

# Sociological perspective on religion

[Religion](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

“ Sociological Perspectives on Religion” During this semester I have learned that in essence, “ free will” does not gear our decision making process, it is primarily society that influences all thoughts and behaviors in turn, impacting all aspects of our life. The evolutionary socialization process initiates at the moment of conception, in our mother’s womb, through childhood, carries on during adulthood and ends in our graves. The most important and influential agent of socialization is the family.

On a global perspective, the primary teachers, our parents, educate us on language, beliefs, physical control, values and civilized behavior for public conduct. The greatest belief instilled is that of divinity and forming part of a religion. According to the Sociology text book, Religion is defined as a social institution involving beliefs and practices based on recognizing the sacred. Ethically, it encompasses what we define to be good or bad. In this paper I will further examine religion on a global perspective from previously conducted social research and just how important a role it plays in our lives.

Religion has been used to celebrate life at birth, adulthood, mourning of death and politics. According to Emile Durkheim (1965, orig. 1915) in his structural -functional approach, society on its own, beyond the life of any individual, has life and power. When practicing religion the power of this society is celebrated. He found that within this society people seek to find social cohesion, social control, meaning and purpose. Symbols, values and norms are what shape a religion. Since “ God” is considered to be the divine and symbol of perfection, religious fanatics fear his judgment.

In the United States about 85% of adults identify themselves with some type of religion. "God Bless America," is widely used by politicians to address our people and demonstrate they believe the higher power is not them but, God. That they cannot lead without the blessing of God. In the past 2008 election many questioned Barack Obama's faith because his father was born Muslim and then became atheist while, his mother was never genuinely active in a religious organization. Therefore, Obama was raised to be skeptic about religion and showed no true inclination, causing a lot of criticism during the campaign.

People want to follow who shares the same values as themselves. Saying a simple phrase as "God Bless America" convinces them that their political leaders' views and ruling will be geared under what religion overseas as ethically correct. When I say ethically right, the geographical location of religion must be taken into consideration because social conflict tends to arise due to the fact that all religions don't support or share the same ideas. For example, in the Middle East there are claims that God is behind the actions we in the United States consider to be evil such as, the terrorist attack of 9/11.

This is one of the differences in religion that affected our society in the U. S. and has provoked violence and war. Violence within the United States towards people that appeared of Middle Eastern descent and declared war against "terror" in the middle east. Religion shapes society and is considered to be socially constructed. With divine being the inspiration, people differentiate the ordinary and extraordinary with in rituals such as, holidays and prayer. In

theory, religion plays a major role in behavior, marriage, union and social inequality.

For example, marriages through religion have lower divorcerates than those arranged outside of religion. Couples are planning a divorce before getting married by making prenuptial arrangements. Although, love may very well be present in these marriages, they are still thinking about themselves individually and protecting against later implications. I was in a relationship for six years and within those years we conceived to the two precious, Xavier and Joshua. If I would've been married through religion, the possibilities of my being a single parent today would be close to none.

Religion gives marriage a greater value rather than the usual base of love. At one point we attempted to seek counseling and received a referral to a pastor who geared the entire session on compliance with divinity, plan of marriage and unity of family under his religion. In NRSV Corinthians 13; 4-8, 13, Paul described the meaning of true love as follows: “ Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.

It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end... And now faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. (NSRV, 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8, 13) If we were to follow this definition of love, we wouldn't be projecting our fears as individuals instead building a base for

both as a whole. In this instance, my relationship would still be present as many others.

Based on this and Emile Durkheim's sociological findings religion focuses on uniting societies. " You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. "(James 2: 24) Surprisingly, another social conflict within religion is due to inequality. Social order as Karl Marx points is justified by religion. He addresses capitalism as the old saying " rich get richer and poor get poorer. " Especially, in today's economy we find the unemployment rate rising at a fast pace resulting in homeless and hungry people. Racism also went hand in hand with religion in social inequality since the nineteenth century due to ethnocentrism.

