and improving their own lives, consequently, they tend to follow religions, which allow more individual autonomy and forms of spirituality, which allows more personal development.
- Hence, they feel attracted to New-Age beliefs, which promotes the growth and development of the self

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Rebuttal:

- However, Bruce has been criticized by Casanova (1994) for assuming that religion is more involved within the private sphere and is increasingly declining from public life.
- He argued that there has been a rather 'deprivatization' of religion and increasing attention was paid to religion politicians, general public and social scientists.
- Various political conflicts occurred due to religion, for example, conflicts between Jews and Muslim Arabs in the Middle East.

LINDA WOODHEAD:

- Religion is declining faster for men than women.
- . Linda Woodhead (2005) had argued that female religiosity and secularization can only be understood by considering gender
- . According to Uleber the 19th century had modernization, which led to rationalization, which mostly affected the public sphere not the private sphere.
- The housewife role was important to women and this led them to be disillusioned by rationalization.
- Male church going was reduced but female church going did not because the churches became more feminized and even zero males offended it (as it had a lot of prestige to them).
- These churches still portrayed God as a male, loving father; but it had passed more views of love and care and relationships which were important to women.
- In the 1970s, women started working, and they got exposed to rationalization and this reduced their church attendance. However, female church attendance levels were still higher than males
- . As this explanation takes secularization into account; it provides further evidence for the vitality of gender in determining the pattern of worship.
- According to Linda Woodhead (2005), the process of "rationalization" largely affected men, while women were isolated from its teachings consequently, male-church going declined, but female church-going did not, leading to women becoming the majority of those involved in Church.
- Churches became feminized and became less appealing for men.
- Further, she examined the reasons that accounts for women's interest in religion.
    1. First, women are still less involved in public work and still have the main responsibility for children, as compared to men.
    2. Second, societies have increasingly categorized religion into the secondary "sphere of lives". Since women are also categorized under the secondary sphere in the majority of societies, they are more likely than men to be involved in Churches and denominations.

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3. Last, the New Age beliefs were also dominated by females. The "traditional" female roles and the roles they play at paid work places are often contradictory. However, the New Age Belief resolves this clash by providing an overall sense of self and offers a promise of discouraging a true self, which is not contradictory but reflects a whole person.

- Thus according to Woodhead, women are more attracted to religion because of feminized Churches, New Age Movements and because they are associated with the secondary sphere of life, supporting the importance of gender in determining patterns of worship.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS:

- However, on the other side of the debate are sociologists, who argue that Woodhead's research is limited because she does not take 'ethnicity' into account.
- The statistics provided by Modood et al, based on the Policy Studies Institute's Fourth National Survey of ethnic minorities shows the variations between ethnic minorities of being religious or not in Britain. 52.6% of Chinese, 15.45% of White British, 0.43 % of Bangladeshis, 11.23 % of Black Caribbean and very few Asians had no religion.
- Over 90% of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis said they were Muslims; over three quarters of Unites and Most Black British regarded themselves as Christians.
- Significant minorities of Black Africans were Muslims and those Chinese who said they had religion were mostly Christians or Buddhists.
- Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were the biggest groups amongst Indians.
- More importance was given to religion by certain ethnic groups namely Muslims (74%), 43 % of Hindus and 32 % of White Roman Catholics compared to only 4 % white members of the Church of England.
- These figures indicated that most ethnic minority groups are more religious than the White majority in Britain.
- Thus, Modood et al argued that ethnicity was more important than gender in determining patterns of worship.

2. ETHNICITY:

JOHN BIRD:

- John Bird argues that the greater religiosity of the ethnic minorities reflects the greater belief of the originating countries and he conducted a study on the British-Pakistanis.
- When the Hindus and Muslims went to the UK in the 1900s; they found that there were no places for them to worship; they did not have any temples or mosques to practice their religion in.
- They then built these from scratch and this acted as the basis of community solidarity.

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- Davie agrees with John Bird and argues that the religious areas became community areas. So religion acts as an agency of socialization and this helps sustain religion across generations.
- John Bird (1999) identifies five main reasons for high religiosity amongst minority ethnic groups.
    1. First, all ethnic groups, for example, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis originate in societies with higher levels of religiosity.
    2. Second, it acts as a mechanism for social solidarity amongst ethnic minorities because of their limited numbers. This results in helping one another.
    3. Third, religious and cultural identity is maintained, such as language.
    4. Fourth, the process of socialization, makes the ethnic minority more religious since it reinforces religious commitment.
    5. Last, religion provides justifications for the social structure and helps them to cope with the oppression. For example, Rastafarianism practiced by Afro-Caribbean offers a promise of salvation through a return to Africa and is sometimes associated with radical political views.
- Hence, according to Bird's view, religious beliefs were stronger among the ethnic minority.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

- However, Steve Bruce does not see religious commitment as the sole reason for stronger religious belief among the ethnic minority.
- He suggested that it was rather because of social reasons namely cultural defense i.e. where, ethnic minorities protect its sense of identity and maintains ethnic pride, and cultural transition, i.e. whereby an ethnic group uses religion to cope with the upheaval of migration, that ethnic minorities are more religious.
- Thus, ethnic minorities are the most influenced social group by religion, contradicting the view and the importance of gender in determining patterns of worship.
- Thus, Bruce rubbishes these views and says that the ethnic minorities are religious largely for social factors rather than having a strong belief.
- Bruce says that the people use religion as a cultural defense against racism.
- People also use religion as a source of cultural transition; they use religion as a springboard which helps them cope with the upheavals of migration.
- They use religion as a 'means' and not as an 'end'. The young people are not as religious as their ethnic forbearers and much of this owes to secularizationand globalization. South Asians have started inter mingling with Caucasians and African-Americans.
- Bruce gives an example of The New Christian Right' in the South states of the USA, which is used as a means of a cultural defense, which ensures that their religion is purified, and protected from other cultures.

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Rebuttal:

- Kepel gives a rebuttal, Bruce assumed that South Asians have less faith and actually use religion as a means of cultural defense and cultural transition, however the South Asian Muslims have revived the strength of their religion, and many younger South Asian Muslims are more religious and religiously knowledgeable because of the increased access to information via the internet.

