

Chapter 1 Beliefs in Society

Topic 1 Theories of Religion

Answers to QuickCheck Questions on page 11

1. False (substantive definitions of religion are exclusive).
2. Durkheim sees sacred things as set apart, special and forbidden; profane things are seen as everyday and ordinary.
3. According to Durkheim and Mauss, religion is the original source of categories of thought, such as notions of time and causation.
4. A belief system that attached sacred qualities to society itself, e.g. a faith in the 'American way of life'.
5. It ignores the conflict that religion often produces; it neglects various types of religious oppression.
6. A lack of control over the means of production.
7. By justifying the caste system, e.g. a person cannot question his or her position, as it is believed to be deserved as the result of good or bad behaviour in a previous life.
8. Male-dominated priesthood; segregation of women; taboos about women; male gods and prophets; unequal rights and treatment.
9. For Muslim women, by using the hijab to enable them to enter the public sphere; in evangelical groups, by sharing experiences and finding support e.g. in Bible study groups; by becoming priests e.g. in the Church of England.