It was generally believed the white dominated over people of color. They were to be kept genuine and not integrate other races even within religion, employment and their entire society. In this belief was also the premonition that God was in accordance with white superiority, or at least this was the excuse, causing the creation of " internal colonialism. " " Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. "(2 Peter 1: 10-11)

Whites remained together, keeping all other races inferior and living in poverty. On the other hand during nineteenth century many religious groups worked against inequality and stood up for the abolishment of slavery during the civil rights movement. As stated in the Sociology text book Male

Orthodox Jews say the following prayer everyday: “ Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, that I was not born a gentile. Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, that I was not born a slave. Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, that I was not born a woman.

Another form of inequality within religion is through gender. Subordination of women has come along throughout history in modern today. Although, we have come a long way inequality still exists. For example, in poor countries such as Africa and Southern Asia polygamy is practiced where it is legal for men to marry more than two women. Also, in Tibet a form of polygamy named polyandry is also practiced where two men can share one woman. In other areas there are still ideas that keep woman from jobs. These women go about their lives marrying, having many children and live in poverty. A man...is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. ” (1 Corinthians 11: 7-9) “ As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. ” (1 Corinthians 14: 33-35) “ Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord.

For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church.... As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. ” (Ephesians 5: 22-24) From a Christian point of view women were sought to be a source of temptation due to the fact that Eve was to blame for Adam’s fall, it was because of her that evil came about into

the world. On the other hand once again religious groups sought to fight for equality by supporting feminism and gay rights during the 1960s and 1970s. Religion has caused great social change. In time of need or illness everyone seeks for enlightenment within religion.

Max Weber and his colleague Ernst Troeltsch studied precisely Calvinism, a protestant reformation movement. Calvinists believe some are selected by God to be saved and others to be damned. They then looked for signs of divine blessing and worked very hard to acquire great wealth. With this wealth they would reinvest profits resulting in the fulfillment of their calling. This Weber and Troeltsch found as the cause in rise of industrial capitalism. The poor were considered rejects of God. Throughout history Christianity has reached out to people suffering in promise of a better life in faith.

Liberating people from oppression, poverty and promotion of greater equality is their purpose. Ironically in most recent years there have been a rising number of cases reported on sexual abuse by Christian priests. The Christian church claims problems arise in our society due to the ignorance in God. Families seek refuge and divinity within their churches and find the cruel reality that evil exists there. Many changes are going about with regards to religion. People are adopting other religious organizations rather than the one's instilled from childhood. Also, as technology continues to advance secularization arise.

Secularization is the decline in importance and value of the sacred and supernatural. In times of despair we now seek answers and depend on physicians. As we see change in religion we find it more questionable. Now

spiritual seekers in the “ New Age” movement, look into conventional religious organizations. Modernization has taken on a new twist in religion and the way we view it. With is the desire to continue conserving our real identity is rarely exactly maintained. In the following passage William Ernest Henley writes about extreme individualism and how capable we are to determine our lives: “ Out of the night that covers me,

Black as the Pit from pole to pole, I thank whatever gods may be For my unconquerable soul. In the fell clutch of circumstance I have not winced nor cried aloud. Under the bludgeoning of chance My head is bloody, but unbowed. Beyond this place of wrath and tears Looms but the Horror of the shade, And yet the menace of the years Finds, and shall find, me unafraid. It matters not how strait the gate, How charged with punishments the scroll, I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul. ” Today we live in a world whereterrorism, wars, death and torture of innocent are to no surprise.

Every day you turn on the news there are children missing, parents killing and mistreating each other and their family. In this society everyone is running at a fast pace with a cold heart, committing selfish acts of corruption, leading abusive relationships, violence, hatred, sexual perversion, etc.. Humans are part of this society and continue responding to and redirecting their social interaction and context. The sad part of it all is that society has created all this and that religion has played a major role in directing everyone’s sense of self.

Works Cited Society. J. Macionis, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 10th edition, 2009. Exploring Religious Meaning. Robert C. Monk. Walter C.

<https://assignbuster.com/sociological-perspective-on-religion/>



Hofheinz. Kenneth T. Lawrence. Joseph D. Stamey. Bert Affleck. Tetsunao Yamamori, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 6th edition, 2003 "

Sociology of religion. " Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. 7 Nov 2009, 23: 59

UTC. 18 Nov 2009 . William Ernest Hensley, " Invictus," Poems( New York: Scribner, 1919), p. 119 " Sociological Perspectives on Religion"