GEORGE CHRYSSIDES:

- George Chryssides (1994) who argued that the migrants to Britain are open to three options namely apostasy, accommodation and renewed vigor.
- Apostasy, is when a certain set of beliefs i.e. religion is abandoned in a hostile environment. He gave an example of Morris Cerello, a Sikh who converted to Christianity.
- Accommodation is when certain changes are adapted in one's religion to fit in the changed situation, for example, a Sikh who removed his turban because he thought that might improve his chances of getting a job.
- Renewed vigor is when religion is used strongly as opposed to the hostile environment.
- Chryssides argued that accommodation and renewed vigor is the most popular among immigrants. Buildings have also been converted into mosques and temples and religious beliefs have been retained rather than abandoned.
- For example, many Islamic women have found ways to dress modestly while incorporating Western elements into their clothing.
- He, therefore, maintains that immigrants have rather strengthened their religious beliefs and also condemning the importance of gender in determining patterns of worship

MODOOD ET AL:

- Modood et al surveyed ethnic minorities and found that in England and Wales's ethnic minority groups are more religious and practice more religion than white groups as it gives a sense of community and identity to them.
- Johal found that in a multi faith society such as the UK; religious identity has become of key importance to members of the ethnic minorities.
- Modood et al found that Pakistanis and Bangladeshi Muslims in the UK identified themselves as primarily Muslim.
- Many young Muslims have deep knowledge about Islam other than their parents.

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- Also, they found that Muslim women feel liberated and better by wearing head scarfs and dressing modestly because they are not subjected to the stereotypes faced by non-Muslim girls.
- South Asians had to establish their faith in a country which was radically different in terms of belief. Religion acted as a social mechanism in times of stress.
- Modood and Saeed found some evidence for a slight decline in overall religious beliefs in South Asians but this does not take away the fact that ethnic minorities are more religious than the majority religions, and hence one's ethnicity does shape their patterns of worship and this view is supported by Ramji.
- Also put forward by Modood is another example, which is that of the Afro-Caribbean, who mainly are mainly Christians wanted to incorporate themselves in the established churches in the UK; but were subject to racism within many congregations.
- One way to tackle this was to develop their own churches and ways of worship. The Afro-Caribbean identity is largely based on ethnicity rather than religion.
- The Rastafarian movement is a religious and political movement in which Black identity is key-based around resistance to racism. In this the Old Testament beliefs are mixed with the 'Back to Africa beliefs of Marcus Garvey (who was an activist).
- They believe that they are the lost tribe of Israel; they claim that Ethiopia is their home and they hope to return to it.

3 AGE:

Brierley (2006)

- Studied the English Church Census
- Young people in Britain tend to be less religious than the old · Rapid decline in young people attending Church in the 1990s
- Average age of Church going individuals had risen from 36 in 1979 to 45 in 2005
- In 2005, 59% of Churches had nobody attending between ages 15 to 19.

Critical Analysis

- In 2008, Burkeshimer studied the European Values Survey of 2002, 2004 and 2006 and the World Values Survey of 1995 and 2004.
- She found that in stable developed countries recent generations were less religious than previous generations
- There was in all years a general trough in religiosity in a person's EARLY 20s
- A slight increase in a person's late 20s was observed and little to no increase in religiosity after the age of 30 was observed therefore little evidence is present to suggest increased religiosity as people aged

Rural Church Project

15

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- It was an extensive study of religion in a rural community · The lowest demographic attending church was teenagers
- The clergy grew concerned about the number of teenagers rapidly reducing as they felt that would result in the extinction of religion in the area in a few years

Voass and Crocket

- Three possible explanations for the lack of religiosity amongst young people :
  1. As a result of age: People who are older are more impacted by the reality of death approaching and thus become more religious. Similarly those with kids may view religion as an important means of socialization thus increasing the tendency of middle aged and old people in religion.
  2. As a result of the period of birth; those born in a particular period (cohort) may be more likely or unlikely to practice religion depending on the social changes which occurred during their lifetime. For example the decline in religiosity amongst the young in the 1990s could be related to the value of 'happiness' being propagated during the 1980s thus spiritual connectivity was no longer valued.
  3. As a result of the progressive decline of religion: Each generation is less religious than the last.
- Voass and Crocket examined data from the British Social Attitudes Survey to consider which of these theories is the most plausible. They found that age and period of birth had little to no direct correlation and thus concluded it was a progressive decline in religion which resulted in younger people being less religious than the old.

Critical Analysis

- Statistics from the World Values Study 2008 :
  - Young people were less likely to attend worship sermons than old people.
  - On a vast majority of countries 76 out of 84 people above 50 were found to be more religious
  - Only exceptions were Georgia, Armenia, Bosnia and Hetrozogovania, Uganda and Bulgaria 4

Davie

- People aged 15 to 34 are less likely than those above 54 to believe in God and heaven.
- Prayer and conservative behavior are more common in old age this could be due to the rationalization of society
- Another reason could be the increased belief in scientific explanations for human existence

MARGOO PUBLICATIONS

(46)

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- People born in WWII were born in an age where the church exhibited great control over society. Now the impact of the church and religious knowledge has declined thus fewer young people are involved in religion

Critical Analysis

- World Attitudes Comparative Survey
  - In ex-communist countries in Eastern Europe and most of Africa there is evidence of an increase in religiosity amongst the young
  - In USA youth attendance of church reduced in the 1980s but rose again in the early 2000s
  - In Puerto Rico, Mexico and Brazil popularity of religion has increased

- The Pew Research Center found that older people are more likely to be religious than younger people in all but two countries they surveyed. The two exceptions are the former Soviet republic of Georgia and Ghana in West Africa.
- there was a great decline in Sunday school attendance among young Christians in the past century. In 1900, 55 per cent of the British population had attended Sunday school, but in 2000 this was only 4 per cent

4 **SOCIAL CLASS:**

Voass and Watt (2014)

- Voass and Watt (2014) conducted research on behalf of the Church of England.
- They made three observations:
  1. Church attendance is higher in rural areas compared to urban areas.
  2. Church attendance is higher in the South of England compared to the North.
  3. They noted growth in church attendance in areas which had high performing church primary and secondary schools
- From this we can conclude that the attendance of churches is higher in places where the lower class live thus making a reasonable assumption that lower class people have more interest in religion than upper and middle class individuals

Critical Analysis

- Ashworth and Fartherting claim that middle class job workers had above average levels of church attendance.
- Those in semi-skilled and unskilled working class jobs had below average church attendance.
- Welfare recipients had the lowest levels of church attendance.

