# 2.3 Religion, identity and power

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 30 marks**

**KEY WORDS** established church • secularism • legitimacy • social movement • minority

## Objective

Study how religion shapes **identity** and **power** in society: religion and the state, religion in **social movements**, and religion as a marker of minority identity.

**You must be able to:**

- describe different relations between religion and the state
- explain how religion can support or challenge power
- analyse a religious social movement
- explain religion as a marker of minority identity
- evaluate whether religion mainly supports or challenges power

## 1 Key knowledge and worked examples

### ■ Religion and the state

| model | example |
|---|---|
| **established church** | the Church of England: the monarch is its Supreme Governor; bishops sit in the House of Lords |
| **strict separation** | France's 1905 law separating churches and the state (*laïcité*) |
| **religious state** | Iran: under the 1979 constitution, a senior cleric is Supreme Leader |
| **secular state with religious freedom** | the US First Amendment (1791) |

### ■ Supporting and challenging power

Religion can **legitimize** power (divine right of kings), and it can **challenge** it: the US civil rights movement was led largely from Black churches; Martin Luther King Jr. was a Baptist minister. In Poland, the Catholic Church supported the Solidarity movement in the 1980s.



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### ■ Minority identity

For minorities, religion can mark belonging and difference: dress, food, festivals and places of worship become signs of identity, and sometimes targets of discrimination.

**Worked analysis.** The civil rights movement used church buildings for meetings, sermons for motivation, hymns at marches, and biblical stories (the Exodus) to frame freedom. Religion gave **organization**, **meaning** and **moral authority** to a challenge to power.

## 2 Practice

**2.1** Distinguish an **established church** from **strict separation**, with an example of each. [2]

**2.2** France's law on separation was passed in 1905 and the US First Amendment was adopted in 1791. Calculate the difference, and explain **one** difference between the two models. [3]




**2.3** Explain **two** ways religion helped the US civil rights movement challenge power. [4]

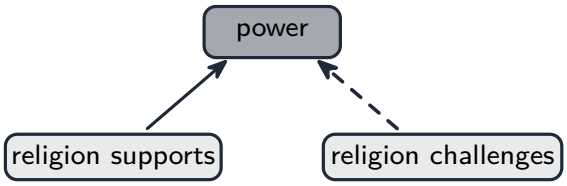


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**2.4** Explain how religion can be a marker of **minority identity**, and **one** risk this creates, with a real example. [6]

## 3 Exam-style questions

**3.1** *(Preparation essay.)* "Religion more often supports power than challenges it." Discuss with reference to **three** cases. [15]






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## Solutions

Marking: **M1** a correct method, **A1** the correct answer, **B1** an independent mark.

Each answer shows the steps, then the **result**.

**2.1**

established church: one church has an official link to the state, e.g. the Church of England; strict separation: the state has no official religion and keeps religion out of public institutions, e.g. France's laïcité (1905)

**2.2**

$1905 - 1791 = \mathbf{114}$ years; laïcité keeps religion out of public institutions, e.g. limits on religious symbols in state schools; the US model forbids an established religion but allows wide public religious expression

**2.3**

any two, explained: organization: churches gave meeting places and networks; meaning: biblical stories such as the Exodus framed the struggle as liberation; moral authority: ministers such as Martin Luther King Jr. spoke with moral force; songs and hymns built courage and unity

**2.4**

religion marks belonging through visible signs, e.g. dress, food, festivals; it supports community and continuity across generations; a real example named and explained; risk: visible difference can attract discrimination or restrictive laws; example of the risk

**3.1**

Mark with the markbands: [13-15] clearly focused on the question, accurate knowledge of at least three traditions, the four concepts applied, different views and sources evaluated, well-developed critical analysis, different perspectives evaluated, a reasoned conclusion; [10-12] focused, mostly accurate knowledge, analysis with some evaluation; [7-9] some focus, relevant knowledge, mostly narrative or description with limited analysis; [4-6] little focus, limited knowledge, mostly narrative; [1-3] little understanding of the question. Points that may be included: concept of power explained; supports power: legitimation, e.g. divine right of kings; state churches; a case in detail; challenges power: civil rights movement; Solidarity in Poland; a third case in detail; religion as both, depending on context and actors; minority religions and the state; comparison of cases; a reasoned conclusion