4.1 Religious Organisations: Churches, Denominations, Sects and Cults: 10-minute Pack

AQA 7192 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Use sociological vocabulary. For extended answers write in full sentences. At least two extended answers require full sentence responses.

1 Explain two reasons, using Weber's idea of the theodicy of disprivilege and other relevant concepts, why sects might appeal to the relatively deprived in modern British communities.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 State one methodological problem a sociologist might face when comparing membership claims made by an established national church and by small local sects.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 Explain one reason why new forms of religious organisation, such as loosely organised therapeutic spiritual groups, might not be classified easily as either a sect or a cult in Troeltsch's scheme.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

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Mark scheme · 4.1 Religious Organisations: Churches, Denominations, Sects and Cults: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies Weber's theodicy of disprivilege as an explanation that suffering or disadvantage can be given religious meaning	**B1**
explains how this attracts the relatively deprived, e.g. sects promise spiritual or future compensation for present suffering	**B1**
identifies a second reason, e.g. sects provide social support and a strong sense of belonging	**B1**
explains the second reason, e.g. material or emotional support within a sect can be attractive to those lacking resources in wider society	**B1**

Answer: Weber's theodicy of disprivilege suggests sects give disadvantaged people a religious explanation for suffering and promise of future reward, attracting the relatively deprived; additionally, sects provide social and emotional support and a strong sense of belonging that appeals to those lacking resources in wider society.

Question 2

identifies a methodological problem, e.g. differing definitions of membership and record keeping between large churches and small sects	**B1**
brief development, e.g. small sects may not keep formal attendance records, making comparisons unreliable	**B1**

Answer: One problem is differing definitions and record keeping of membership: large churches often keep formal attendance records while small sects may not, making comparisons of membership unreliable.

Question 3

identifies a reason, e.g. these groups mix low commitment of cults with some moral expectations of sects	**B1**
development, e.g. their organisational fluidity and focus on personal experience challenge strict size and authority criteria	**B1**

Answer: Because such groups mix features like low commitment and personal focus with moral expectations, their organisational fluidity and emphasis on personal experience challenge Troeltsch's strict size and authority criteria, making classification difficult.

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