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- They concluded that due to a lack of time to engage in religious activities those from the lower class attended church less

Glock

- People from poorer backgrounds found 'spiritual compensation' and a sense of community in smaller religious sects.
- The organizations helped them cope with the difficulties connected to social and economic deprivation.
- They felt that other people in similar situations were around them so they weren't alone. Hence people from poorer backgrounds were often more religious than those from wealthier areas

Ahern

- Conducted a study of the working class in London
- They didn't trust the Church of England
- Found its ministers boring and patronizing.
- Instead, they turned towards denominations like Methodism or the Roman Catholic Church.
- They found ministers in those denominations to be kinder and more accepting of them

Roy Wallis

- Roy Wallis (1984) pointed out that denominations such as Methodism spread values and moral teachings that were especially useful for working-class people.
- Values of hard work and determination are spread
- Methodism is largely a working class denomination as a result
- Roy Wallis found that New Religious Movements (NRMs) and New Age Movements were most popular among the middle class.
- Educated, middle-class people joined organizations, such as the Unification Church and Krishna Consciousness.

Lawes

- Lifelong atheists usually are highly qualified with high academic achievement and successful backgrounds.
- They do not believe in fate and rely upon scientific evidence to predict outcomes
- Thus those in the upper class are less religious
- On the other hand, lifelong theists were usually unskilled or semi-skilled working-class people.
- They lacked the understanding of scientific principles thus relies upon religion to discuss the origins of human existence and value

Holden

NANDOS LUBEYGHA

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- Researched the Jehovah's Witnesses for 4 years
- Found that its members had lower-class status at work.
- He argued that they joined the organization to find compensation for their lack of prestige in their work-life.
- In the religious organization each member was revered and treated as a sacred being
- He found them to be increasingly devout due to this higher status

General Criticisms for Social Class CA

- Andrew McKinnon notes that there has been a lack of research on the relationship between religion and social class, meaning there is something of a data gap. Thus no result on this relationship is reliable enough to be considered as proof.
- Many studies rely on indicators such as area of living, income and school type to determine the relationship between social class and religion however there are no direct studies to accurately determine this

Rel. & SO 11-2 11.2

Summary

Writer:	Theory:	CA:
Karl Marx	Religion is an "opium of the masses"	Engels
Althusser	Religion as an ISA	Overlooks power of democracy
Gramsci	The Elites control people through religion	Neo - Marxist
Emile Durkhiem	Religion is a vital part of society	Lenin
Malinowski	Religion provides comfort to people.	Tambiah
Otto Maduro	Theory of liberation	Liston Pope

- **Karl Marx**
  - Marxists see religion as an essential tool for the ruling class to secure their positions
  - Karl Marx believed that religion was an "opium of the masses"
  - That blinded them from the reality of their exploitation
  - At the hands of the ruling class
  - Through religion the working class is brainwashed and falls into the belief that their struggles will be granted in the afterlife
  - In the form of heaven as their reward
  - As a result, no one rebels against the ruling class

CA: Engels

- However while Marxists like Engels support Marx's ideology
- He also believes that religion is used more as a weapon against the ruling class rather than a tool by the ruling class to secure power

 19

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- He advocates how in history, such wars have happened where the proletariats have used religion to rally themselves together against the ruling class

❖ **Althusser**
- Believes that religion is an ideological state apparatus
- That circulates ruling class ideology through generations
- Due to religion, the ruling class legitimize their position
- And brainwash people into believing that their current situation is "God Given"
- As a result, the working class lose hope to improve their situation
- *And thus the ruling class maintains its status quo*

CA:

- Althusser is criticised for overlooking the existence and power of democracy
- And that people cannot be fooled by religious leaders
- Because of the vast globalization that has spread knowledge everywhere
- The modern industrial society structure does not go in hand with Althusser's belief

❖ **Lenin**
- Argues that religion is a "spiritual gin" for the working class that allows the ruling class to control them
- The working class is brainwashed into thinking that their current condition is because the "ruling class has the devine right"

❖ **Gramsci**
- Believes that religion is no longer the only tool controlling people but its also "hegemony"
- That allows people to get controlled by the Elites religious ideologies
- And eventually allowing them to gain control

CA: Maduro

- Criticises the neo-marxists
- Says that religion does allow for autonomy
- Religion can be used as a force of social change instead
- And It can be used to represent the population instead of suppressing them
- The way it was used in Latin America to liberate the them in the 19th century

❖ **Emile Durkhiem:**
- Says that religion is a positive force present in society
- And is an important social institution
- Because human action is directed and controlled by norms provided by the social system

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- Religion is a vital part of the social system as through religion there is a social solidarity when worshipers get together to perform a ritual
- For example, Muslims for Friday prayer get together to pray in congregation
- Religion also creates value consensus as it gets different social groups to follow the same norms and values
- Hence getting everyone think and form similar narratives
- The norms which direct action are not merely isolated standards for behaviour
- In fact they are integrated and patterned by the values and beliefs provided by the social system
- Durkhiem also says that religion helps in maintaining social order
- As religion teaches the what is right and wrong
- Helping members of society to integrate effectively
- Hence religion does not support one particular social group but supports the interest of society as a whole
- So society can run effectively and in harmony

CA: Lenin

- says that no ideology can serve the whole society when society is divided into antagonistic social classes that are locked in a constant class struggle
- He says it is naive to assume that the interests of the bourgeoisie and proletariat are ever going to be the same
- Since there will always be conflict among them
- *The bourgeoisie will always seek to stay at the top and maintain the utmost dominance in* society
- Whereas, the proletariat will want to acquire more rights and a better wage structure
- Thus it is impossible that religion works for everyone in society and instead it works for the rich and powerful to build a narrative and a social order

