

Defining religion			Key Vocabulary		
1	Substantive	a) This looks at the content or substance of religious belief. b) People may believe in God or supernatural forces. WEBER (1905) a) Religion is a belief in a superior or supernatural power. b) This can't be explained scientifically. c) This is above nature. d) This definition is exclusive. e) To be a religion, the beliefs must relate to a belief in God or the supernatural. f) It creates a division between religious and non-religious beliefs.	1	Religiosity	the extent to which someone sees themselves as religious.
		Evaluation W-Rejects beliefs and practices that do not involve a belief in God. W-Western bias- excludes Buddhism which do not share a Western idea of God.	2	Fundamentalism	appeal to tradition -they seek return to the basics or fundamentals of their faith.
			3	Secularisation	means the decrease in power that religion has in society.
			4	Ideology	means a set of ideas, values and beliefs that provide a means of interpreting the world.
			Different types of religion		
2	Functional	a) Rather than specific beliefs, this looks at the social and psychological functions the religion performs for individuals and society. Functionalist support: b) DURKHEIM (1915) Looks at the contribution religion makes to social integration. c) YINGER (1970) Religion helps us in answering the "ultimate questions" eg. What happens when we die?	1	THEISTIC BELIEFS	Belief in a higher power that could be a single God (monotheistic) or many Gods (polytheistic). This supernatural being is the source of beliefs around which the religion revolves.
		Evaluation S-This is an inclusive definition. S- It embraces a wide range of beliefs and practices that perform functions. S-It doesn't specify a belief in God or the supernatural and so Western bias is reduced. W- Institutions that perform the function of integration are not necessarily religions. Eg Chanting at a football match plays a role in integration but it's not the same as a religion.	2	NEW AGE MOVEMENT	Spiritual rather than a religious belief system, focused on self development and fulfilment rather than a devotion to a higher power. Often based on eastern Religions like Buddhism. Eg. Reiki or Yoga
			3	ANIMISM	Belief in spirits and ghosts that can positively or negatively impact the human of natural world . Animistic religions tend to be more prevalent in pre-industrial and non-industrial societies eg. Paganism and Ancient religions such as the Aztecs.
			4	TOTEMISM	Form of animism. A community creates a symbol that represents them as a group. The symbol gains sacred significance and is believed to protect the people it represents. Eg Australian Aborigines.
3	Constructionist	a) They are interested in how definitions of religion are constructed, challenged and fought over. b) ALDRIDGE (2013) Scientology is a religion for it's followers. BUT... Several Governments have tried to ban Scientology questioning it's status as a religion. This shows that religion can be contested and influenced by those with the power to define the situation.			
		Evaluation S- It doesn't assume that religion has to involve a belief in God S-It doesn't assume that it performs the same functions in all societies. S-It can uncover the meanings people give to religion. W-It is impossible to generalise about the nature of religion- no agreement on the meaning of religion.			

