A generation ago, studies of the relationships between religion and economic life were often framed within a view of modern society that emphasized institutional differentiation and secularization. As a result, studies of economic behavior seldom paid attention to religion, and studies of religion seldom dealt with economic activities (Beckford 1985). In recent years, more borrowing across subdisciplinary lines is evident. Studies of religion incorporate insights from economic sociology about economic preferences, markets, and organizational structure, while research in economic sociology sometimes draws on ideas about ritual and ceremony, symbolism, testimonials, ethnic and religious communities, and sacralization. Beyond these mutual influences, there has been a more important shift in thinking about the nature of religion itself. The new directions resulting from this shift converge in significant ways with current thinking in economic sociology (Swedberg 1991).

Theories of modernization suggested that religion would become increasingly differentiated from other institutions, including the political and economic spheres. These theories also argued that religion was becoming privatized, leaving behavior that truly mattered in the larger society free of religious influences. These arguments, as well as increasing specialization within the social sciences themselves, often made it possible to ignore the role of religion. Even on topics in which religious considerations might have been evident, such as immigration (Portes 1998; Portes and Rumbaut 1990), lower-income African American neighborhoods (Wilson 1980), and trust (Coleman 1990), these considerations were often neglected.

Mutual influences between studies of religion and economic sociology have grown in response to the neo-institutional approach to organizations (Powell and DiMaggio 1991) and emphasis on the social embeddedness of economic transactions (Granovetter 1990). These influences are evident in such work as Chaves’s (1997) study of organizational innovation among religious denominations in decisions concerning the ordination of women, Becker’s (1999) study of conflict in congregations, and Finke and Stark’s (1992) study of denominational growth and decline. In economic sociology and related subdisciplines, some interest in religion or concepts from scholarship on religion is evident in discussions of the ceremonial aspects of formal organizations (Meyer and Rowan 1991), trust (Fukuyama 1995; Seligman 1997), and social capital (Putnam 2000). Some convergence between studies of religion and economic sociology can be seen in Ezzioni’s (1988) and Selznick’s (1994) treatments of the moral dimensions of economic life. Other studies have examined the economic aspects of religious organizations themselves, especially finances and fund-raising (Ronsvale and Ronvall 1996; Hoge 1996; and Vallet and Zech 1995), and some attention has been paid to the commercialization of religion (Moore 1994).

There has, however, been a more general reorientation of scholarship on religion, including studies that bear directly on economic life. This reorientation works within the framework of questions raised by the founding figures in sociology, especially questions about the conditions under which religion and economic life bear affinities with each other or conflict with each other. Long-standing questions about religion accommodating to economic conditions or serving as modes of resistance also remain. Recent work has not so much abandoned these questions as responded to earlier answers that posed additional problems. New directions in the study of religion and economic life emphasize culture, social practices, agency, constructedness, and embeddedness in many of the same ways that economic sociology does (DiMaggio 1994). Rather than being regarded as a separate institution or as a set of ideas, religion is viewed as “lived religion” (Hall 1997) or as “practice” (McDannell 2001). It therefore has economic dimensions and is part of the fabric of communities,
social relationships, power arrangements, and policy deliberations in which economic behavior is embedded.

**The Classical Legacy**

Understanding the recent shifts in orientation is best done in comparison with emphases evident in classical work and studies following in those traditions. The relationships between religion and economic life were emphasized especially by Karl Marx and Max Weber, and to a considerable degree by Émile Durkheim. Their contributions have been examined on many occasions and have been increasingly regarded as open-ended, complex, and multivalent (Calhoun 1996; O'Toole 2001). A brief review will thus be helpful (see also Wuthnow 1994b; Fenn 2001; O'Toole 2001; and Giddens 1975).

Although Marx and Engels ([1846] 1947, 1967) wrote extensively about religion, their work on this topic is scattered and for this reason is best understood within the framework of their larger contributions to the study of capitalism. In their view religion is a form of ideology or consciousness that composes part of the societal superstructure that is in turn shaped by the mode of production and relations of production that form the societal infrastructure. In causal language, religion is thus a dependent variable the shape and content of which are determined by a set of economic conditions. There are of course ways in which religion and other forms of ideology act back upon economic conditions (such as reinforcing passivity or encouraging dissent), but these relations are not as powerful in the larger Marxian understanding of society as the internal dynamics of capitalism itself. Thus, Marx and Engels argue that the shift from agrarian to industrialized societies under capitalism is accompanied by a split between the bourgeoisie who own the means of production and the proletariat who provide labor but do not participate fully in the fruits of their labor because profits are appropriated by the bourgeoisie. Religion reflects this division between bourgeoisie and proletariat. For the bourgeoisie, religion provides legitimation for its power and privilege by emphasizing individualism and the just rewards of entrepreneurialism. For the proletariat, religion becomes in Marx and Engels's famous phrase an “opium of the masses,” masking the true source of their oppression through beliefs about the divine nature of inequality and anticipation of rewards in the life to come.

