4.3 Functionalist Definitions of Religion and Civil Religion: 10-minute Pack

AQA 7192 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For questions worth more than 1 mark, write in full sentences. Show sociological knowledge and, where asked, apply it to the item material. Time guidance: 10 minutes for the whole pack.

1 Item A: Extract about an American national ceremony

Item A: During a state memorial service for disaster victims, the US President refers to a shared national faith, asks citizens to pray for the victims, and the ceremony includes a moment of national silence and a reading from the Constitution. Sociologists studying civil religion point to such public rituals as examples of a shared sacred language used to unite diverse citizens.

Using Item A and your knowledge of Bellah's civil religion, explain two reasons why such public rituals might strengthen national solidarity. Each reason should be developed.

(Total for Question 1 is 6 marks)

2 Explain one way Malinowski's psychological-functionalist account complements Parsons' functional account of religion's role in maintaining social order.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

Mark scheme · 4.3 Functionalist Definitions of Religion and Civil Religion: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies a reason, e.g. rituals sacralise national values by giving them a sacred framing	**B1**
development, e.g. referring to prayer and Constitutional reading turns secular symbols into sacred ones, creating shared moral language	**B1**
identifies a second reason, e.g. public ceremonies provide collective emotional experience that bonds citizens	**B1**
development, e.g. moment of silence and shared mourning produces empathy and a sense of belonging across diverse groups	**B1**
additional development linking to Item A, e.g. presidential leadership in the ritual gives moral authority and models unity	**B1**
further development, e.g. using the Constitution in the ceremony links national identity to a sacred text, reinforcing shared commitment	**B1**

Answer: Reason 1: The ceremony sacralises national values, for example turning the Constitution and public prayer into sacred symbols, which creates a shared moral language and sense of what the nation stands for. Reason 2: The collective ritual produces shared emotion and grief, for example the moment of silence and communal prayer, which bonds citizens through empathy and a feeling of belonging; the President's role also lends moral authority and models unity.

Question 2

identifies that both see religion performing useful functions for society or individuals	**B1**
development, e.g. Malinowski's focus on individual anxiety relief complements Parsons' focus on social stability by showing how individual wellbeing supports social order	**B1**

Answer: Both views see religion as performing useful functions; Malinowski's focus on relieving individual anxiety at life crises complements Parsons' emphasis on social stability because individuals who are psychologically supported are more able to play their social roles, helping maintain order.

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk