

## Sociology of religion:

### 1. What is religion?

**Substantive definitions:** emphasis on faith in God, spiritual creatures, on the paranormal.

**Functional definitions:** pay attention to the positive social effects of religion, such as bringing people together and providing purpose.

### 2. Key classical theorists:

#### a. Emile Durkheim (1858- 1917):

**Book:** The Elementary Forms of Religious Life

**Key concepts:** \_ Sacred vs. profane; collective conscience. \_ Religion creates social solidarity; reinforces norms and values.

#### b. Karl Marx (1818\_ 1883): religion as ideology; aids ruling class.

#### c. Max Weber (1864\_ 1920):

**Book:** The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.

**Beliefs (Calvinism):** hard work, discipline, reinvestment.

### 3. Functions of religion:

- Social Cohesion
- Social control
- Provides meaning
- Supports or resists change

### 4. Contemporary views:

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- + **Secularization Thesis:** religion's declining impact in contemporary society.
- + **Civil religion:** public ceremonies and religiously inspired patriotic symbols.
- + **New Religious Movements:** growth of non-traditional religious communities.