they are worshipping society, although the clan members may be unaware of this. Worsley (1956) notes that there is no division between the sacred and profane, and that different clans share the same totems. Even if Durkheim is right, it doesn't prove the essence of all religions.

**The Collective Conscience**

Durkheim believes that the sacred represents society's collective conscience (the shared norms and values, and beliefs and knowledge), and that regular shared rituals reinforce this, as well as maintaining social integration. Participation is a reminder to individuals of not only their part in a community, but of the power of their society without which they are nothing.

This theory only applies to small-scale societies with one religion. It would be harder to apply to multi-faith societies where social integration within the communities is explained, but the conflict between them is not.

Mestrovic (1997) argues that contemporary society is not accounted for as increasing diversity has fragmented the collective conscience; there is no longer a single shared value system to reinforce.

**Cognitive Functions**

Religion is also seen as a source of our intellectual capacity. For Durkheim, religion is the origin of the concepts needed for reasoning, creating categories such as time and space through ideas such as a creator bringing the beginning of time, or the division of humans into clans being an early notion of classification. Thus, religion is the origin of human thought, reason and science.

**Psychological Functions:**

Malinowski (1954) agrees with Durkheim. He adds to Durkheim's view by suggesting religion also performs psychological functions, helping them cope with stress which would otherwise undermine social solidarity. He also identifies two situations that religion would perform such a role:

1. When the outcome is important but uncertain. When the Trobriand Islanders went fishing in the lagoon (a safe environment), they performed no ritual beforehand. However, before fishing in the ocean (a more uncertain environment), 'canoe magic' is performed for a successful trip. This gives a sense of control to the forces group-society, for Malinowski sees rituals as a 'god of the gaps', filling in the gaps of human being's control.

2. At times of life crises. Religion helps to minimise disruption. For example, funerals reinforce solidarity among the survivors whilst providing comfort to the bereaved. For Malinowski, death is the reason for the existence of religion.

**Parsons – Value and Meaning:**

Parsons (1967) believes religion helps individuals to cope with unforeseen events and uncontrollable outcomes, like Malinowski.

He also identifies that it creates and legitimates basic norms and values by making them sacred (sacralising them). For example, the USA has allowed Protestantism to sacralise the core American values of individualism, meritocracy and self-discipline, helping to promote value consensus.

Religion also gives a source of meaning, answering ‘ultimate questions’ such as why the good die young, which would make life seem meaningless if left unanswered which would in turn undermine our commitment to values. Therefore, religion allows people to adjust to negativity and helps maintain stability.

**Civil Religion:**

Bellah (1970) argues that what unites multi-faith societies is civil religion – a system of belief that attaches sacred qualities to society itself. In the case of America, none of the churches or faiths can