- **Bronislaw Malinowski:**
- Did fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands
- He found that religion was particularly concerned with situations of emotional stress
- That threaten social solidarity
- He says that religion doesn't support the interest of the rich and powerful in society
- In fact, religion plays a much vital role in ensuring societal norms and maintaining harmony in society
- He argues that events such as the death of a close person, natural disasters or even a global pandemic can cause a crisis in someone's life as questions may arise on why this occurred
- This is where religion steps in and gives answers to such questions
- Thus religion is present to support everyone in overcoming their hardships of life

CA: Tamblah

MASOOR MOBEYGIYA

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- Disagrees with Malinowski
- Says that Malinowski exaggerates the importance of religion in dealing with stress
- He points out that friends and family are the ones who actually become an avenue for comfort for the distressed
- Rather than religion itself
- He also says that there are times when religion causes stress amongst people
- Especially during religious rituals when people become stressed with buying new clothes or renovating the house
- Hence promoting materialism leading to tension

Rel as a source of SA

- **Otto Maduro**
  - Says that religion doesn't work for the interest of the rich and powerful
  - Argues that religion has independence or relative autonomy from the economic system of the bourgeoisie
  - Liberation theology proposes to fight poverty and free the poor from oppression
  - He says that in Latin America during the 1970s, Catholic Priests would gather people using religion
  - Here they would criticize the rich and teach liberation theology
  - This led to a revolution in 1979 where oppressive governments in El Salvador, and Columbia were overthrown.
  - Hence Maduro tries to prove how religion actually benefits the proletariat

CA: Liston Pope

- Criticizes Maduro for having a very narrow view as he only looks at how religion has benefited the working class in Latin America
- But there have been numerous instances around the world where religion has been used to suppress the working class.
- In his report, Midlands and Preachers (1942)
- He gives an example of 1929 strikes among the textile workers in Gastonia, North Carolina, where religion served to mold people into docile and passive workers.
- When the strikes happened, the clergy of the main churches in that town, which were always aided by local industrialists, not only failed to provide any support to the workers who were striking, but also worked hard to uphold the status quo, by organizing religious activities to distract the workers from striking.
- This shows how Maduro should have taken a holistic approach when analyzing religion rather than basing his argument solely on the incident in Latin America.
- Liston also shows that, indeed, religion has helped the rich and powerful in society

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Writer:	Theory:	Type:	CA:
Emile Durkhiem	Relgion ensures society is same from rapid change that can lead to anomie	Functionalist	Emile Durkhiem
Bellah	Civil religion acts as a conservative force in society	Neo-Functionalist	Marxists
Karl Marx	Religion is an "opiate of the masses"	Marxist	Functionalists
Lenin	Religion acts as "spiritual gin" for the proletrait	Marxist	-
Simon de Beauviour	Religion is used to maintain the oppression of women in society	Feminist	Aldridge
Engels	Religion acts as a force of social change	Neo-Marxist	Due to secularization religion doesn't hold such a significant power over people anymore
Gramsci		Neo-Marxist	Church acted out of self interest
Otto Maduro		Neo-Marxist	Liston Pope
Martin			Casanova

S Δ

- Weber's theory of the role of religion in the rise of capitalism:-

- Put forward the social action theory
- Where he argues that human action is directed by meanings and motives
- In his most famous book; The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism
- Weber examines the relationship between the rise of capitalism and its relations to certain forms of Protestantism
- In the first part of the book he identifies how a certain form of Capitalism I.e Ascetic Calvinist
- Which preached that only a certain few individuals would go to heaven, called ***the Elects***
- And they were predestined to go to heaven under ***the Doctrine of Predestination***
- This made Father John Calvin's followers anxious if they were chosen as one of the Elects
- They were told that those individuals who were chosen, were those that worked hard in this world, thus would be rewarded for in the Hereafter
- Therefore by working hard and being submissive to authority they were promised false rewards of the hereafter to maintain a strong and obedient workforce for Capitalism
- Therefore Protestantism preceded the development of Capitalism
- Other areas of the world may possess certain aspects of capitalism, but they were not the first to develop it

What they lacked according to Weber was a religion that encouraged and facilitated the development of Capitalism

S Δ

- Religion is a Conservative Force:-

- **Emile Durkhiem**
- **Said that religion teaches people the moral norms and values they need to stick to the collective conscience**

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- So maintaining social order
- He saw the conservative nature of religion in a positive light - encouraging harmony
- As it means that society is safe from rapid change e.g. revolution; which would bring about anomie
- Leading to a break down in social order
- Thus preventing social change

CA: Emile Durkhiem

- However he was not entirely opposed to social change
- He recognized that under some circumstances a slow change is necessary in order to prevent *society from stagnating and*
- To help society progress
- E.g. Europe previously didn't allow women to work and began to get stagnated
- Eventually through female employment the country started to develop

❖ **Bellah**

- Civil religion acts as a conservative force in MIS
- It binds together people of different faiths
- Reinforcing the collective conscience
- Civil religion promotes social solidarity by blending faith and patriotism
- E.g - the way American school children traditionally stand with their hand on their heart every morning in assembly singing the national anthem
- This performs the same functions that Durkhiem deitifed of religion and promotes social cohesion, order and *stability*
- And prevents radical change, again acting as a conservative force
- Bellah sees this function of religion as necessary and diserable
- If these groups were not united by civil religion, conflict between them could result in social disorder
- Thereby, religion prevents social change.

