

## Worksheet 1.1 Science and society (pages 4–10)

### Consolidate (work individually)

- 1 Suggest three socially constructed belief systems.
- 2 Suggest one way in which science offers support for a universe of meaning.
- 3 Identify two principles on which the Enlightenment was based.
- 4 Identify four features of the traditional view of science in modern society.
- 5 How, according to Popper, are scientific theories superior to ‘everyday knowledge’?
- 6 Why is the Enlightenment view that science will improve the human condition now treated with increasing scepticism?
- 7 What two features, according to Beck, are characteristic of late modern society?
- 8 Define, using an example to illustrate your answer, the concept of a ‘metanarrative’.
- 9 Suggest one reason why, according to Lyotard, ‘there is widespread disillusionment with science in postmodern society’.
- 10 Suggest one difference between ‘science’ and ‘technoscience’.

### Apply (work in small groups)

- 1 Provide two examples of how ‘one society’s truth may be another society’s falsehood’.
- 2 Briefly explain how a religious universe of meaning differs from a scientific universe of meaning.
- 3 How, according to Knorr-Centina (2005), are scientific facts ‘fabricated’?
- 4 Provide examples of how ‘negative views of science are balanced by more positive ones’ in our society.
- 5 Suggest one example of a metanarrative, other than those mentioned in the text.

### Evaluate (work as a class)

- 1 ‘The many benefits of scientific knowledge far outweigh its dangers.’ Critically assess this statement.
- 2 Discuss the argument that religious beliefs about the origin of the universe have been successfully challenged by scientific explanations about its origins.

## Worksheet 1.2 Ideology (pages 10–15)

### Consolidate (work individually)

- 1 Suggest three common sociological usages of the term 'ideology'.
- 2 How does a neutral view of ideology differ from a negative view?
- 3 Identify two major features of the structure of society suggested by Marx.
- 4 On what, according to Marx, is the power of a ruling class based?
- 5 Identify two ways in which, according to Gramsci, ruling class hegemony is maintained.
- 6 Suggest two criticisms of the claim that there is a 'dominant ideology' in a modern capitalist society.
- 7 Suggest three examples of gender inequality in modern Britain.
- 8 Identify three defining features of a political ideology.
- 9 Identify three political ideologies in British society.
- 10 Suggest three differences between conservative and socialist political ideologies.

### Apply (work in small groups)

- 1 Suggest three examples of 'men's jobs' and three examples of 'women's jobs' in modern Britain.
- 2 Identify and briefly explain two ways in which Marxist ideology differs from feminist ideology.
- 3 Suggest some examples of beliefs held in modern Britain which could be seen as part of 'ruling class ideology'.
- 4 Identify and explain examples of the 'individual freedoms' enjoyed by people in modern Britain.
- 5 Suggest some of the ways in which people are shaped by their social environment.

### Evaluate (work as a class)

- 1 Split the class into two groups (such as males and females). Ask one group to argue that gender inequality is good for society and the individual, and the other that gender inequality is bad for society and the individual.
- 2 Split the class into three groups (Liberal, Conservative and Socialist). Give each group five minutes to argue in favour of their chosen political ideology.

## Worksheet 1.3 Theories of religion (pages 16–37)

### **Consolidate (work individually)**

- 1 Most sociologists would probably agree that religions typically involve what three things?
- 2 Identify three functions of religion suggested by Durkheim.
- 3 Identify two types of event with which religion, according to Malinowski, is characteristically involved.
- 4 What, according to Parsons, are three major functions of religion?
- 5 Identify one way in which, according to Bellah, civil religion differs from 'conventional' religions.
- 6 According to Marx, what are religious beliefs a response to and a protest against?
- 7 Suggest three criticisms of Marxist views of religion.
- 8 Suggest three ways in which, for feminists, religion is patriarchal.
- 9 Identify three ways in which, according to Lyon, postmodernity has impacted on the culture of societies.
- 10 How do postmodernists explain the spread of new religious movements?

