

Religion

Emile Durkheim's 3 main findings

- 1) Religion is so varied they have no specific belief / practice in common
- 2) A community is developed around their beliefs and practices
- 3) Religions separate profane from sacred
ordinarysupernaturalgod devilheaven hell

3 elements of Religion

- 1) A moral community formed from a group's beliefs and practices
church
- 2) Beliefs that some things are sacred
- 3) Rituals centering on things considered sacred

Functionalist Perspective

"Religion is universal because it meets human needs"

- Questions about ultimate meaning
- Emotional comfort
- Social solidarity
- Guidelines for everyday life

Conflict Perspective

"Religion supports status quo and helps maintain social inequalities"

- Highly critical of religion

Karl Marx - "Opium for people"
Religion is a drug.

- Diverting thoughts towards future happiness in an afterlife
- "Forgets" about the suffering of the world
 - Reduces possibility of rebelling against their oppressors

Spirit of Capitalism

Calvinism - Protestants did not know if they were going to heaven or hell

Max Weber disagreed with the Conflict Perspective

Calvinism brought along the change from Catholic to Protestants, a change in thought and behaviour.

This change brought along the Protestant Ethic.

"Idea of having a good afterlife by having a self-denying moral life with money and hard work"

"Accumulate capital and reinvest and not indulge in self-pleasure"

Types of Religious Groups

The starting point

Cult - A new religion with few followers

- A charismatic leader

- Seems crazy at first

Most fail but some succeed and make history

- Since new, lots of hostility from society

e.g. Christianity - An unschooled carpenter who preached in remote villages he was Son of God, was killed then resurrected

Sect - As followers ↑, society hostility ↓

Church - A large sect that has become highly bureaucratized

State religion

Ecclesia - A religious group so integrated into culture that it's hard to tell when it stops or begins in a culture

Characteristics - Diversity

- Tolerance

- Pluralism and Freedom

Future

Religion will remain because science cannot answer questions about afterlife, purpose of life, morality and existence of God