Weber's most important contribution to thinking about religion and economic life is his discussion of the role played by the Protestant ethic in the rise of rational bourgeois capitalism. For Weber, capitalism was encouraged by a wide range of developments, including technological advances that made industrialization possible, separation of business from households, and rational methods of bookkeeping. These, however, were in his view insufficient to explain the rise of capitalism because people still required motivation to save, plan, and work hard in worldly pursuits. The Protestant ethic provided such motivation, Weber claimed. It did so inadvertently by teaching that only God's foreordained “elect” would receive eternal salvation, but emphasizing that God's inscrutability made it impossible for the elect to be certain of salvation. Faced with such uncertainty, Puritans argued that hard work, service, sobriety, and moral discipline were ways of obeying God and that the material success deriving from this kind of behavior could be taken as a sign of God's favor. In subsequent work, Weber compared the world's major religious traditions, showing that each sought to provide a cosmological framework in which life ultimately made sense. All such traditions ran into the problem of evil or theodicy (how a good God or supreme being could permit evil) and thus developed explanations for evil that implied modes of possible salvation. Protestantism and other forms of what Weber termed inner-worldly asceticism were conducive to rational economic behavior, while other religions diverted attention more to mysticism or otherworldly expectations.

Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* ([1915] 1995) was not as directly concerned with the relationships between religion and economic life as the work of Marx or Weber. But the *Elementary Forms* can be viewed as the culmination of Durkheim's long quest to understand the changing bases of social solidarity under conditions of industrialization. In his early work on the division of labor in society, Durkheim described a shift from what he termed mechanical solidarity, based on homogeneity, to organic solidarity, based on heterogeneity. In complex societies, economic development required an increasing division of labor or occupational specialization that in turn required people to interact because of economic interdependence. Durkheim was concerned, however, that economic exchange alone could not provide sufficient basis for social cohesion. For this reason he considered ways of supplementing economic transactions, including occupational and prof-
sional organizations, public education, and representative government. He eventually settled on religion as an important way of reinforcing social cohesion because of its capacity for symbolically representing the whole community (the gods, he argued, reflected the collectivity), drawing people together in rituals, and reinforcing social classification schemes demarcating the sacred and the profane. Durkheim nevertheless envisioned religion becoming increasingly focused around what he called the cult of the individual as societies became more economically differentiated.

Marx’s discussion of the formative influences of bourgeoisie and proletariat class relations on religion, along with some of Weber’s remarks about status groups serving as carriers for religious ideologies, resulted in a long line of scholarship focusing on the relationships between social class and religion (Estrus and Overington 1970). Scholars theorized that social class influenced religion in at least two ways. First, social class affected people psychologically, encouraging those with fewer economic opportunities to look more fervently toward the spiritual realm as a kind of substitute for material achievement, and perhaps encouraging the economically privileged to abandon religion altogether. Second, social class exposed people to different subcultures and provided their religious organizations with different amounts of economic wherewithal. For instance, working-class people might join or form sectarian organizations whose patterns of worship required little in the way of professional clergy or elaborate buildings and whose codes of conduct encouraged simple living that might result in upward social mobility.

Weber’s work on the relationship of Protestantism to the rise of capitalism generated at least three distinct lines of investigation. First, historians and sociologists have examined more closely the specific linkages between religion and economic behavior in early modern Europe with the aim of seeing whether or not other factors could better account for the rise of capitalism and whether other aspects of Protestant teaching should be emphasized. Second, scholars have compared the economic achievements of Protestants and Catholics to see whether Weber’s arguments still hold or have been superseded. And third, scholars have sought to apply Weber’s arguments to other cases, such as the Middle Ages or early modern Japan, or to related topics, such as law and political protest.

