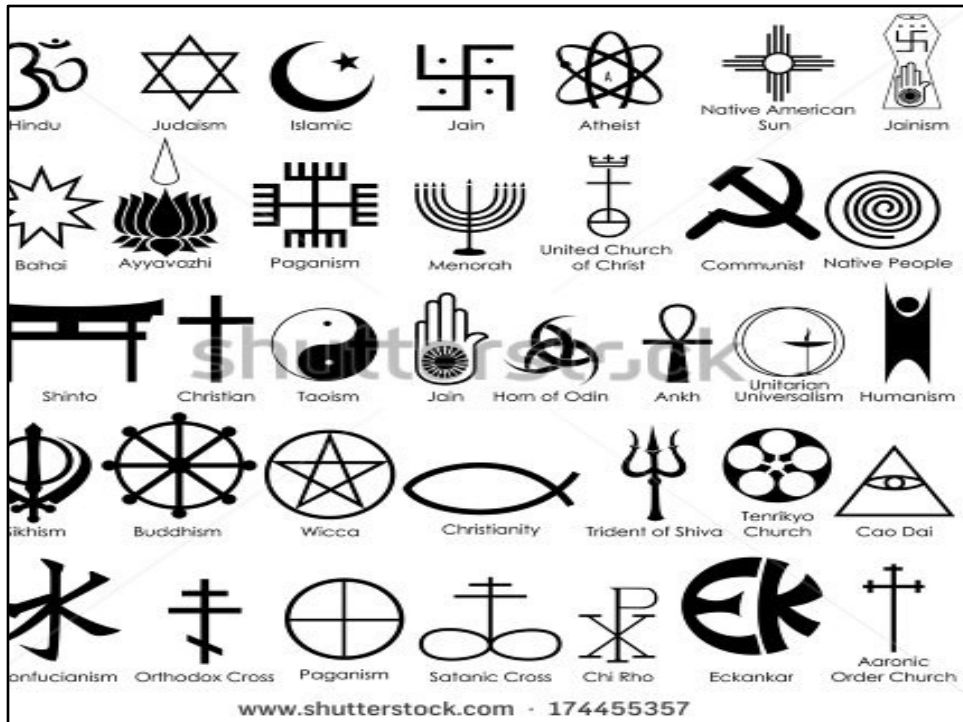


RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION





Religion and Sociology

- Sociologists study religion as they study family: to understand religious experiences around the world and how religion is tied to other social institutions.
- Not using judgment in the process, no attempt to say whether any religion is right or wrong.
- Instead, sociologists try to determine why religions take a particular form and how religious activities affect society as a whole.

WHAT IS RELIGION?

- From the Latin *religio* (respect for what is sacred) and *religare* (to bind, in the sense of an obligation), the term religion describes various systems of belief and practice concerning what people determine to be sacred or spiritual.
- Religion is a system of faith and worship.

WHAT IS RELIGION?

- A system of beliefs, rituals, and ceremonies
- Religion is a social institution involving beliefs and practices based on a conception of the sacred.
- According to Emile Durkheim, religion involves “things that surpass the limits of our knowledge”.

DEFINING RELIGION

- Religion is a “unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite people into one single moral community.”
- **Sacred**- that which people set apart as extraordinary, inspiring a sense of fear and respect (worship).
- **Profane**- that which people define as an ordinary element of everyday life.

DEFINING RELIGION...

OGBURN

- Religion is an attitude towards super-human powers.

A.W. GREEN

- Religion is a system of belief and symbolic practices and objects governed by faith rather than by knowledge, which relates man to an unseen supernatural realm beyond the known and beyond the controllable.

THE ELEMENTS OF RELIGION

Belief:

- Statements to which members of a particular religion adhere.
- It does not belong to reason or logic.
- Belief in one God, the Doomsday, life after death, the Angels, the Prophets, sacred books and good and bad luck are the elements of faith and belief in Islam.

THE ELEMENTS OF RELIGION

Ritual:

- All religions observe ceremonial practices called rituals.
- Religious rituals are prescribed acts that are sacred and symbolize the sacred things.

THE ELEMENTS OF RELIGION

Sacred Objects:

- Every religion believes on some holy or sacred things which constitute the center of religion.
- The temples, idols and cows are sacred for Hindus.
- Cross, Church and Bible are sacred for Christians.
- The Holy Quran, the Baitullah, and mosque are sacred objects for Muslims.

THE ELEMENTS OF RELIGION

Symbolism:

- In religion, symbols are used for sacred objects and beliefs. Religious symbols are a way to unite members of a common faith tradition, and to indicate to others the religious tradition they represent.

