

Religion as a social tool: durkheims and marxs views

[Religion](#)



Durkheim and Marx's view of religion There are similarities between Durkheim's and Marx's views on religion one of which is that religion is an illusion simply because it is created by humans for their spiritual and social gratification. According to Marx, religion which has been created entirely by humans comes in to cut people from the reality of the issues at hand. People mask themselves in the most repressive and dire of the situations and then seek religion to remove them from these situations.

The two also believe that strong religious beliefs is what makes people believe that in this religious staunchness, they can find solace and if the belief is strong enough, they do find solace in what they have created. The same views are held by Durkheim when he explains how this unrealistically makes people be transported back into different worlds and even periods entirely as start creating their own thoughts and ideas about this new world which they relate to religion (Morrison 269).

The other similarity the two shared is that religion is a social tool which leads the individuals who believe in religion to behave in the manners they do relating their behaviors to religious beliefs and a greater supernatural being. This view is shared because they both view religion from outside, from the point of view of non-believers.

The difference between the two is that even though they both agreed that religion was a social tool, Durkheim views it as a tool that brings about social cohesion while Marx view it as a social tool that leads to stratification of the human society. Durkheim believes that people who share the same religious views and believe in the same religious beliefs about the existence of a supernatural being: God tend to group them together and explore their

beliefs more. Marx on the other hand believes that religion leads to social oppression which eventually divides people (Morrison 119).

Marx's views and criticisms of religion are connected to economic benefit religion has to the people. Reverting back to his theory of class, Marx makes the religion fit in the theory by explaining how since religion is nothing but an illusion, it divides the people up in classes depending on whether one believes or not. Those in religion are oppressed and experiencing poverty and seeing religion as the only way to end their lack of wealth. Some give up their possessions for spiritual wealth. Durkheim on the other hand views religion as purely social and tries to explore its roots more in different societies and even their beliefs of for example totems.

Lastly Marx sees religion as opium (drug) which cures all the diseases for the religious fanatics and those religion believers. They therefore constantly have to take the drug which becomes addictive in the end and they are stuck. Durkheim has a more positive view of religion viewing religion as a way for the society to express themselves through the religious beliefs and find way to recreate their state of mind through performance of religious rites and rituals (Morrison 236).

Work Cited

Morrison, Ken. Marx, Durkheim, Weber: Formations of Modern Social Thought. New York: SAGE, 2006.