View of Religion			EVALUATING DURKHEIM'S THEORY of RELIGION		
1	Religion is a vital institution for maintaining social cohesion and solidarity.		1	Weakness	WORSLEY (1956) a) The evidence on totemism is unsound b) There is no division between the sacred and the profane. c) Different clans share the same totems. d) Even if Durkheim is right about totemism, it doesn't mean he had discovered the essence of all other religions.
DURKHEIM			2	Weakness	This theory is hard to apply to large-scale societies- it is better applied to small-scale societies with a single religion.
1	Sacred and Profane	a) The key feature of religion is a distinction between the sacred and the profane not a belief in God or the supernatural. b) The sacred= Things we set apart.They may be forbidden-inspire awe, fear and wonder. c) The profane= The ordinary and mundane.They have no special significance. d) The sacred thing represents society itself. e) Symbols vary between cultures but have an essential function in uniting believers in a single moral community.	3	Weakness	MESTROVIC (2011) Postmodernist Durkheim's ideas cannot be applied to contemporary society- increasing diversity has fragmented the collective conscience- no single version of the truth.
2	Totemism	Eg. Arunta Tribe - worship a totem- an emblem of the clan eg a bird or animal. Rituals and worship reinforces social solidarity.	MALINOWSKI-		
3	Collective conscience	a) Sacred symbols represent the collective conscience eg shared norms and values, beliefs and knowledge b) makes social life and cooperation possible between individuals. c) Rituals remind us of our membership of a single moral community d) Rituals also remind the individual of the power of society-without which they themselves are nothing and to which they owe everything. e) Religion performs a function for the individual. f) It reinvigorates us and helps us to overcome the obstacles we face.	1	Social solidarity	Religion promotes social solidarity. religion promotes social solidarity. It performs psychological functions for individuals.
4	Cognitive functions	a) Religion is the origins of human thought, reason and science. b) Religion is a source of our cognitive capacities-our ability to reason and think conceptually. c) People need concepts such as time , space, cause, substance and number to make sense of the world. d) We share these concepts with others to communicate effectively and understand the world.	2	Psychological functions	helps people cope with emotional stress that could undermine social solidarity
			3	Two situations	There are 2 situations where religion performs a psychological function a) Where the outcome is important but is uncontrollable and thus uncertain. b) At times of life crises
			4	Example1 Trobriand islanders	Where the outcome is important but is uncontrollable and thus uncertain. Lagoon fishing -no ritual needed but ocean fishing-ritual needed.
			5	Example 2 Trobriand Islanders	Religion helps to minimise disruption eg funeral rituals reinforce a feeling of solidarity among the survivors. The notion of immortality gives comfort to the bereaved by denying the fact of death.Death is the main reason for the existence of religious belief. Eg ancestors' spirits live on the island of Tuma.

PARSONS

1	Key idea	Religion helps individuals to cope with unforeseen events and uncontrollable outcomes- like Malinowski.
2	2 essential functions	1) It creates and legitimates society's central values. 2) It is the primary source of meaning.
3	Legitimizes society's central values.	Religion creates and legitimates society's basic norms and values by sacralising them (makes them sacred). Eg. Protestantism in USA has sacralised the core American values - meritocracy, self-discipline and individualism.
4	It is the primary source of meaning.	It answers ultimate questions about the human condition. Eg. Why do the good suffer and why do some people die young? They defy our sense of justice and make life appear to have no meaning. This could undermine the values of a society. Religion will then provide answers

EVALUATION of FUNCTIONALIST THEORY of RELIGION

1	Strength	Functionalism emphasises the social nature of religion and considers the positive functions it can perform
2	Weakness	It neglects negative aspects of religion Eg. Oppression of the poor (Marxism) or of women (Feminism)
3	Weakness	It ignores religion as a source of conflict in complex modern societies where there may be religious pluralism- hard to unite and integrate all in a shared belief system eg Northern Ireland.
4	Weakness	Some would argue that describing "Americanism" as a religion stretches the definition of religion too far. Patriotism or nationalism does function as a form of belief system or ideology and it may carry out some of the functions that Durkheim, Parsons or Malinowski ascribe to religion. However, is that enough for something to be considered religious?

BELLAH: CIVIL RELIGION

1	Key idea	religion unifies society (like Parsons). This is important in multi-faith societies.
2	Example: USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) America is unified by civil religion. b) This is a belief system that attaches sacred qualities to society itself. c) Civil religion is a faith in "The American way of life" d) Civil religion can claim the loyalty of all Americans. e) This civil religion involves loyalty to a nation-state and a belief in God-equates to being a true American.
3	Rituals and symbols of civil religion in USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Civil religion in America is expressed through rituals, symbols and beliefs; b) Singing the National Anthem c) Pledging allegiance to the flag d) The Lincoln Memorial e) Phrases such as "One nation under God" f) BUT...this is referring to an American God rather than a Catholic, Protestant or Jewish God. g) It sacralises the American way of life uniting people from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds.
4	Functional alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Non-religious beliefs and practices that perform similar functions to those of organised religion eg maintaining social cohesion. b) Some other belief system may perform similar functions eg Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union united society through secular- non-religious -political beliefs and rituals. (Fascism and Communism) c) The problem with this is that it ignores what makes religion distinctive ie it's belief in the supernatural.