Durkheim’s contributions have resulted in fewer studies concerned specifically with religion and economic life but have generated scholarship on related topics. For example, studies of so-called mass society considered the expansion of commercial markets and the mass media and suggested that Durkheim might be right about religion becoming focused more on the individual. Other studies have combined insights from Durkheim and Toqueville to suggest that market expansion necessarily increases self-interest that in turn needs to be checked by the kinds of associations and religious rituals that interested Durkheim.

As scholarship became more abundant in these various areas of investigation, observations started to be made about the relationships between religion and economic life that ran counter to classical assumptions or that could not easily be addressed within these earlier frameworks. Investigations of the relationships between social class and religion, for instance, suggested that working-class people were neither as alienated nor as passive as previous arguments had suggested. It became evident, too, that certain kinds of religion, such as fundamentalism, did not fit expected patterns. Fundamentalists were often middle-class people whose adherence to religious orthodoxy could not be explained in terms of economic marginalization. Studies also suggested that resistance to economic injustices was not limited to large-scale political insurrections. Researchers began to question whether some forms of religion might actually be empowering the economically disadvantaged (Scott 1977; Ranajit and Scott 1999). Thinking also began to focus more on passive or quiet resistance of the kind that might take place among women’s groups in religious organizations (Higginsbotham 1993) or through civic training programs (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). More broadly, this reorientation in thinking about resistance may have been furthered by the collapse of the Soviet Union, which may have caused some scholars to assume that resistance to oppression created by capitalism would have to come from the inside, as it were, rather than from a completely different form of economy organized around socialism or communism. It was more likely reinforced by the rise of so-called Western Marxism or cultural Marxism (Anderson 1976), which focused more attention on the ways in which power and possibilities for resisting power were built into language, discourse, and social interaction.

Scholarship rooted in Weber’s work on Protestantism and capitalism also started to turn in new directions. Research focusing on elective affinities between religious beliefs and certain economic conditions, or on internalized motives connecting
the two, gave way to studies that sought to pin down more concretely the social settings in which such affinities and motives might take root. For instance, Zaret (1985) examined how Protestant teachings shifted to put more emphasis on this-worldly achievements, showing that the power relationships among front-line parish clergy, lay parishioners, and higher religious officials needed to be considered. Similarly, Gorski (1993) examined Dutch Calvinist conventicles, showing that Calvinist discipline was not simply a function of beliefs but was enacted and enforced in the small group meetings of which these conventicles were composed. Scholars also turned Weberian questions about the process of rationalization in new directions. For instance, Dobbin (1994) examined how different ideals of rationality were constructed in European policy debates, and Biernacki (1995) combined Weberian and Durkheimian insights to suggest that industrial firms developed rituals that became encoded in the uses of space and time to reinforce certain understandings of rationality.

The Durkheimian legacy was rich with insights about symbolism, ritual, culture, and classification. Consequently, research following this tradition shifted increasingly toward examining specific settings in which rituals and beliefs were ritualized social arrangements and toward paying greater attention to Durkheim’s idea of religious experience as a kind of social sensory system (Nielsen 1999, 2001). Douglas (1966) and Foucault (1977), among others, showed that the human body and rituals pertaining to it (including eating and dress) dramatized certain regularities in the economic and political system. Douglas (1986) also examined formal organizations, applying insights from studies of religion and ritual to suggest that these organizations “think” in the sense of making some assumptions more plausible than others. Durkheim’s interest in community encouraged other scholars to look more closely at the symbolic boundaries defining race and ethnicity, at public discourse that may undermine a sense of community (Bellah et al. 1985), at the dramatization of collective memory, and at public rituals.

Broader attempts to generalize about modernization also raised questions about the relationships between religion and economic conditions. Modernization theory suggested that economic relations would increasingly become the same everywhere, governed by universal considerations of rationality and market exchange. Yet studies of the spread of these modernizing tendencies suggested that they came about through imitative processes that sometimes consisted of ritualistic performance and display, like religious behavior, rather than being driven by economic principles. Other studies suggested that ethnic and religious communities channeled modernizing processes in different directions and were sometimes powerful, if ambivalent, forces of resistance to these processes. Muslim banking practices (Sached 1996), Jewish and Muslim antimodernizing movements in the Middle East (Heilman 1992; Euben 1999), and Pentecostal movements in Latin America (Garrard-Burnett and Stoll 1993) served as examples. Phrases such as “selective modernization” and “controlled acculturation” (Antoun 2001) pointed to the importance of looking more closely at local contexts and at processes of resistance and negotiation.

