



Research Paper

Contrasting perspectives in the sociology of religion with an emphasis on the views of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim

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Abstract

The present study, which is a library, descriptive-analytical method, seeks the sociological dialectic of religion. Religion has always been one of the serious topics of sociologists and there have been different views and perspectives on it. This study has reconsidered the views of three sociologists (Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim) on religion. Karl Marx considered religion to be both a concept of self-alienation and an expression of class society, and he considered religion to be a factor in the oppression of the upper classes of society by the lower classes. Despite Max Weber's belief that religion gives meaning to human life and gives meaning to human life in the face of deprivation and suffering, societies in today's world have moved beyond religion and have reached a concept called rationalization. Emile Durkheim believes that religion is a factor of solidarity and cohesion between individuals in society, and on the other hand, he considers God and society to be one. Accordingly, we seek to examine the religious ideas of these three thinkers in the field of sociology and finally address their contrasting ideas about religion.

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Extended Abstract

1. Discussion

The fusion of religion with human life is an undeniable issue. Religion is one of the forms of life that both affects and is affected by it. On the other hand, the growth and expansion of sociological studies of religion has also made significant progress, and sociologists have long been engaged in sociological studies of the institution of religion and its dimensions. Since religion has not only not disappeared with the ups and downs that have occurred for human life on earth, but is still one of the most important pillars of human communities. Therefore, sociologists cannot ignore the institution of religion in their scientific studies and not include it as one of their serious studies. This is why the study of religion and religious behavior in human societies has always been an important pillar of sociology. Of course, it must be acknowledged that many perspectives on religion and its dimensions have been examined in sociology. Sociologists usually express their opinions on religion and its place throughout human history based on their own methods. In some of these perspectives, agreement and overlap are seen, and on the other hand, contradictions and conflicts are also evident in some perspectives. This contradiction and conflict is also deep and significant in some cases, and in others it is very superficial. It is also necessary to state that in some cases it is observed that there are opposing views on religion among members of the same class. For example, there are contradictions and conflicts among sociologists, philosophers, or psychologists regarding religion and its place in society and the system of existence. What is important is

to find the roots of these contradictions and conflicts. Sometimes these issues arise from the different methods of thinkers, and sometimes this issue arises from the influences of predecessors.

The German philosopher and economist Karl Marx was born in Trier, Rhineland-Prussia. His father converted to Luther in 1824, and his family members also converted from Judaism. Marx studied in Bonn, Berlin, and Jena, and in 1841, he received his doctorate in philosophy from the University of Jena with a dissertation on Epicurus (Reiss, 1400: 706). During the Industrial Revolution, Marx had followed the changes that were taking place in society. His political activities had placed him in conflict with the German authorities. His interest in the European labor movement and socialist ideas is evident in his works and writings. A large part of his works is related to economic issues and topics; but since he always sought to connect economic issues with social institutions, his work has been full of sociological insights (Giddens, 1399: 18). Since Marx considered his works to be scientific rather than philosophical, it can be said that he did not consider himself a Marxist (Ries, 1400: 710).

Max Weber was born on April 21, 1864. His parents had seven children, of whom Max was the eldest. Max's parents were of German Protestant descent and had fled their Catholic city because of the persecution they were being subjected to by Catholics at the time. Weber was raised in a cultured bourgeois family. Not only prominent politicians but also prominent academics frequented Weber's home. He was a bright but frail, shy and withdrawn young man. In addition to pursuing his research interests, he also pursued his political interests and played an active and prominent role in Christian Socialist



political circles. He also had a remarkable and comprehensive mind. His thought was influenced and influenced by many (Kozar, 1392: 320-325). Although he was not a philosopher, he was familiar with most of the classical philosophical systems during his student days. He was not a theologian, but his works show that he had extensive studies in the field of theology (ibid., 332). He is considered the author of classical works in sociology and the guide of Emile Durkheim. Having studied law, he was also a professional economist (Lalman, 1401: 301). Inspired by the legacy of Nietzsche, who considered life to be a constant struggle and a tireless will to improve the situation, he passes the propositions of this issue through the privileged filter of politics and religion and receives them (ibid., 314).

Emile Durkheim was born in Epinal in 1858. He was raised according to the Jewish religious tradition. He learned Hebrew and studied at a rabbinical school. Despite the ancient family tradition, he did not become a rabbi. After high school, Durkheim went to the Collège de Halle, where he passed the Agrégation of Philosophy exams to become a philosophy lecturer at the high school, and studied with Henri Bergson and Jean Jaurès. Despite Durkheim's turn from religion, his analyses were constantly influenced by respect for law and the importance of social power. Among the historical events that influenced his life were the defeat of France by Germany in the war of 1870, the

suppression of the Paris Commune, and the Dreyfus affair. Durkheim borrowed from the works of the historian Noma Denis Fostal de Coulanges his training and methodological rigor. Durkheim was also influenced by Emile Buter and Charles Renouvier, who were considered neo-classical philosophers. Durkheim was among those who believed in the equality of all before the law and respect for civil rights and political freedoms (Lalman, 1991: 230).

2. Conclusion

In general, the views of these three thinkers and sociologists can be considered to be in agreement in some ways and in opposition in others. All three sociologists express a kind of functionalism of religion in their views; but they express this issue with different approaches. Marx, with his negative and critical approach to religion, sees religion as only an instrumental tool and believes that it causes alienation and that the ruling class benefits from it to suppress the lower class. Max Weber, with his rational approach to religion, extracts a meaningful function from religion, and finally Durkheim considers the social function of religion in creating a collective identity around a sacred thing. Therefore, in the view of these three thinkers, religion has a functional aspect; but in the view of one, it has a positive function and in the view of the other, it has a negative function.