Marxist theory of Religion-MARX

1	False class consciousness	Marxists believe that the working class are falsely class conscious as a result of the transmission of ruling class ideology.
2	Revolution	However, the working class would eventually become aware of their exploitation and this would lead to class conflict and a revolution to overthrow capitalism.
3	Classless society	This would lead to the creation of a classless society free from exploitation.
4	Comparison with Functionalism	Marxists disagree with Functionalists that the role of religion is to unify society and strengthen value consensus.
5	Religion in a classless society	Marxists see religion in the context of a class-divided society. In a classless society there is no purpose for religion and it too will disappear.
6	Ideology	is a belief system that distorts people's perception of reality in ways that serve the interests of the ruling class. The class that controls economic production also controls the production of ideas in society such as the church, education and media.
7	Religion as ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Religion operates as an ideological weapon to legitimate class inequality. b) It justifies the suffering of the poor as inevitable and God-given. c) It promotes the idea that suffering is a virtue and offers rewards for this in the afterlife. d) Ideas such as this creates false class consciousness- a distorted view of reality that prevents the poor from acting to change their situation.

**MARX (1844)
Religion and alienation**

1	Religion is the product of alienation.
2	Alienation involves being separated or losing control over something that one has produced or created.
3	This is most extreme under capitalism.
4	Workers here do not own what they produce and have little control over the production process. This means they can't express themselves as creative beings.
5	The capitalist factory and the division of labour promotes alienation as the workers will engage in repetitive minute tasks which involve little skill or meaning.
6	These conditions are dehumanising and so workers will turn to religion as a form of consolation.
7	Marx describes religion as an opiate to dull the pain of exploitation. As opium masks pain rather than treating the cause-religion masks the underlying problem of exploitation that create the need for it.
8	Religion offers a distorted view of the world and so can offer no solution to earthly misery.
9	It promises an afterlife to create an illusion of happiness that distracts attention from the true source of suffering- capitalism. Eg. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. MATTHEW 5:12
10	Religion is then a product of alienation. It arises out of suffering and acts as a consolation for it but fails to deal with exploitation that causes it. Religion acts as an ideology to legitimate the suffering of the poor and the privileges of the ruling class.

LENIN (1870-1924)

1	Spiritual gin	Religion is a spiritual gin- an intoxicant given to the masses by the ruling class to confuse them and keep them in their place. It creates a mystical fog that obscures reality. The ruling class use religion cynically to keep the masses in their place and this prevents revolution.
2	Example	EG. The 16 th century idea of the Divine Right of Kings suggested that the King had been chosen to be the representative of God on Earth and so total obedience was owed. Disobedience was then not just illegal but also a sin.

Evaluation of Marxist Theory of Religion

1	Strength	Shows how religion can be a tool of oppression-masks exploitation and creates false class consciousness.
2	Weakness	Ignores positive functions of religion-psychological adjustment to misfortune. Neo-Marxists see certain forms of religion as assisting not hindering the development of class consciousness
3	Weakness	ALTHUSSER - rejected the concept of alienation as unscientific and based on a romantic idea that human beings have a “true self” - this would be an inadequate basis for a theory of religion.
4	Weakness	Religion does not necessarily function effectively as an ideology to control the population. Abercrombie, Hill and Turner (2015) argue that in a pre-capitalist society , while Christianity was a major element of ruling class ideology, it only had a limited impact on peasantry.