**NEW APPROACHES AND ASSUMPTIONS**

The scholarly emphases that have emerged over roughly the past two decades contrast sharply with the concepts and assumptions set forth by the classical theorists and in much of the work that followed directly in this lineage. These contrasts are summarized in Table 1. The recent work has not developed in specific opposition to the earlier work. It is better understood as a variety of efforts, largely through empirical investigations, to work out some of the questions that the earlier work left unanswered, while remaining indebted to that work for the ways it had framed many of these questions. For instance, recent studies have grappled with the fact that religion seems not to have diminished in importance to the extent that the earlier writers assumed, but these studies have still been interested in how religion is influenced by such processes as urbanization and societal complexity. The recent work has also been influenced by dissatisfaction with the positivist assumptions that guided some of the earlier work and has been less interested in defining and defending disciplinary boundaries. Studies of religion have been particularly eclectic, as the examples discussed in this chapter will illustrate. They represent contributions by scholars in a variety of disciplines and programs, including sociology, anthropology, religious studies, history, and American studies.

**Scope of Inquiry**

Studies produced by the classical theorists and by scholars following them (which I will refer to simply as old) contrast with more recent (new) approaches in the degree to which they emphasize
TABLE 1. Comparison of Old and New Perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scope of inquiry</th>
<th>Old</th>
<th>New</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acontextual, macroscopic,</td>
<td>Contextual, microscopic,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>causal generalizations</td>
<td>acausal interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object of study</td>
<td>Patterns, classification</td>
<td>Processes, contingencies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>schemes, taxonomies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explanatory emphasis</td>
<td>Structure, constraint</td>
<td>Agency, empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Locus of power</td>
<td>Ascribed or given, systems</td>
<td>Negotiated, resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of stratification</td>
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<tr>
<td>View of culture</td>
<td>Values, beliefs, ideas,</td>
<td>Discourse, social practices,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>teachings</td>
<td>production, enactment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional logics</td>
<td>Differentiated, formal,</td>
<td>Transgressive, constructed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reified, gendered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Declining importance,</td>
<td>Continuing presence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>secularization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic action</td>
<td>Rationalized models and</td>
<td>Socially embedded</td>
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<td></td>
<td>markets, autonomous</td>
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<td>preferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preferred methods</td>
<td>Quantitative, comparative</td>
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<td>historical</td>
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contextualizing their conclusions. The earlier work
privileged the search for acontextual patterns that
could be viewed as generalizations or even laws
about human society. While this was more true for
some of the classical theorists than others (Marx,
say, more than Weber), their work was generally
concerned with large social phenomena and develop-
ments covering considerable territory and time
(such as capitalism or the West). Subsequent work
often focused more narrowly on, say, a single or-
ganization or community, but was oriented toward
establishing generalizations (for instance, about re-
ligious sects or about social mobility). Recent stud-
ies have been less optimistic about finding useful
generalizations. These investigations are more like-
ly to emphasize the distinctive characteristics of
specific cases or events. While they do not abandon
interest in generalizations, they often emphasize
contingencies or cases that run counter to previous
generalizations.

Object of Study

The old lines of investigation paid a great deal of
attention to patterns, causal relationships, typolo-
gies, and taxonomies. Broad distinctions became
common: traditional versus modern, rational ver-
sus nonrational, sacred versus profane, to name a
few. The new approaches focus more on processes.
Processes are concerned with near-term change
rather than long-term developments; they empha-
size doing, making, assembling, planning, mobiliz-
ing, and creating. The search for patterns went
hand in hand with the idea that broad acontextual
generalizations could be found. Once scholars
became less convinced about finding such general-
izations, their interest turned toward describing
processes. Patterns deal more with the lay of the
land, so to speak, while processes are concerned
with what people do and say. The old view might
be typified by Marx’s description of differences be-
tween proletariat and bourgeoisie; the new, by a
study that examined how working-class people
come together, perhaps through a religious net-
work, to form an opposition movement.

