

Example of essay on what is sociology of religion

[Religion](#)



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Introduction to Sociology of Religion

Religion is a concept that encompasses belief systems, world views and cultural systems that connect humanity to spirituality and, partly to ethical and moral values (Yinger 1). Religion plays a crucial role of responding to mains emotional needs, particularly in times of suffering. According to many religious scholars, religion enhances an individual's value and encourages social cohesion and welfare (Yinger 3). This paper seeks to reflect on the concepts outlined in " Introduction to the sociology of religion" by Yinger (Yinger 4). The paper will particularly establish the definition, importance and the rational choice theory for " sociology of religion".

In order to get the meaning of " sociology of religion", it's imperative to understand the meaning of sociology and religion as separate concepts. According to Yinger, sociology refers to the study of human social life, both in groups and communities (Yinger 20). However, the definition does not provide a sufficient distinction between sociology and other key disciplines such as history. Thus, Yinger clarifies that a description of sociology must include consideration of human action as its foremost interest. People act the way they do because of the qualities they possess. Studies conducted on individual behaviors show that personal qualities include elements of moral praise and blame. Such elements form important guidelines to the understanding of social relations (Yinger 12). Through constant interaction people may do the following: learn from each other; irritate each other; deceive each other and even ignore each other.

In most instances, it's not up to an individual to decide how he/she will behave in the society. There are social laws that guide people to behave in

ways they may not desire. According to Yinger, this result into a “ self-fulfilling prophecy” where everybody believes that the system cannot be changed (Yinger 11). Though the explanation attracts debates in sociology circles, many agree that social laws play a pivotal role in determining individual relations. Most disagreements revolve around the idea as to whether the social forces are stable, strong or have a complete control over human actions (Yinger 7). The implied social forces can also be referred to as societal forms. Societal forms include fixed societal structures, in addition to more vibrant models, that dictate social relations. Religion comes in as an example of social forms that affect social interaction.

As captured in the introductory part, religion is a concept that encompasses belief systems, world views and cultural systems that connect humanity to spirituality and, partly to ethical and moral values (Yinger 14). According to Yinger, religion is defined as “ the effort to bring the relative, the provisional, the unsatisfactory, and the hurting things in life into relation with that what is envisioned to be lasting, complete, and ludicrously hopeful” (Yinger 15). Yinger’s definition provided a new radical approach to religious studies. If keenly followed, the ideas postulate that a person who aligns towards a certain religious order is not necessarily religious. The denominational labels used by Christians and other religions are not of much use in defining religion. Therefore, the definition provided by Yinger provides sociologists to overcome the trap that comes when focuses on the common sense religious categories and labels.

Why is the Subject important?

Sociology of religion is a crucial subject, mainly due to the central role religion plays in social interactions. The study of sociology of religion, as described by Yinger, can assist one to understand the three universal roles performed by religion.

First, it's important to note that life is not guided by perception alone. Man is an emotional creature. Therefore, he requires support from religion in times of hardships and frustrations. Sociology of religion helps sociologists to understand how belief in the existence of unseen power helps man to navigate through trying times. The ability to bear with frustrations helps man to integrate with his personality (Yinger 16).

According to Yinger, religion magnifies the concept of sociology to unimaginable proportions. Man embodies himself through religious beliefs, and the society benefits a lot from the excitement provided by religious beliefs. Social harmony is created by many promises that are given by different religions. For instance, the promise that there life after death encourages members of the society to stick to a strict moral code.

Sociology of religion provides an understanding on how different structures support social cohesion. An important aspect of social existence is the ability for people to check their behaviors and those of other people they interact with in the society (Yinger 15). Such values cannot be created by other social structures such as technology. Some of the important social foundations mentioned by Yinker are: the requirement for children to obey and respect their parents; the requirement for married couples to remain faithful to each other; and the requirement for people to be honest to each other (Yinger 16).

Sociology of religion also enables one to see how the social welfare done by various religious bodies instills values in the society. Religious bodies provide social services to humanity, such as promotion of art, culture and secure environments.

What is the rational choice theory?

Rational choice theory provides a platform for understanding and creating models for social and economic behavior (Yinger 7). Rationale choice theory is the key theoretical model used in microeconomic studies. The basic idea in the rational choice model is that societal behavioral patterns must reflect the choices they make in a bid to maximize their benefits and minimize harm (Yinger 41). In other terms, individuals make decisions on how to act by evaluating the costs and benefits of various options. According to Yinker, different patterns of behavior come up when individuals make choices based on the rational of choice theory.

The concept of rational choice theory is easy to understand when viewed in economic terms. People often want to gain the most value at the lowest price. The benefits provided by one object are usually compared to those of other similar objects and their respective prices (Yinger 37). According to the theory, decisions are made depending on individual preference.

Conclusion

This paper sought to reflect on the concepts outlined in “ Introduction to the sociology of religion” by Yinger (Yinger 14). The paper specifically sought to establish the definition, importance and the rational choice theory for “ sociology of religion”. Sociology of religion identifies the roles played by religion in society (Yinger 1). Different works done by Yinker have helped <https://assignbuster.com/example-of-essay-on-what-is-sociology-of-religion/>

sociologists to describe religion much easier and without necessarily using the different labels. Sociological religion is important in the sense that it helps one to understand how religion checks societal excesses. Rational choice theory refers to a decision making process that is based on costs and benefits.

Work Cited

Yinger, John Milton. Religion, society, and the individual: an introduction to the sociology of religion, London: Macmillan, 1957. Print.