Evidence of Patriarchy

1	Key idea	Formal teachings often promote equality between the sexes but there is still evidence of patriarchy
2	Religious organisations ARMSTRONG (93)	These are dominated by men even though more women participate in them. Eg Orthodox Judaism and Catholicism forbid female priests. This exclusion is evidence of the marginalisation of women
3	Places of worship Holm	: women are devalued in religious places of worship Places often segregate the sexes and marginalise women eg. Seating them behind screens while men dominate the more sacred central spaces.
4	Places of worship	Women may not be allowed to fully participate eg. Read from sacred texts.
5	Places of worship	Women may be denied participation as they are regarded as potential pollutants . This stems from taboos surrounding childbirth, pregnancy and menstruation. EG. Menstruating women are unable to touch the Qu'ran.
6	Sacred texts	a) They largely follow the actions of male gods and prophets and written and interpreted by men. b) Stories reflect anti-female stereotypes eg. Genesis- Judaeo-Christian story-Eve causes humanity to fall from grace and be expelled from the Garden of Eden.
7	Religious laws and customs.	a) These favour the rights of men. b) Eg. Divorce, marriage -many spouses, decision-making, dress codes. c) Religion thus influences cultural norms and may lead to unfair treatment eg genital mutilation or punishment for sexual transgression.
8	Religious laws and customs.	a) Many religions regulate and legitimate the domestic role of women. b) They also promote the reproductive role. c) Eg. Catholic Church ban on abortion and artificial contraception. d) Woodhead (2002) The catholic church, in denying a female priesthood has a deep unease about the emancipation(freedom) of women.

Feminist view of religion

1	Feminists see society as patriarchal-male dominated.
2	Some Feminists see religion as an institution that reflects inequality.
3	Beliefs function as patriarchal ideology that legitimates the subordination of women.

Key Vocabulary

1	Patriarchy	Male domination and oppression of women
2	Monotheistic religion	Belief in one God
3	Polytheistic	Belief in many Gods /Goddesses

Evidence against patriarchy

1	Karen Armstrong (93)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Women have not always been subordinated. b) Early religions often placed women at the centre. c) There has been evidence of earth mother goddesses , female priestesses and fertility throughout the Middle East until 6000 years ago. <p><u>However....</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) From 4000 years ago, the rise of monotheistic religions- meant that people were encouraged to worship a single all powerful male God. b) Eg. Hebrews- Jehovah, male prophets in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
2	Nawal el Sadawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Religion oppresses but was not the root cause of female subordination. b) It is the result of patriarchal types of society coming into existence over the last few thousand years. c) Patriarchy began to re-shape religion- men reinterpreted the teachings and beliefs to favour men. d) The rise of monotheism legitimates power over women.
3	Religious forms of Feminism Woodhead (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) There are also ways that women use religion to gain greater freedom and respect. b) Critical of feminists that see all religion as patriarchal and oppressive. c) Much traditional religion is patriarchal but not true of all types. d) EG. The hijab worn by Muslim women may be a source of liberation- not oppression. This allows some women to enter the public sphere of education and employment without being viewed as immodest. Increasing their opportunities.
4	Religious forms of Feminism <u>Piety Movements:</u> RINALDO (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) They are conservative movements that support traditional teachings about women's role, modest dress and Bible study. b) Even in these conservative religions women find ways to further their interests. c) Middle class women join these movements and these women may already have resources and income with which to pursue their goals. d) Assists in networking. <p><u>Liberal Protestant Organisations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Quakers and the Unitarians and the Church of England: b) A third of Unitarian ministers are female. c) The C of E has had female priests since 1992 and bishops since 2015.
	Religious forms of Feminism BRUSCO (95;2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Use of religion to gain status and respect for roles in the home and family. b) Colombia- belonging to a Pentecostal group can be empowering for some women. c) Women can use religion to increase their power and influence because Pentecostals believe men should respect women. This prevents macho behaviour. d) Women also engage in Bible study meetings where experiences can be shared with other women.

RELIGION as a CONSERVATIVE FORCE

1	Key idea	<p>Religion can be seen as a conservative force in two ways;</p> <p>1) It is traditional and upholds traditional beliefs about the way society should be organised- defending traditional customs, institutions and moral views and roles.</p> <p>2) It stabilises society and maintains the status quo- it functions to conserve or preserve things as they are.</p>
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RELIGION'S BELIEFS

1	Moral issues	<p>Many religions have conservative beliefs about moral issues.</p> <p>They may oppose change that would allow people more freedom in their personal and sexual relationships. Eg. Catholicism has strict beliefs regarding abortion, divorce and artificial contraception. It opposes gay marriage and condemns homosexuality.</p>
2	Family Values	<p>Most religions will uphold family values. They support the patriarchal domestic division of labour. EG. Church of England : traditional marriage ceremony dates back to 1602 where the bride vows to "love, honour and obey" the groom. The groom only needs to "love and honour." This promotes the traditional belief that the man should be the head of the household.</p>
3	Non-Christian religion and family values	<p>Traditional values are also common in non-Christian religions. Eg Hinduism endorses male domestic authority and the practice of arranged marriage.</p>