CA: Marxists

- These theories are outdated and arguably tell us little about religion today
- And Marxists argue that the working class does not benefit from the status quo
- This puts them in conflict with the middle class
- Thus even if religion may be preserving social order, it is not producing social change

❖ ***Karl Marx***

- Describes religion as the ***"opiate of the masses"***
- Acting like a drug it cushions workers from the misery of being exploited in capitalist society
- Marx also described religion as the ***"heart in a a heartless world"***

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- And understood the appeal of religion in a society than in other respects was dedicated to the buying and selling of commodities and the accumulation of profit by the minority and the increasing poverty of the majority
- However he saw this as a negative force
- Marx argued that the proletariat should rise up against the bourgeoisie in a revolution
- Religion was one of the ways in which bourgeoisie maintained control
- As the upper class use religion as a tool to maintain monopoly over wealth and power in a society

CA: Functionalists

- Argue that the working class benefit from capitalism
- Society is meritocratic
- So the hard working and able are rewarded with high status and wealth

Rebuttal: Lenin

- This view is criticised by Marxists who point out that the difference in wealth and income of the working compared to the upper class continues to increase.
- Lenin echoed Marx's argument by referring to religion as ***"spiritual gin"***.
- He argued that the ruling class use religion cynically - to create a mystical fog which obscured reality for the working class.
- This is a very similar concept of the idea of it being an opiate.

- **Simon de Beauvior**
- Feminists assert that religion socializes women to conform to patriarchal norms
- Religious texts proclaim male superiority
- Placing women in a subordinate position
- E,g, in the Quran it is asserted that men are in charge of women hence good women are obedient
- Therefore feminists disagree with the functionalist view that in maintaining the status quo, religion benefits society as a whole.
- They argue that women do not benefit as they are oppressed in the male dominated world - educated by traditional religions.
- Men use religious texts to legitimize women's subordination and preserve their own social advantage
- In order to maintain men's social position, religion prevents social change
- Simon de Beauvior adds to this view saying women are oppressed and are then compensated by religion in which they are given false belied that they will gain equality and be rewarded in heaven when they die.

CA: Aldridge

- Aldridge points out that Quakers and Unitarians are committed to gender equality

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- The status of women in the Anglican Church has increased with female ordination now allowed
- Some religions are very respectful towards women and want social change for the,
- E.g. Sikhism - is always respected women and their rights
- This suggests that religion does not inevitably suppress women.

- Religion is a Force of Social Change:-

❖ **Engels:**

- Suggested that religion had a dual character
- Could act as a conservative force
- But also possible for it to challenge the status quo
- And encourage social change
- The idea of a dual character is exemplified well in Hinduism.
- Which for generations was used as a powerful conservative force
- Not least in the maintenance of the caste system
- Where indian society was divided up into immobile social classes by birth
- With the Dalits or "untouchables" at the bottom of the social pile
- Outside the caste system itself
- However, the same religion inspired huge social change in the Indian Nationalist Movement
- And particularly the principles of non - violence and self - renunciation at the heart of Mahatma Ghandi's ultimately successful campaign against the British Empire
- Today Hinduism is again argued to be driving social change
- As a key factor in India's economic development according to Nanda.
- Engels did realize that in some circumstances religion could be a force for change.
- He argued that groups which turned to religion as a way of coping with oppression, could develop into political movements which sought change on earth rather than salvation in heaven.

CA:

- Neo - Marxist views are arguably outdated
- They see religion as being socially very significant
- Whether it be as a conservative force or as a force of social change
- Rapid process of secularization
- Religion today doesn't play an especially significant role in either way; conformist or *reformist*

❖ **Gramsci:**

- Under certain circumstances religion could become a focal point of the masses to rail against their oppressors.
- E.g. in Poland in the 1980s

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- The Catholic Church supported the Polish Trade Union's protests against the communist regime that ruled the country as part of the Soviet Union
- The struggle resulted in the liberation of Poland from Soviet Control in 1989
- Thus, Gramsci proposed that the Churh could work alongside working-classintellectuals to educate the masses about the reality of their plight which means that the working class could overcome the false consciousness.
- In this way, religion could be used to empower the working class, spurring them on to improve their social situation.

CA:

- However it is possible to view the cooperation of the Catholic Church ib this instance as self-interest
- It too was oppressed under the communism
- The Church's leader in Poland - Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski, had been placed under house arrest for speaking out against the communist leadership.
- Thus the liberation of the people meant that the Church, too would be free.

❖ **Otto Maduro:**

- Also claims that religion is not always a conservative force
- He argued that in the 1960s and 1970s Catholic Priests in Latin America criticised the Bourgeoisie and preached the Liberation Theology using religion to free people from their oppression
- This led to resistance and social change
- Maduro saw this as an example of how religious organizations could provide guidance to the working class and the oppressed as they struggled with the upper class
- Rather than being a conservative force the Catholic Church locally performed a revolutionary role in countries like El Salvador.

CA:

- However its also possible to view the cooperation of the Church in this instance as self interest
- As the Catholic Church in Latin America is very influential in governance affairs

❖ **Rebuttal: Nelson**

- Argued that far from encouraging people to accept *their place, religion can spread* resistance and revolution
- In cases when religion has been a force for change in society, the society that results may be strongly influenced by religion.
- Numerous e.g.s show that religion can act as a vehicle for social change
- Such as in the 1950s, Martin Luther King started to work towards the Civil Rights Movement.
- He made use of many Baptist Churches around the USA to gather people
- And as a platform to deliver speeches to encourage people to stand up against oppression

MANSO COLLEGE GHANA

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- This led to the Civil Rights Act
- Which prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, colou, sex and religon

❖ **Max Weber:**

- Put forward the social action theory
- Where he argues that human action is directed by meanings and motives
- In his most famous book; The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism
- Weber examines the relationship between the rise of capitalism and its relations to certain forms of Protestantism
- In the first part of the book he identifies how a certain form of Capitalism I.e Ascetic Calvinist
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- This made Father John Calvin's followers anxious if they were chosen as one of the Elects
- They were told that those individuals who were chosen, were those that worked hard in this world, thus would be rewarded for in the Hereafter
- Therefore by working hard and being submissive to authority they were promised false rewards of the hereafter to maintain a strong and obedient workforce for Capitalism
- Therefore Protestantism preceded the development of Capitalism
- Other areas of the world may possess certain aspects of capitalism, but they were not the first to develop it
- What they lacked according to Weber was a religion that encouraged and facilitated the development of Capitalism
- Thus, by altering the existing economic structure, religion showed that it did encourage social change

CA:

- However Weber is criticised because there were a number of places in the world where Calvinism was strong but they were not the first to develop into a capitalist society
- E.g. Switzerland, Hungary and Scotland, had a lot of Calivinists but Capitalism developed much later