THE ELEMENTS OF RELIGION

SECT:

- A sect can be defined as a relatively small religious group that has broken away from some other religious organization to renew what it considers the original vision of the faith
- Sect members have rigid religious convictions and deny the beliefs of others

THE ELEMENTS OF RELIGION

Organization:

- Religious activities generally need some infrastructure to be conducted. For this reason, there generally exist religion-supporting organizations. Without organization no religion can survive.

- ***secularization***—*the process by which religious beliefs, practices, and institutions lose their significance in sectors of society and culture*



FUNCTIONS OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION

- **Religion Creates Social Solidarity:** Religion is considered as a 'Societal Glue', as it creates harmony of attitude, ideas and habits among its followers. They come closer to one another and are cemented together.
- Religious rituals like weddings, births, burials and celebration of special religious events promote group solidarity and cohesion as all members know how to behave towards one another .

It is an integrative force in society. Promoting sense of belonging and collective consciousness

FUNCTIONS OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION

Socialization:

- As a process of initiation into the larger society, religion is an actual agent of socialization. In this case, parental faith, or religion becomes the faith of children.
- E.g: Religion teaches its followers to accept even negative life experiences, and their fate as something that is divinely predestined.

FUNCTIONS OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION

- **Social Control:** Besides acting as an integrating force, religion also provides guidance and becomes a means of social control.
- It provides rules and standards of behaviour.
- It also provides fear of divine punishment for those who do not abide by the rules, hence creating physical and social cleanliness.

FUNCTIONS OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION

Social Control:

- Religious beliefs can influence the conduct of those who believe in them. It keeps people 'in line' through folkways and mores. Religious sanctions play a significant role in this regard. Many taboos in various cultures have religious sanctions, e.g., the taboo against eating of pork in Jewish and Muslims and cows meat in Hindus.

FUNCTIONS OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION

- **Judgment of Right and Wrong:** It helps to determine what is considered acceptable behaviour and what is not. e.g Islam divides actions into two categories; the right acts lead to Heaven and the wrong acts to Hell.

FUNCTIONS OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION

- **Religion Gives Answer:** It gives explanation or knowledge about the occurrence of certain phenomena. What is the purpose of life? Is there an afterlife? Why do people suffer?
- **Religion removes the fears and anxieties** of the individual by reassuring him of the care and protection. Religion is a sense of comfort and support to the individuals during times of personal and social crises such as death of loved ones, serious injury, etc.

- **Preservation of Values:**
- Religion preserves social values which have been derived from it.
- The social values are closely linked with the religious teachings, therefore those acts are condemned or forbidden that are not 'in line' with the religious teachings.
- Sanctity of women, respect for Ramadhan, sacred places and the elders.

CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE

- The social-conflict approach highlights religion's support of social inequality.
- According to Karl Marx religion serves ruling elites by legitimizing the status quo and diverting people's attention from social inequities.
- People become satisfied because they have been taught to believe in an afterlife in which they will be rewarded for their suffering and misery in this life.

- The capitalist class uses religious ideology as a tool of domination to mislead the workers about their true interests. For this reason, Marx wrote his now famous statement that religion is the “opiate of the masses.”
- Marx was of the view that Religion is “the sigh of the oppressed creature in a hostile world, the sentiment (heart) of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people”

FORMS OF RELIGION

- Scholars from a variety of disciplines have strived to classify religions. One widely accepted categorization that helps people understand different belief systems considers what or who people worship (if anything). Using this method of classification, religions might fall into one of these basic categories

ANIMISM

- Animism is not a SPECIFIC religion but more of a term to describe TRADITIONAL religious beliefs
- Animism is the belief that there is no separation between the SPIRITUAL and PHYSICAL (or material) world
- Potentially, animism perceives all things—animals, plants, rocks, rivers, weather systems, human handiwork and perhaps even words—as animated and alive.

Souls or Spirits exist, not only in humans, but also in all other **animals**, **plants**, and other natural forces.

TOTEMISM

- The term totem is derived from the Ojibwa word ototeman, meaning “one’s brother-sister kin.”
- A **totem** is any species of plants or animals thought to possess supernatural powers. Each group within the society may have its own totem, including associated ceremonies.

- Animism; the belief that natural objects have souls that may exist apart from their material bodies.
- ***Animism is the belief* that plants, animals, or other elements of the natural world are endowed with spirits or life forces having an impact on events in society.**

THEISM

- The term **theism** (from the Greek *theos*, or "god") commonly refers to belief in God.
- *Theism*—a belief in a god or gods.
- Horticultural societies were among the first to practice *monotheism*—a belief in a single, supreme being or god who is responsible for significant events such as the creation of the world. Three of the major world religions—Christianity, Judaism, and Islam—are monotheistic.
- By contrast, Shinto and a number of indigenous religions of Africa are forms of *polytheism*—a belief in more than one god.