RELIGION'S FUNCTIONS

1	Key idea	<p>Religion functions to conserve and preserve things as they are and maintain the status quo. This view of religion, as maintaining social stability, is held by Functionalists, Marxists and Feminists.</p>
2	Functionalists - Religion and consensus	<p>Functionalists see religion as a conservative force as it maintains social stability and prevents the disintegration of society. It promotes value consensus reducing the opportunity for people to pursue their own selfish interests at the expense of others. It helps people cope with potentially disruptive stresses.</p>
3	Marxists Religion and capitalism	<p>Marx sees religion as a conservative ideology that prevents change. It legitimates or disguises exploitation and inequality. It creates false class consciousness in the working class and prevents revolution- maintaining the stability of capitalist society.</p>
4	Feminists Religion and patriarchy	<p>Feminists see religion as a conservative force because it acts as an ideology that legitimates patriarchal power and maintains women's subordination in the family and wider society. (NB some feminists do disagree!)</p>

WEBER's views on religion

1	Key idea	Weber argues that religion acts as a force for social change.
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PROTESTANT ETHIC and SPIRIT of CAPITALISM

1	Key idea	In his classic work he argues that religious beliefs of Calvinism (a form of Protestantism founded by John Calvin during the reformation) led to the emergence of capitalism in Northern Europe in the 16 th and 17 th Centuries.
2	Past societies	Weber states past societies also had capitalism but that this was linked to greed in pursuit of wealth - often spent on luxury consumption.
3	Modern capitalism	However, modern capitalism is based on systematic, efficient, rational pursuit of profit for it's own sake, rather than for consumption. This is known as "The spirit of capitalism."

CONSEQUENCES of ASCETICISM

1	Wealth as a psychological function	Wealth and success performed a psychological function for the Calvinists that allowed them to cope with their salvation panic. Wealth was seen to be a sign of God's favour. This was contrary to their original doctrine that it wasn't possible to uncover God's will.
2	Work ethic and wealth	The work ethic resulted in the systematic accumulation of wealth by the most efficient and rational means. They didn't squander this wealth on luxuries and so reinvested into their businesses which continued to grow and led to further profit. This is the spirit of modern capitalism- acquiring profit for it's own sake.

CALVINIST BELIEFS

1	PREDESTINATION	God had predetermined which souls would be saved - the elect - and those who would not. This was decided even before birth. Individuals are powerless to change this decision- either through their deeds (Pilgrimage) or through faith (as believed by Lutherans)- it is fixed and already made by God.
2	DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE	God was far above and beyond this world and so incomparably greater than any mortal- no human being could claim to know his will. Coupled with predestination Calvinists were left with a feeling of "unprecedented inner loneliness"- it created what Weber refers to as "a salvation panic". They were unable to know whether or not they had been saved.
3	ASCETICISM	This refers to abstinence (going without), self-discipline and self-denial. Monks lead such an existence- rejecting luxury items, wearing simple clothes and avoiding excess. They would devote themselves to God and a life of prayer.
4	VOCATION or CALLING	Before Calvinism a religious vocation - calling to God-meant renouncing everyday life to join a monastery or convent. Weber calls this other-worldly asceticism. Calvinism introduced this- worldly asceticism. The only thing Calvinists knew of God's plan was through the Bible. This told them that we were put on the Earth to glorify God's name through work. This meant constant, methodical work in an occupation, not in a monastery. BUT ...work was still not a means of earning salvation-it was a religious duty. Calvinists led an ascetic lifestyle. They shunned all luxury, worked long hours and practised rigorous self-discipline. Idleness was sinful-

