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| **Conservative force** – Religion operating to keep society stable and reduce the chance of change. Religion operates as an agent of **social control** making sure **norms and values** remain constant, even at times of great social upheaval.LEARNING TABLE 6 – CONSERVATIVE FORCE/FORCE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE + CONFLICT/CONSENSUS | **Social change** – religions comes into conflict with societies agreed norms and values and seeks to change them by influencing individuals and groups to change the position they are in. |
| Marxism | Functionalism | Neo Marxism | Weberian theory |
| * See religion as a conservative force…
* The Ruling class seeks to reduce the chance of revolution by stopping change…
* By controlling ideas of heaven the ruling class own working class values…
* Religion is therefore an **ideological force** **(ISA)** that operatives to control the way the proletariat think…
* Marx see religion operating as a **conservative force** which is negative as it stops revolution (**social change**)…
 | * See religion as a conservative force…
* Religion is an **agent of socialisation** that passes on positive **norms and values** to the members of society…
* Religion provides shared goals which lead to social harmony…
* People are helped through life crises such as death and divorce making them less angry and likely to want change…
* Religion sets out a moral code for people to live by, helping society to stay the same…
* This means that society slowly evolves over time which is a much more healthy way for a society to develop…
 | * Believe that religion can lead to social change…
* The creation of liberation theology in developing countries suggests that there is a religious will to change society for the better…
* Some of the clergy are willing to take up arms against ruling groups to make society fairer…
* There are examples in South Africa and Poland where religion has operated as a force for change…
 | * Weber believes that religion does lead to social change…
* Weber argues the whole basis of capitalism was created by the Calvinist protestant work ethic…
* Capitalism was born from the industrial revolution (**change**) a revolution started by a religious group – the Calvinists…
* It is their belief in hard work and predestination that meant they worked hard and reinvested their wealth…
* This created the spirit of capitalism…
 |
| Example | Example | Example | Example |
| NCR supporting right-wing business candidates in American elections | The fact that religion still has a powerful voice in the media on moral issues such as cloning and abortion | Make poverty history campaign to cancel 3rd World debt | There is great emphasis placed on people getting jobs – those with out work are vilified as scroungers in the press |
| Relevant in modern society? | Relevant in modern society? | Relevant in modern society? | Relevant in modern society? |
| Marx explains simple industrial society but it is much more difficult to relate his ideas to a 21st century, complex industrial society where religion has lost importance. | Functionalists explain simple societies but there is a lot of global conflict in the 21st century that has a religious element, this is not explained by functionalists at all. | Neo Marxism is relevant in describing 21st Century religious action. They recognise that religion can cause change with examples that can be seen around the world | The echoes of Weber’s theory can certainly be seen in 21st century British society. One of the few countries that had no Maximum work requirement work and wealth are still seen as valuable personal characteristics |
| Conclusion points: **Fundamentalists** seek to first change society then act as the ultimate conservative force… **Globalisation** and **secularisation** suggest that the conservative force arguments are outdated… There is no definition of religion or a set way to judge the impact of religion on individuals… Postmodernist argue that these **meta-narratives** are dead… |

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| ***Consensus/Harmony*** *– Agreement over norms and values that are promoted by religion means people work together to make society function* | ***Neither Conflict or Consensus/harmony*** *– Marxist see religion as stopping conflict through false class consciousness but not providing consensus or harmony as there is no agreement of norms and values* | ***Conflict –*** *the struggle between different groups in society.* |
| Functionalism | Marxism | Neo Marxism | Weberian theory |
| * See religion as a proving *consensus and harmony*…
* Religion is an **agent of socialisation** that passes on positive **norms and values** to the members of society *promoting consensus harmony*…
* Religion provides shared goals which lead to social harmony…
* People are helped through life crises such as death and divorce making them less angry and likely to want *conflict*…
* Religion sets out a moral code for people to live by, helping to *provide agreement…*
* This means that society slowly evolves over time which is a much more healthy way for a society to develop…
 | * See religion as a negative force that doesn’t create conflict but also doesn’t lad to consensus…
* The Ruling class seeks to reduce the chance of revolution by stopping change…
* By controlling ideas of heaven the ruling class own working class values…
* Religion is therefore an **ideological force** **(ISA)** that operatives to control the way the proletariat think…
* Marx see religion operating as a **conservative force** **which** is negative as it stops revolution (**social change**)…
 | * Believe that religion can lead causes conflict…
* The creation of liberation theology in developing countries suggests that there is a religious will to change society for the better *therefore promote conflict with existing norms and values*…
* Some of the clergy are willing to take up arms against ruling groups to make society fairer…
* There are examples in South Africa and Poland where religion has operated as a force for change…
 | * Weber believes that religion is *based on conflict with traditional norms and values*…
* Weber argues the whole basis of capitalism was created by the Calvinist protestant work ethic **meaning a there was conflict between Calvinists and other social groups of the time**…
* Capitalism was born from the industrial revolution (***conflict***) a revolution started by a religious group – the Calvinists…
* It is their belief in hard work and predestination that meant they worked hard and reinvested their wealth…
* This created the spirit of capitalism which *lead them into conflict with workers in the traditional industries*…
 |
| Example | Example | Example | Example |
| The fact that religion still has a powerful voice in the media on moral issues such as cloning and abortion | NCR supporting right-wing business candidates in American elections | Make poverty history campaign to cancel 3rd World debt | There is great emphasis placed on people getting jobs – those with out work are vilified as scroungers in the press |
| Relevant in modern society? | Relevant in modern society? | Relevant in modern society? | Relevant in modern society? |
| Functionalists explain simple societies but there is a lot of global conflict in the 21st century that has a religious element, this is not explain by functionalists at all | Marx explains simple industrial society but it is much more difficult to relate his ideas to a 21st century, complex industrial society where religion has lost importance. | Neo Marxism is relevant in describing 21st Century religious *conflict*. They recognise that religion can cause change with examples that can be seen around the world | The echoes of Weber’s theory can certainly be seen in 21st century British society. One of the few countries that had no Maximum work requirement work and wealth are still seen as valuable personal characteristics |
| Conclusion points: **Fundamentalists** seek to create massive conflict which would create a religious harmony of sorts… **Globalisation** and **secularisation** suggest that the idea of religion being responsible for conflict or consensus is outdated… There is no definition of religion or a set way to judge the impact of religion on individuals… Postmodernist argue that these **meta-narratives** are dead… |