

SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ESSAY TITLES:

1. GENERAL SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION.

Readers:

R. Robertson, *Sociology of Religion*, Penguin, 1969
R. Boccock and Kenneth Thompson, *Religion and Ideology*, OU, 1985
Richard K. Fenn, *The Blackwell Guide to Sociology of Religion*, Blackwell, 2001.

Introductions:

*Malcolm Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion*, Routledge, 1994.
*Steve Bruce, *Religion in the Modern World*, OUP, 1996. Defender of secularisation.
Peter Clarke and Peter Byrne, *Religion Defined and Explained*, Macmillan, 1993.
Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, OUP 1982.
R. Robertson, *The Sociological Interpretation of Religion*, Blackwell, 1972.
Michael Hill, *A Sociology of Religion*, Heineman, 1973.
Betty Scarf, *The Sociological Interpretation of Religion*, Hutchinson, 1970.
Roy Wallis, *Sociological theory, religion and collective action*, QUB, 1986.
Rodney Stark, *A theory of religion*, Lang, 1987

On contemporary religion:

*Steve Bruce, *Religion in Modern Britain*, OUP, 1995 (Useful intro. on modern UK).
*Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945*, Blackwell, 1994.
D. Martin, *A Sociology of English Religion*, Heineman, 1967 (now dated).
Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe*, OUP, 2000.
Stephen J. Hunt, *Religion in Western Society*, Palgrave, 2002.
Alan Aldridge, *Religion in the Contemporary World*, Polity, 2000.

On the classics:

Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, CUP, 1971.
Lewis A. Coser, *Masters of Sociological Thought*
Geoffrey Hawthorn, *Enlightenment and despair: a history of social theory*, CUP, 1987.
R.A. Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, Heineman, 1966 (S18.21)
T. Bottomore and R. Nisbet, *A History of Sociological Analysis*, Heineman, 1978
(S18.24).
Daniel L. Pals, *Seven Theories of Religion* (on Durkheim and Marx), OUP, 1996.
A Swingewood, *A Short History of Sociological Thought*, Macmillan, 1984.
Bryan Turner, *Religion and Social Theory*, Sage, 1991.

2. TOPICS

i. *Secularisation.*

- a) Is secularisation irreversible?
- b) What is meant by a secular society?
- c) What have been the core manifestations of the process of secularisation in the West?

E. Barker (ed), *Secularization, Rationalism and Sectarianism*, Clarendon, 1993.
James Beckford, *Religion and advanced industrial society*, Unwin Hyman, 1989.
Robert Bellah, *Beyond belief: essays on religion in a post-traditional world*, Harper and Row, 1970.
Steve Bruce (ed), *Religion and Modernization*, Clarendon, 1993.
A.D. Gilbert, *The Making of Post-Christian Britain*, Longman, 1980.
Thomas Luckmann, *The invisible religion: the problem of religion in modern society*, Macmillan, 1967.
D. Martin, *General Theory of Secularization*, Blackwells, 1978.
Owen Chadwick, *The Secularisation of the European Mind in the 19th Century*.
Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Secular Society*, Watts, 1966.
Andrew Walker and Martyn Percy (eds.), *Restoring the Image*, Sheffield, 2001, esp. Pt 1.

Robin Gill, *The Myth of the Empty Church*, SPCK, 1993.
R. Hornsby-Smith, *Roman Catholics in England*, CUP, 1987.
W. Pickering, *Sociology of Anglicanism* in Sykes and Booty.
David Nicholls, *Church and State in Britain since 1820*, RKP, 1967

W.S.F. Pickering, "Sociology of Anglicanism" in: Sykes and Booty.
idem., *Anglo-Catholicism, A Study in Religious Ambiguity*, RKP, 1989.

ii. *Church and Sect.*

- a) What are the distinguishing features of churches, sects and denominations?
- b) What factors promote or retard sect development?
- c) Do you agree that the best way to define a sect is in terms of its response to the world?

B.R. Wilson, *The Social Dimensions of Sectarianism*, Clarendon, 1990.
R. Stark and W.S. Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion*, Berkeley, 1985.
idem., *A Theory of Religion*, Lang, 1987.
Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, London, 1931.
(for a synopsis, see H-G Drescher, *Ernst Troeltsch*, SCM, 1992, pp.222-248).

iii. *Functionalism (Durkheim)*

- a) What are the strengths and weaknesses of functionalist approaches to the sociology of religion?
- b) Have the social functions that sociologists once ascribed to religion now been superseded?
- c) What advances, if any, have been made in the sociology of religion since Durkheim?
- d) What are the main functions of religion in modern society?

See general reading list. On Durkheim, see esp:

*S. Lukes, *Emile Durkheim*, Penguin, 1973.

*W.S.F. Pickering, *Durkheim's Sociology of Religion*, RKP, 1984.

E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, George Allen and Unwin, 1915.

A. Giddens, *Durkheim*, Fontana, 1978.

K. Thompson, *Emile Durkheim*, OU, 1982.

iv. *The Protestant Ethic*

- a) Critically assess Weber's account of the relationship between Protestantism and Capitalism.
- b) What part, if any, did Protestantism play in the emergence of modern capitalism?
- c) How, in Weber's opinion, does an understanding of ascetic Calvinism help one to understand the rise of *modern* capitalism?