HINDUISM and CONFUCIANISM

1	Key idea	Weber didn't state that the Calvinist beliefs were the cause of modern capitalism- they were one of it's causes. <i>The Protestant Ethic was not enough on it's own to bring modern capitalism into being.</i>
2	Key idea	A number of other material or economic factors were necessary ; natural resources, trade, a money economy, towns and cities and a legal system.
3	Key idea	other societies that have had a higher level of economic development than parts of Northern Europe had in the 16 th and 17 th centuries and yet modern capitalism failed to develop. EG. China and India. They were more materially advanced than Europe but capitalism failed to take off due to the lack of a Calvinist-like belief system.
4	India -Hinduism	Hinduism was an ascetic religion but it's orientation was other-worldly- directing concerns away from the material world and towards the spiritual world.
5	China- Confucianism	Confucianism discouraged the growth of rational capitalism. It was a this-worldly religion like Calvinism but it was not ascetic.
6	Conclusion	<i>Both religions lacked the drive to systematically accumulate wealth that is necessary for modern capitalism.</i>

MARXIST EVALUATION of WEBER on RELIGION and SOCIAL CHANGE

1	<i>"A debate with Marx's ghost."</i>	Marx saw economic or material factors as the force for change. Weber argues that material factors alone are not enough to drive change . Other material and economic factors needed to be present to create modern capitalism.
2	KAUTSKY (1927)	Weber overestimates the role of ideas and underestimates economic factors in bringing capitalism into being. He argues that capitalism preceded rather than followed Calvinism
3	TAWNEY (1926)	<i>Technological change not religious ideas caused the birth of capitalism.</i> It was only after capitalism was established that the bourgeoisie adopted Calvinist beliefs to legitimate their pursuit of economic gain .
4	<i>Not every country that contained Calvinists developed capitalism</i>	Scotland had a large Calvinist population but capitalism developed slowly. BUT Marshall (82) This was due to a lack of investment capital and skilled labour - supporting Weber's point that material and cultural factors were needed for capitalism to develop.
5	<i>Calvinists were the first capitalists but this wasn't because of their beliefs.</i>	Some argue that this was the result of being excluded by law from political office and many professions , like the Jews in Eastern Europe. They turned to business as one of the limited opportunities available to them. BUT Weberians state that religious minorities were excluded in this way but did not become successful capitalists.

BRUCE (2003)

1	Key idea	Like Weber he is interested in the relationship between religion and social change.
2	Key idea	He refers to 2 examples of religiously inspired protest movements in the USA that tried to change society; 1) American Civil Rights Movement 2) The New Christian Right

American Civil Rights Movement

1	Key idea	The struggle by this movement in the 1950s and 60s, to end racial segregation, can be seen as an example of religiously motivated social change.
2	Key idea	Slavery was abolished in 1865 and yet black people were legal and political rights in many Southern states of the USA.
3	Key idea	Segregation was enforced -black people were unable to use the same amenities as white people eg buses, shops and toilets. Schools were segregated and inter-racial marriages were forbidden. Black people were denied the vote through intimidation and the law.
4	Key idea	The Civil Rights Movement began in 1955 when Rosa Parks - a black civil rights activist - refused to sit at the back of a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Other protests involved marching, boycotts and demonstrations.
5	Key idea	Segregation was outlawed in 1964.
6	Key idea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This movement was underpinned by the Black clergy. • This was led by Dr Martin Luther King. • This gave support and moral legitimacy to civil rights activists. • Their churches provided a place to meet and a sanctuary from the threat of white violence. • They would pray together and sing hymns- rituals that promoted unity. • The black clergy could shame white people into changing laws by appealing to a shared Christian value of equality. • The impact on white clergy in the South was limited but national support was gained through the message.
7	Key idea	Sees religion as the context as an ideological resource- it provided beliefs and practices that protestors could draw on for motivation and support.
8	Key idea	Using the civil rights movement as an example, he identifies several ways in which religious organisations can support protests that may lead to social change; Taking the moral high ground, Channelling dissent, Acting as honest broker, Mobilising public opinion.
9	Key idea	He sees the civil rights movement as an example of religion becoming involved in secular struggle and helping to bring about change. The movement was successful as it shared the same Christian values as those in power and wider society. It brought about change by shaming those in power to put into practice the principle of equality in the American Constitution that all men and women are born equal.