The influence of religion

12.1

Writer	Theory	Critical Analysis
Davie	Eurocentric Analysis of Secularisation	Bruce
Kepel	Reversal of the secularization trend	Bruce
Stark and Bainbridge	Rise of NRMs	Bruce
Glock and Bellah	Focus on majority religions	-

MANGO STUDY GUIDE

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Question	Answer	Marks
5	**'Functionalists provide the most convincing explanations of the role of religion.' Evaluate this view.** **Key focus of the question** Functionalist accounts of the role of religion are centred on the view that religion serves to unite people in society (social solidarity) through participation in shared rituals and beliefs. Good answers will demonstrate a clear understanding of the arguments for and against this viewpoint. Discussion of the functionalist view of religion is likely to include references to relevant concepts, such as collective conscience and value consensus, and might also consider the contribution of different functionalist theorists, such as Durkheim Radcliffe-Browne, Malinowski, and Parsons. Evaluative responses will assess the merit of functionalist explanations of the role of religion, possibly through juxtaposition with other theories (Marxist, feminist, Weberian, etc.). General strengths and weaknesses in functionalist theory might also feature in good analytical responses. This could include a critique of the teleological nature of functionalist reasoning and of the conservatism inherent in the emphasis on social order and value consensus. Evidence could be used to support arguments for and against the functionalist claim that religion helps to bring people together and create social solidarity as opposed to social conflict and division. **Indicative content** For: • Functionalist arguments and concepts supporting the idea that religion is a source of social solidarity and value consensus. • Functionalist contributions from Durkheim, Radcliffe-Browne, Malinowski, and Parsons. • Successful capitalist economies (US, UK, Germany, Japan) have often enjoyed long periods of relative stability within their own borders where divisions such as those between employers and workers and managed harmoniously for the most part. Functionalists may be right in arguing that religion has made a significant contribution to achieving this level of integration and stability. This suggests that just as there is evidence to show that religion may sometimes help trigger social conflict, there is also a significant weight of evidence to support claims that religion promotes social stability. • Examples of communities/ethnicities where participation in religious practice and belief are high and this appears to act as a significant binding force between members of the group. • Examples of where religious organisations play an active role in helping to maintain social cohesiveness and help prevent social conflict. • Religion as a source of moral authority and a basis for ceremonies that help to bind the community together. • Examples of how theology may support ideas of social harmony and community togetherness. • Discussion of civil religion as a further functionalist angle on how social harmony and togetherness is achieved.	35

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Question	Answer	Marks
5	Against: • Conflict theories (Marxist and feminist) that question the role of religion as a source of social solidarity. • The idea that religion unites people in society implies the existence of controls that prevent significant conflict and unrest breaking out in society. Yet there are numerous examples of bloody conflicts and extreme persecution and unrest in which religion appears to have played a part. • Functionalist theories that emphasise the supposed role of religion in promoting social solidarity appear to downplay the potential for conflicts to arise due to divisions within religious groups. For example, various splits and schisms within the Christian church over the centuries. • Conflicts based around religious divisions are rarely short-lived; they often run on in a society for decades and, in some cases, centuries. Hence, it is not as if religious conflicts can be written off as a minor exception to what functionalists see as the normal role of religion in helping to maintain social solidarity. • Whilst it is true that the values of peace and harmony are central to most religious teachings, it is not always the case that organised religions set out determinedly to avoid conflict or to defend the status quo. Liberation Theology, for example, is a concerted effort by a committed group of priests in Latin America to challenge oppressive political regimes and press for social changes that would help alleviate poverty and exploitation. Possible links between fundamentalist religious groups and activities which are clearly harmful to social harmony, including terrorist activity. • The idea that religion unites people in society may be a misnomer as religion may serve to mask underlying conflicts between people. For example, feminist theories claim that religion is patriarchal and works to keep females in a subordinate position and to legitimise gender inequality. • Established religions have been closely associated with the rich and powerful in society, sometimes taking sides against the less privileged. It is hard to see this as promoting social unity and, indeed, it may contribute to social conflict in the long run. • Max Weber warned against making sweeping generalisations about the contribution that religion makes to society. He recognised that the role of religion can vary across time and between societies, and that not all religions have the same impact on people's thoughts and behaviour. In some situations, Weber said religion could be a source of social change, in others it may act as a conservative force helping to uphold the status quo. Weber also saw that religion can at times be a catalyst for division and confrontation. This is a more nuanced way of thinking about the role of religion than the one presented in traditional functionalist and Marxist theories of religion.	

30

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Cambridge International Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level
9699 Sociology June 2025
Principal Examiner Report for Teachers

SOCIOLOGY

A MUST READ!

Paper 9699/42
Globalisation, Media, Religion

Key messages

- Most candidates showed reasonable awareness of the issues raised by the questions.
- High quality responses included explicit and sustained evaluation.
- Good responses also made use of relevant sociological concepts and theories.
- Higher marks could be achieved by including more references to sociological evidence.
- Low-scoring responses mostly lacked references to sociological materials and relied on opinion and general knowledge instead.

Sharks, mark this !

General comments

Like Zara Abdullah

The standard of the scripts overall was good. High-scoring responses included detailed references to relevant sociological theories and studies. Some candidates also made effective use of relevant examples to support their answers. Responses in the middle of the mark range often selected relevant material to support the view in the question, but struggled to deliver a convincing evaluation. To gain high marks for evaluation (AO3), it is important to challenge and test the view in the question, preferably by making explicit evaluative points. There were some lower-scoring answers that included a lot of material that was tangential to the question. Some answers addressed the general topic of the question, but neglected the issues raised by the specific wording. → Contextualisation!

There also continue to be some candidates who rely on opinion and general knowledge as a basis for their answers. The marks awarded for responses that lack references to appropriate sociological materials are inevitably low. It is important therefore that candidates are encouraged to use references to sociological concepts, theories and evidence in their answers.

Most candidates answered two questions in the time available. Some candidates answered more than two questions, though they appeared to derive no advantage from this strategy in terms of marks achieved. The questions on Religion and Media proved most popular, with those on Globalisation less frequently attempted.