Explanatory Emphasis

While studies continue to emphasize the inter-
action between social structure and human agency,
there has been a notable tilt away from the former
and toward the latter. The earlier work was inter-
ested in showing how people are constrained by
the social structures surrounding them. Studies of
working-class churches, for instance, would have
emphasized how beliefs and practices were dictated
by the stratification system. The newer studies
have been interested in seeming departures from
such determining factors. They have been more
likely to emphasize individuals’ and groups’ capac-
ity to make decisions and mobilize despite the constraints with which they are faced. A focus on agency is illustrated in studies of religious movements, cultural production, and managerial practice. Whereas structure implies unwitting acceptance, agency suggests that structures supply resources and that actors create strategies.

Locus of Power
In the older view, power was generally built into the system, as it were. It was ascribed by the system of social relationships and by institutions, such as the state, that held formal authority. Power differentials in gender relations or class relations were taken for granted as being relatively fixed, even though they were acknowledged to be exploitative or unjust. Studies of revolutions, collective behavior, and social movements played an important role in shifting attention to possibilities for challenging ascribed power arrangements. Recent work has gone a step further. It has emphasized the role of culture, language, and personal interaction in maintaining power; thus, by localizing power, it has also been able to suggest that power can be negotiated. Resistance has become a topic of increasing interest. Resistance involves constructing new myths, neutralizing the legitimacy of dominant ideas, and subverting the power of dominant groups.

View of Culture
The older view emphasized beliefs and values, ideas, doctrines, and formal teachings. Culture included religion and religious teachings reflected economic conditions, as Marx and to some extent Durkheim argued, or became internalized as motives for action that influenced economic behavior, as Weber emphasized. In the older view, culture was often conceived of as a schema of means and ends, or norms and values capable of guiding goal-oriented behavior. The newer view stresses discourse, cultural toolkits, the symbolic resources through which people make sense of their lives, the dynamic interaction among producers and consumers of culture, and such cultural objects as texts, rituals, and public performances. Many of these emphases are captured in the concept of social practices. Practices are strings of behavior woven together around habits and rules and embedded in traditions and social settings that reinforce their meaningfulness (Turner 1994; MacIntyre 1984). Economic action is harder to separate from culture in the newer view. Advertising, for example, is both cultural and economic; sermons are cultural but may also be part of the fund-raising campaigns of religious organizations.

Institutional Logics
Institutions were regarded in the older view as formal systems of norms and values that became increasingly differentiated in modern societies. Religion was differentiated from the economy, and thus one could examine relationships between the two. Scholars assumed that the distinguishing features of religion and the economy were inherent in the nature of action within each system. They also wrote inadvertently in ways that differentiated the two; for example, describing economic behavior in masculine terms as rational and public, religious faith in feminine terms as irrational and private.

The newer view downplays predefined boundaries separating institutions. While agreeing that there may be different logics in different institutions, it suggests that these logics are socially and culturally constructed. It also emphasizes the transgressive nature of social action: logics from one institution may penetrate another institution (not simply become isomorphic with them through impersonal processes). For example, market logics may be seen in religious settings, and religious rituals may be orchestrated in ways that sacralize economic space.

Religion
The earlier view emphasized secularization as the key to understanding religion's relationship to the economy. Modern economies were thought to function increasingly in terms of secular considerations and thus to marginalize the values espoused by religious people. Studies of religion were concerned with its decline, while studies of economic life were able to ignore religion. The newer view emphasizes the continuing presence of religion in societies characterized by very different kinds of economic relationships. Religion varies and changes qualitatively, but remains a powerful force that must be considered in studying economic behavior. Religion is also understood to be more than a set of ideas and organizations devoted exclusively to otherworldly concerns; religion is a complex of practices that is intertwined with everyday life (and thus with work and consumption), and these practices have economic dimensions and implications (such as spiritual practices that result in heavily funded health and counseling programs).

Economic Action
The economic sphere in the older view was composed of rationalized systems of exchange and thr
was understandable in terms of formalized relationships among entrepreneurs and workers, markets, and consumer preferences. The older view held that the economic sphere became increasingly differentiated from other activities, and this autonomy necessitated treating it as if it operated according to its own laws. The newer view emphasizes the social embeddedness of economic action. Exchange takes place among people who interact in noneconomic as well as economic ways. It involves trust and requires that people make sense of their behavior.