Robert Robertson, "Max Weber and German Sociology of Religion" in: Ninian Smart (et al), *19th Century Religious Thought in the West*, Vol.III.

*Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Allen and Unwin

Gordon Marshall, *In Search of the Spirit of Capitalism*, Hutchinson, 1982.

Gordon Marshall, *Presbyteries and profits: Calvinism and the development of capitalism in Scotland, 1560-1707*, Clarendon, 1980.

H.H. Gerth and Mills, *From Max Weber*, RKP, 1948

R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, Pelican, 1938.

H. R. Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*, 1929.

v. *Karl Marx*

a) What social functions did Marx ascribe to religion?

Marx and Engels, *On Religion; Theses on Feuerbach; The German Ideology; Capital*, Chs. 1 & 3.

Denis McKown, *The Classical Marxist Critique of Religion*, The Hague, 1975.

David McLellan, *Marxism and Religion*, Macmillan, 1987.

Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche*, Constable, 1964.

Trevor Ling, *Karl Marx and Religion*, Macmillan, 1980.

David McLellan, *The Young Hegelians*, 1969.

vi. *New Religious Movements, Fundamentalism and Millennialism.*

a) What factors have led to the growth of New Religious Movements?

b) What is meant by fundamentalism? Why does it seem to have grown in recent years?

c) Why do so many people expect the world to come to an end?

E. Barker, *New Religious Movements*, HMSO, 1989.

E. Barker, *New Religious Movements: A Perspective for Understanding Society*, Mellen, 1982.

E. Barker, *The Making of a Moonie*, Blackwell, 1984.

Peter Clarke, *New Paths to Salvation*, Macmillan.

B. Beit-Hallahmi, *Despair and Deliverance*, New York, 1992.

George D. Chryssides, *Exploring New Religions*, Cassell, 1999.

Roy Wallis, *The elementary forms of the new religious life*, RKP, 1984.

*Bryan Wilson and Jamie Cresswell (eds), *New Religious Movements*, Routledge, 1999.

N.T. Ammerman, *Bible Believers*, Image Books, 1987.

James Barr, *Fundamentalism*, 1978.

J. Beckford, *The Trumpet of Prophecy*, Blackwell, 1975.

Steve Bruce, *The Rise and Fall of the New Christian Right*, Clarendon, 1988.

idem, *Firm in the Faith*, Gower, 1987.

L. Caplan, *Religious Fundamentalism*, Macmillan, 1987.

M. Marty et al, *Fundamentalisms Observed*, 3 Vols, Chicago, 1991-3.

B.R. Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium*, Heinemann, 1973.

vii. *Biblical Studies and Sociology*

- a) What are the problems of the so-called ‘sociological interpretation of the bible’? (this can be restricted to either the Old or New Testaments).

Fernando Belo, *A materialist reading of the Gospel of Mark*, Orbis, 1981.
David Chalcraft (ed.), *Social-scientific Old Testament criticism*, Sheffield, 1997.
John Elliott, *Social scientific criticism of the New Testament*, SPCK, 1995.
Philip Esler, *The first Christians in their social worlds: social-scientific approaches to New Testament interpretation*, Routledge, 1994.
Bengt Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament: an appraisal*, Fortress, 1990.
David Horrell, *Social-scientific approaches to New Testament interpretation*, T & T Clark, 1999.
Howard Clark Kee, *Knowing the truth: a sociological approach to New Testament interpretation*, Fortress, 1989.
Carolyn Osiek, *What are they saying about the social setting of the New Testament?*, Paulist, 1992.
Robert R. Wilson, *Sociological approaches to the Old Testament*, Fortress, 1984.

viii. *Theology and Sociology*

- a) Examine John Milbank’s critique of social theory in *Theology and Social Theory*. To what extent is it a “retreat from serious worldliness”?
b) What is the relationship between theology and sociology?

John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, Blackwell, 1990.
Various Essays on Milbank in: *Modern Theology*, Vol.8, No.4, Oct., 1992.
Various Essays on Milbank in: *New Blackfriars*, Vol.73, No.861, June, 1992.
Charles Davis, *Religion and The Making of Society*, CUP, 1994, Intro.
David Martin, *Theology and Sociology*, Clarendon, 1997.
Andrew Walker and Martyn Percy (eds.), *Restoring the Image*, Sheffield, 2001, esp. Pt 2.
Richard H. Roberts, “Transcendental Sociology?” in *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol.46, No.4, 1993, pp.527-535.
Various Essays on Milbank in: *Modern Theology*, Vol.8, No.4, Oct. 1992.
Robin Gill, *Theology and Sociology*, London, Cassell, 1997 (Various Essays).
Robin Gill, *Social Context of Theology*, London, Mowbray, 1975
Andrew Shanks, *Civil Society, Civil Religion*, Blackwell, 1995.
Leslie J. Francis (ed.), *Sociology, Theology and the Curriculum*, Cassell, 1999.