They must have been from "Jutaani" College !

Comments on specific questions

Section C

Question 5 "Functionalists provide the most ..... the role of religion." Ev. this view. [35]

This question provided an opportunity to consider the role of religion with reference to functionalist theory. Good answers offered a sustained account of different functionalist views, covering thinkers such as Durkheim, Malinowski, Parsons, and Bellah. High-scoring responses demonstrated a clear understanding of concepts such as collective conscience, sacred and profane, value consensus, social solidarity, psychological reinforcement, and civil religion. Evaluation was provided by contrasting functionalist ideas with other sociological accounts that have a fundamentally different view of the role of religion, such as the Marxist and feminist theories. Examples of where religion has contributed to social conflict and social change were also cited as a way of challenging the functionalist perspective. Some answers described different theories of religion without making it clear how they help to demonstrate potential strengths or limitations in the classical functionalist accounts. There were a few low-scoring responses that showed little understanding of the functionalist perspective and instead discussed the role of religion in general, with little or no reference to relevant sociological material.

mirchi-Masala!

→ Lack of Contextualisation?! Strictly adhere to my formula!

31

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Question	Answer	Marks
5	**'Women have complete equality with men in religious organisations today.' Evaluate this view.** **Key focus of the question** The question invites consideration of the relationship between religion and gender equality, with particular focus on the position of women in religious organisations today. Feminist sociologists claim to have identified close links between religion and patriarchy, with religious teachings representing females in a negative way and emphasising their subordination to male figures, such as fathers and husbands. However, this view has come under increasing scrutiny in recent years, partly because of many religious organisations adopting new policies that are more favourable to female members. Good evaluative responses will consider the possible sources of gender inequality/patriarchy in religious organisations and enquire how far recent changes in these organisations have reduced or removed these sources of inequality. Responses that challenge the feminist view of religion in a broader sense should also be credited. This might include, for example, consideration of the functionalist view that women perform different but equal roles within many religious organisations, and the interactionist view that only detailed study of what women think and feel about their experience of religion will shed light on whether they find religion oppressive and patriarchal. **Indicative content** For: • Arguments and evidence supporting the view that many religious organisations have changed in recent years to embrace gender equality and challenge patriarchy. • Women have greater opportunity to access positions of authority within many religious organisations today, including through ordination. • Women are now the largest worship group in many religions. • Religious organisations have had to adapt to wider social changes, such as the move towards gender equality, to remain relevant and attract members. • The extent of patriarchy in religion can be questioned. For example, many women with religious affiliations may support some or all of the religious values that feminists see as patriarchal. • Many religious organisations have made a concerted effort in recent years to explain and justify aspects of their beliefs and practices that feminist critics have criticised as patriarchal. This has perhaps contributed to a more nuanced debate about the relationship between religion and patriarchy, highlighting new avenues for discussing what equality means in the context of gender relations. • Some religions have always been further forward than others in supporting gender equality; for example, Sikhism and Quakerism. Likewise, some NRMs and New Age movements may have more progressive attitudes to gender equality among their followers. • Some religions are generally patriarchal, but aspects of them can still provide significant opportunities for women. Hence, there is a danger of over-generalising as the position of women in religion varies greatly between different religious organisations.	35

32

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Question	Answer	Marks
5	• The secularisation thesis suggests that religion has little social significance today and so the influence of religion in contributing to patriarchy and the oppression of women may be very limited for much of the female population. • Functionalist arguments that women perform different but equal roles within many religious organisations. • Only detailed study of what females think and feel about their experience of religion will shed light on whether they find religion oppressive. Against: • Arguments and evidence from traditional feminist accounts supporting the idea that religious organisations are patriarchal. • Feminist responses to those who argue that many religious organisations have changed and are now much less patriarchal or not patriarchal at all. • The promotion of some women within religious organisations may be a form of tokenism that conceals ongoing underlying patriarchy in the hierarchy of these organisations. • Upsurge in support for fundamentalism in religion may in part be a reaction against attempts to liberalise some religious organisations away from patriarchal power structures and ways of thinking. • While some religions have embraced changes that are more favourable to women, others have not. • Examples of religious teachings that support a patriarchal worldview and represent women in an inferior or prejudicial way. • Evidence to show that women are often lowly represented in positions of authority within religious organisations. • Women are encouraged to follow traditional gender roles in society in many religions. • Reports from women that involvement in religion has damaged their self-esteem and sense of freedom; they feel oppressed by the exercise of religious authority. • Examples that suggest some religions may remain patriarchal because of their opposition to causes that feminists might have campaigned for, such as fertility rights, access to contraception, cohabitation, and freedom from arranged marriages.	

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Question	Answer	Marks
5	**'The role of religion is to maintain social control.' Evaluate this view.** **Key focus of the question** This question provides an opportunity for candidates to consider the role of religion as an agency of social control, and to contrast this with other theories of religion that focus more on the positive consequences of religion in contributing to social solidarity, social change, and the fulfilment of individual and group needs. There are many historical and contemporary examples of where religion appears to help maintain social control. Discussion of some of these examples would provide support for the view expressed in the question. Candidates might also support the view in the question by discussing sociological theories (Marxist and Feminist) that emphasise the role of religion as a form of ideology that helps to maintain social order. Evaluation might take the form of a juxtaposition of theories that reject the view of religion acting as an agency that helps maintain social control, such as the functionalist view that religion contributes to social harmony and to the fulfilment of individual and group needs. Candidates might also reflect on changes in religious participation and belief and consider whether the more individualised forms of religion practised today mean that religion can no longer maintain social control. **Indicative content** For: • There are numerous examples of where religion has acted to maintain social control, both in the case of theistic regimes and cases of where established religions have acted in support of secular states in imposing order and control in society. • Marxist theory suggests that religion is an ideological force that helps to maintain social order in capitalist societies by creating false consciousness and passivity among the working class. • Religion provides a form of spiritual solace (opiate) for the poor, making them less likely to resist the material deprivation they experience and thereby supporting the interests of the capitalist ruling class. • Feminist theory sees a close relationship between religion and patriarchy, suggesting that religious organisations and beliefs play a part in maintaining the dominance of men over women in society. • Historical examples of where religion has been imposed on subordinate groups by the rich and privileged, including the early period of industrialisation with the working class and cases of missionary work in the spread of colonialism in the nineteenth century. • Successful capitalist economies (US, UK, Germany, Japan) have often enjoyed long periods of relative stability within their own borders where divisions such as those between employers and workers are contained and a high level of social control is maintained by the state and related agencies. There is evidence that organised religion may have contributed significantly to forms of mediation and control that help to maintain harmony between the interests of capitalist owners and the industrial working class.	35