### **Apply (work in small groups)**

- 1 In what ways do substantive definitions of religion differ from functional definitions?
- 2
  - a) Identify some examples of core values in British society.
  - b) For each value you've identified, show how it may have been influenced by religious beliefs.
- 3 Outline some of the arguments you could use to criticise the traditional Marxist argument that religion is a conservative social force.
- 4 Identify and explain some of the ways the religious metanarratives of the past have been attacked and broken down.
- 5 How can the concept of globalisation be used to explain the development of new religious movements?

### **Evaluate (work as a class)**

- 1 Assess the argument that the major function of religion is the male domination of women.
- 2 Compare Marxist and postmodern views on religion in contemporary British society.

## Worksheet 1.4 Religion and social change (pages 38–44)

### Consolidate (work individually)

- 1 Identify two ways in which, for Marx, religion discourages social change.
- 2 Suggest two ways in which, for feminists, religion maintains patriarchy.
- 3 Identify three reasons put forward by functionalists to support the idea that religion is a force for stability rather than change.
- 4 According to Weber, which ideas were essential for the development of capitalism?
- 5 Identify two forms of religious fundamentalism which have increased in recent years.
- 6 Identify three reasons why religious fundamentalism is frequently seen as a conservative form of religion.
- 7 What, according to the Moral Majority, were the ills of American society?
- 8 What changes were introduced to Iranian society following the overthrow of the Shah in 1979?
- 9 Give two examples of how 'social change and even revolution have been directed by religious beliefs'.
- 10 Identify four factors that, according to McGuire (1981), influence whether religion promotes rather than inhibits change.

### Apply (work in small groups)

- 1 Briefly explain the difference between functionalist and Marxist explanations of religion and social change.
- 2 According to Durkheim, religion reinforces the collective conscience in society. Thinking about Christianity in Britain (the Ten Commandments, for example), identify some examples of the:
  - a) norms it promotes
  - b) values it promotes.
- 3 For any of the values and norms you've identified in the previous question briefly explain how they contribute to or promote social stability.
- 4 Identify examples of the way religion in our society might give meaning to and help people make sense of their life.
- 5
  - a) Identify some of the similarities and differences between Islamic and Christian fundamentalism.
  - b) What 'common themes' can you identify in these different religious forms?

### Evaluate (work as a class)

- 1 Examine the arguments for and against the claim that religion is always a conservative social force.
- 2 'People should be free to practise their religion, even where its teachings conflict with the norms and values of wider society.' Discuss this statement in the context of any religion with which you are familiar.

## Worksheet 1.5 Religious organisations and movements (pages 44–54)

### Consolidate (work individually)

- 1 Identify four features of a church-type religious organisation.
- 2 Suggest four features of a sect-type religious organisation.
- 3 Outline three features of a denomination-type religious organisation.
- 4 Identify four features of a cult-type religious organisation.
- 5 Suggest three problems relating to the classification of religious organisations.
- 6 What are the three types of NRM classified by Wallis?
- 7 Suggest two criticisms of Wallis' classification.
- 8 Identify two problems with the sociological classification of New Age movements (NAMs).
- 9 Suggest one way in which NAMs are *similar* to cults.
- 10 What levels of commitment to NAMs are identified by Heelas (1996)?

### Apply (work in small groups)

- 1 How does a church differ from a sect?
- 2 Suggest three reasons why someone might join a New Age movement rather than a church.
- 3 Draw a table with five columns headed 'Church', 'Denomination', 'Sect', 'Cult' and 'New religious movement', and assign each of the following to one of the categories:  
  
Jehovah's Witnesses, Roman Catholicism, Raelians, Unification Church, Islam, Transcendental Meditation, Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, Scientology, Neo-Pentecostalism and Charismatic Renewal, Protestantism, Christadelphians, Methodists, the Amish, United Reformed Church.
- 4 How has the development of the Internet contributed to the development of New Age movements?
- 5 Explain the argument that a major difference between church-type organisations and New Age movements is that while the former see 'God' as outside the individual the latter see 'God' as within the individual.

