



Beliefs in Society Knowledge Organiser



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Ideology, science and religion				Religion and social change/ stability			
Ideology = set of ideas and values shared by a social group.	Pluralist: there are many social groups, each with their own ideologies, and all equally valid.	Marxist: ruling class impose the dominant ideology to working class using ideological state apparatus (Althusser)	Patriarchal: ideas that support and justify the power of men (Feminist)	Political: ideas that provide an analysis of how governments use power	Functionalist perspective (conservative force 1): helps reinforce value consensus	Durkheim: Life divided to sacred/ profane; totemism = more pure; religion reinforces collective conscience; civil religions replace supernatural beliefs – are these religion?	Evaluations: -Downplay social change - Religion can be divisive eg wars -Ignores diminishing religiosity
						Malinowski: Religion provides explanations for difficult things and security in uncertainty eg death, birth	
						Parsons: Religion underpins and reinforces core values and socialization; gives people 'mechanism of adjustment'	
Defining religion	Functional/ inclusivist (Durkheim): broad definition, focusing on function – anything seen as sacred	Substantive/ exclusivist (Bruce; Berger): Narrower, focuses on content of religion: belief in supernatural; 'sacred canopy' (Berger)	Features of religion: 1. Beliefs in a god 2. Theology eg bible 3. Practice eg prayer 4. Institutions eg church 5. Consequences		Marxist perspective (conservative force 2): opium of the people	Marx: religion as 'opium of the people' – relieves pain of poverty by offering escape after death, solution to earthly problems and justification for social class	Evaluations (Neo-Marxists; Gramsci) - Religion can be used to challenge ruling class and for change eg Christian churches in civil rights in USA
				Marx: religion as a means of social control and power used by ruling class – eg Hindu caste system, Catholic church – barrier to change, conservative			
Ideology and religion	Similarities: Both offer a means of understanding, interpreting, explaining the world.		Differences Religion not tied to a social group, unlike ideology; ideology does not require belief in supernatural.		Interpretivist perspective (conservative force 3)	Berger (1990): religion provides a 'universe of meaning' – beliefs and values that help people make sense of the world. Provides theodicy – framework to make sense of big issues eg life and death. Also a sacred canopy, protecting people from uncertainty/ pointlessness of life.	Evaluations: Berger argues sacred canopy is lost in postmodern society
Science as a belief system	Popper (1935): Scientific method (hypotheses and falsification) means theories in science are open to challenge; not facts	Science is an open system – scrutinised Religion is a closed system – faith	Kuhn (1962): Science is not so objective – scientists are influenced by paradigms, science is therefore socially constructed – form of ideology?	Feminist perspective (conservative force 4)			
Has science displaced religion?	Aldridge (2007): Cote's stages: 1. Theological stage – supernatural beliefs 2. Metaphysical stage – abstract ideas 3. Scientific stage - science replaces theological/ metaphysical explanations		Weber – disenchantment with the world in scientific stage Popper – religion cannot be proved or disproved so science should replace religion.		Religion as a force for social change	Weber - The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism -Calvinism promoted hard work, self-denial, pursuit of profit and reinvestment of profit -Weber argues this provided the rationality, ideas and ethics to develop capitalism in West Europe -Therefore religion can cause change	McRobbie (2001) Robinson (2001) 4 factors to determine change: nature of beliefs; significance of religion; social involvement in religion; authority of religious organizations
Postmodern approach	Lytard (1984) – science, ideology, religion all metanarratives – no claim to truth	Science – a metanarrative, caused more problems than it has solved	Religion – spirituality as consumer product; Bauman's vacuum of meaning in postmodernity			Bruce (2008) and fundamentalism: growth of Islamic fundamentalism shows religion can act as a conservative force by supporting social change	



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Religious Organisations			Religion and social characteristics			Secularisation and Globalisation				
	Key ideas	Debate	Gender: women are the biggest consumers of religion	Religion and patriarchy	Why?	Secularisation thesis	Wilson (1966) process of religious thinking, practice and institutions losing significance Data on secularisation is unreliable and hard to collect accurately			
Churches	Bureaucratic; world-accommodating; inclusive; higher social class over-represented; monopoly of truth	Bruce (1996) concept of church is outdated – most societies have religious pluralism and church lacks power it once had		Aldridge (2007) women legally inferior in Qur'an	Halman + Draulans: family life			Causes of Secularisation	1. Functions of religious organisations now carried out by welfare state eg education 2. Science and rationalisation have displaced faith in understanding the world 3. Decline of metanarratives 4. Religious pluralism	
Denominations	Eg Methodists; world-accommodating; open membership; no monopoly truth			Walby (2007) religions emphasise traditional role	Davie: God seen as forgiving/ feminine Bruce: nurturing roles as mums					
Sects	Eg Jehovah's Witnesses; world-rejecting; no hierarchy; tight social control of members; alienated minority groups; claim monopoly of truth			Woodhead (2002) Catholic ban on contraception		Davie: women closer to life/ death				
Cults	Eg Scientology; world-affirming; followers not members; little social control; open to all but wealthier members; tolerant of other religions.	Baker (1989) sects stigmatised. Wilson (1982) conflicts and commitment.	Ethnicity: minority ethnic groups are more religious in the UK	Holm (1994) menstruation seen as dirty in Hinduism	Mirza: rise of Muslim identity UK: British foreign policy Decline of other identities Multicultural policy	Evidence for Secularisation	1. Decline of religious thinking/ belief. Bruce (2002) science has undermined faith 2. Decline of religious practice BUT Davie (2002) – doesn't mean decline in belief 3. Decline of religious institutions - Martin (1969) disengaged from society			
New Religious movements	Baker (1989): concerned with spirituality; young supporters; charismatic leader; believe they are chosen; short-lived. Example: Heaven's Gate	Giddens (2006) individual focus. Stark and Bainbridge: audience, client and cult movements.		Bruce: community solidarity				Johal: creates hybrid identity	Evidence against Secularisation	1.1. Many people still show signs of religiosity. Heelas et al (2004) 'spiritual revolution' 2.2. Decline in church attendance doesn't mean decline in belief: Bellah et al (1996) rise in more private worship instead 3.3. Religious institutions still have a lot of power, eg faith schools, property ownership
New Age groups	Bruce (2002): focus is on self; everything connected; self is authority; therapy; global cafeteria	Sutcliffe (2003) diverse range of ideas that lack premises		Social deprivation						
Growth of cults/ sects: Wallis: cults as key to success Weber: marginality Heelas: vacuum of meaning Wilson: social change Glock and Stark: protest		Dynamics of sects: Niebuhr (1929) sects are short-lived usually, because: it's difficult to maintain fervour; need charismatic leaders; religious diversity; appeal of sect		Older people: Become more disengaged from society as they age More likely to have had religious upbringing Facing illness and death more acutely	Impact of globalisation on religion	1. Meyer et al (2011) deterritorialization of religion – not linked to place eg Islam 2. Huntington (2002) more clashes between different religions; Kurtz (2012) 'culture wars' between different religions 3. Singeton (2014) Rise in fundamentalism 4. Spiritual supermarket expanding 5. Religion as resistance to cultural imperialism				
		Age: Religiosity is lowest under 34 and highest over 55		Churches/ denominations: -Upper/ middle class over-represented -Ashworth and Farthing (2007) middle class pursuit -Denominations = more appeal to lower classes			Sects/ cults: -Sects generally draw from working class - World-affirming cults/ new age: upper class			
		Social class: Lack of reliable data; inclusivity of religion								