34

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Question	Answer	Marks
5	Against: • While religion may maintain social control, it can also be a source of division and open conflict in society. Conflicts between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland and between Hindus and Muslims in India, are just two examples of this. • Durkheim argued that religion contributes to social solidarity and to the fulfilment of collective needs. • Malinowski's view that religion satisfies important psychological needs of the individual. • Post-modernist reflections on the role of choice and personal identification as factors influencing meaning of religion today. • It is not always the case that organised religions set out determinedly to avoid conflict or to help maintain the status quo. Liberation Theology, for example, is a concerted effort by a committed group of priests in Latin America to challenge oppressive political regimes and press for social changes that would help alleviate poverty and exploitation. • Max Weber rightly warned against making sweeping generalisations about the contribution that religion makes to society. He recognised that the role of religion can vary across time and between societies, and that not all religions have the same impact on people's thoughts and behaviour. In some situations, Weber said religion could be a source of social change, in others it may act as a conservative force or a catalyst for division and confrontation. This is a more nuanced way of thinking about the role of religion than the one presented in traditional functionalist and Marxist theories of religion. • The secularisation thesis suggests that religion has lost its social significance and therefore it is debatable whether organised religions retain the power to play a part in the maintenance of social control.	

ER

Section C

Question 5

This question provided an opportunity to consider the role of religion with particular reference to social control.

Good answers offered a sustained account of the Marxist and feminist views about the impact of religious practices and beliefs in supporting the status quo. This was often supported with evidence highlighting the subordinate position of the working class and/or women within religious organisations and theology. Evaluation was provided by contrasting these conflict theories with other sociological accounts that challenge the idea that religion is an agent of social control. Functionalist arguments about religion contributing to social harmony and to the fulfilment of individual and group needs were reprised as a counter to the Marxist and feminist emphasis on social control. Examples of where religion has contributed to social change were also cited as a way of challenging the view expressed in the question; liberation theology was mentioned in that respect. Some answers outlined different theories of religion without linking the material well to debates about whether religion is an agent of social control. Other lower scoring responses were limited to a discussion of the tangential debate about whether religion has any influence on social behaviour today.

35

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Question	Answer	Marks
6	**'Religion promotes social solidarity.' Evaluate this view.** **Key focus of the question** The focus of this question is the relationship between religion and social solidarity. Good answers are likely to develop the contrast between sociological theories that view religion as a conservative force that promotes social solidarity and theories that view religion as an oppressive force contributing to division and inequality in society. The idea that religion may be used as a force to challenge the existing social order is another thread that might be developed in high-scoring evaluative responses. Durkheim's ideas about the links between religion and social solidarity are likely to surface in good accounts of the view on which the question is based. This might be supported with relevant ideas from other functionalists such as Radcliffe-Browne and Parsons. Marxist theories of religion might be used to challenge the functionalist perspective by pointing out that while religion might create the appearance of social solidarity, it serves to promote ideological control of the working class in the interests of the rich and powerful. Religions contribution to social change, as opposed to social solidarity, might be explored through the work of thinkers such as Max Weber and/or case studies such as the Iranian revolution and liberation theology. Similarly, postmodernists view religion as bound up in the social changes that they refer to as postmodernity. **Indicative content** For: • Durkheim's view that religion contributes to a sense of collective identity and value consensus; it helps bind people together in support for the existing social order. • Radcliffe-Browne on the integrative forces of religion. • Malinowski's arguments about the importance of religion in developing stable, well adapted individuals. • Parsons ideas about the role of religion in helping to integrate society. • Marxist views that religion provides false consciousness/ solidarity/ hegemony which promotes social solidarity. • Religious scriptures promoting harmony and social acceptance. • Examples to show how ritual may play a part in promoting social solidarity. • Arguments that the nature of religious belief and practice encourage conformity, respect for authority, and acceptance of the existing social order. • Examples of where religion has been important in encouraging social solidarity, for example during wartime.	35

36

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Question	Answer	Marks
6	Against: • Marxist sociologists argue that religion is a form of ideology that deters the working class from rising up and overthrowing the capitalist economic system. Religion makes people passive and accepting of the status quo but fails to achieve a lasting harmony (or solidarity) between the different sections of society. • Some religious movements (liberation theology, for example) have been quite radical in their opposition to poverty and exploitation, putting the fight against inequality ahead of any efforts to promote social solidarity. • Sects and cults are often seen as divisive elements in society, leading to conflicts and tensions with other groups in society. • Some social/political movements that challenge the status quo have links with religious teachings. For example, Labour movements in western Europe historically had a close connection with non-conformist religions. Many of the great social changes of the twentieth century were driven by labour movements. • Feminist theories suggesting that religion contributes to gender divisions rather than promoting social solidarity. • Supporters of the secularisation thesis would argue that the declining social significance of religion means that any power that religious organisations must promote social solidarity is considerably diminished.	

Question 6

Good responses to this question demonstrated a detailed understanding of the view that religion promotes social solidarity. High-scoring answers included references to a range of relevant theories and research evidence. This was complemented by a sustained evaluation of the strengths and limitations of the view expressed in the question. Some candidates made good use of examples to show that while religion may sometimes promote social solidarity, in other instances it contributes to conflicts and divisiveness in society. Marxist and feminist theories were also used to suggest links between religion and conflict. There were a few answers that discussed conflict theories of religion without offering any contrasts with functionalist theories that emphasise the contribution of religion to social solidarity. Weaker responses demonstrated little understanding of the concept of social solidarity and relied on a general discussion of the role of religion instead.

37

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