### Evaluate (work as a class)

- 1 Discuss the idea that, unlike churches, New Age movements are minority organisations in contemporary society which have short life-spans and little or no influence.
- 2 'New Age movements should *not* be classified as religions.' Argue the case either for or against this claim.

## Worksheet 1.6 Explaining religious movements (pages 54–62)

### Consolidate (work individually)

- 1 Identify three possible reasons that explain why people join sects.
- 2 How do sects offer a religious solution to relative deprivation?
- 3 Briefly explain the meaning of 'desacralisation'.
- 4 Identify three characteristics of world-affirming NRMs.
- 5 Suggest one problem with explaining NRMs as a response to specific developments in Western society during the second half of the 20th century.
- 6 Identify three characteristics of New Age movement members.
- 7 Suggest three features of late modernity/postmodernity that make people more open to joining New Age movements.
- 8 Identify two criticisms of postmodern explanations for New Age movements.
- 9 Suggest two routes that sects might follow in contemporary societies.
- 10 Suggest two routes that world-rejecting NRMs might follow in contemporary societies.

### Apply (work in small groups)

- 1 a) Briefly explain how the concept of deprivation differs from that of relative deprivation.  
b) Suggest two reasons why this distinction is significant in terms of explaining why people join religious organisations and movements.
- 2 Provide examples to illustrate the concepts of:
  - a) Life-as
  - b) Subjective-life.
- 3 Give two examples of how the concept of relativism can be used to undermine the idea of religious metanarratives.
- 4 Identify examples of famous people working in 'expressive professions' who have joined New Age movements.
- 5 Why are people who work in 'expressive professions' (such as actors and singers) more likely to be attracted to New Age movements rather than traditional religious organisations?

### Evaluate (work as a class)

- 1 'Religious behaviour cannot be explained simply in terms of "the individual"; rather, we must understand it in terms of the way social structures push people into religious behaviour.' What evidence is there to support such a statement?
- 2 To what extent has contemporary society become desacralised compared with the past?

## Worksheet 1.7 Secularisation and Contemporary religion (pages 62–74)

### Consolidate (work individually)

- 1 Define 'secularisation'.
- 2 Identify two versions of the secularisation thesis.
- 3 Suggest three ways to test the evidence for secularisation.
- 4 Has religious practice increased or declined since the mid-18th century in our society?
- 5 Briefly explain Davie's idea of 'belief without belonging'.
- 6 Suggest three explanations for the growth in the membership of ethnic minority group religions in the UK.
- 7 What changes in modern society have, according to Berger, accelerated the process of secularisation?
- 8 Identify three explanations for secularisation put forward by Wilson.
- 9 According to Lyotard, postmodern society is characterised by a loss of confidence in what?
- 10 Why is it difficult to prove or disprove the secularisation thesis?
- 11 Which two religions have the most followers across the world?
- 12 What percentage of the Central and South American population were followers of Pentecostalism in 2005?
- 13 Suggest two theories to explain religious resurgence in the developing world.
- 14 Identify one characteristic of a defensive religious reaction to modernisation and globalisation.
- 15 Identify one characteristic of a proactive religious response to modernisation and globalisation.

### Apply (work in small groups)

- 1 Briefly explain the concept of 'privatised religion'.
- 2 How can the concept of privatised religion be used to explain the development of New Age movements?
- 3 Suggest three problems sociologists face when trying to measure secularisation.
- 4 How does the way you choose to measure secularisation influence the validity of the data collected?
- 5 What conclusions about secularisation can we draw from an analysis of the Kendal Project?
- 6 What evidence is there for a resurgence of religion in the world over the past 40 years?
- 7 Briefly explain why and how religion may be a defensive reaction by some social groups to globalisation.
- 8 Briefly explain why and how religion may be a proactive response by some social groups to globalisation.

### Evaluate (work as a class)

- 1 Contemporary societies are characterised by 'belief without belonging'. What sociological evidence is there to support or reject this statement?
- 2 Examine the evidence for and against the secularisation thesis.