**Preferred Method**

The search for broad generalizations in the older view led scholars to engage in metempirical theoretical speculation and to privilege comparative and historical research. Increasingly, scholars also relied on advanced statistical analysis of quantitative data in hopes of establishing generalizations. While continuing to make use of comparative, historical, and quantitative data, the newer studies have made greater use of ethnographic research and in-depth interviews. Scholars consider qualitative data valuable for understanding the processes, meanings, and complex relationships that may not be illuminated by quantitative data.

While these broad shifts in orientation can be seen in a number of studies, they are not universal. Recent contributions to understanding religion and economic life are seldom framed as studies specifically or exclusively about the relationships between religion and economic behavior. Instead, we must look to a variety of studies to see how scholars currently understand the complex, intertwined social practices that have both religious and economic dimensions. We can see how these practices are being examined by considering recent scholarship in the following areas: ethnoreligious communities, fundamentalism, faith-based organizations, religion and markets, working life, and policy domains.

**Ethnoreligious Communities**

I will define ethnoreligious communities as subpopulations of larger societies that are bounded by ethnic traditions and distinctive religious customs. Ethnoreligious communities have been interesting sites for research because of questions about their persistence and functioning in relation to immigration and assimilation. Studies of such communities generally recognize that the religious and ethnic practices through which people seek and maintain identities have implications for the conduct of economic life.

One of the more influential studies of an ethnoreligious community is Robert Ospi’s (1985) *Madonna of 115th Street*, an ethnographic history of Italian Harlem from 1880 to 1950. During this period, Italian Harlem underwent dramatic economic and social change, initially as a result of rapid immigration and population growth and later in response to a sagging economy, changing labor market, and new opportunities for employment and housing in the suburbs of New York City. Ospi contends that the social identity of Italian Harlem and the solidarity of its social networks remained remarkably stable despite these dramatic changes.

To explain why, he examines the rituals and symbolic practices of the community. Most important of these is the festa that is held every year on July 16. The festa is an all-day event at Our Lady of Mount Carmel on 115th Street that draws the entire community together. Women prepare food and prepare their homes for overnight guests days in advance. After a solemn high mass, the great Mount Carmel parade begins, with thousands of marchers, several bands, and numerous brightly decorated floats and banners. The community then spends the evening in the streets, at the church, and in homes, consuming ethnic food, listening to music, dancing, and socializing.

The festa makes public and emotionally reinforces both the solidarity that holds the community together and the internal demarcations that give it identity. The parade winds through the various neighborhoods and precincts of which Italian Harlem is composed, symbolically tying them together as it progresses. The marchers themselves are organized in groups that reflect the community’s ranks and social division: prominent members of the community, such as physicians and lawyers, toward the front; lower-income people and penitents, some walking barefoot, at the rear; priests separated from laypeople; men and boys walking separately from women and girls. The gendered division of labor is further exemplified in the cooking and family rituals, while family loyalty is often demonstrated by the presence of adult children who have moved to the suburbs.

Underlying the festa is what Ospi calls the domus, which he says “is the religion of Italian Americans” (77). A domus-centered society attaches fundamental loyalty to the family and with it, the domestic space in which the family lives, the gendered work rules that govern that space, and the extended network of kin relations that link
home and community. Loyalty to the domus involves eating together, which in turn prohibits transgression of family schedules by work or entertainment. It involves defining money as “family money,” rather than individual money, which means that working members of the household contribute to a common pool and that “pin money” (Zelizer 1994) is to be spent on household purchases rather than for personal pleasure. Children are taught to respect their parents and to believe that such respect is a distinctive trait of Italian Americans. Blood ties are considered sacred, and one of the worst forms of punishment is expulsion from the domus. Individual households are linked through complex kin and godparentage (comari and compari) relationships.

But the domus system necessarily experienced strains as the community underwent economic and social change. First-generation immigrants often expressed fear that the entire social order was in danger of collapse and thus sought to impose a kind of “authoritarian purity” (108) to prevent this from happening. Offspring felt suffocated by unrelenting demands for family loyalty and self-sacrifice. Anger welled up and rivalries developed between competing families and conceptions of status. Dating and marriage became contested issues between generations. Youth gangs developed among young men, and opportunities for freedom, education, and careers for young women were severely restricted.

These strains were not simply resolved, not by the festa and not by people silently slipping away from the community (although many did). The religious and family practices of which the domus was composed instead provided resources with which resistance could be waged. Women especially gained power in this way, seizing control of many of the church’s functions, drawing lines that circumscribed the influence of (male) clergy, and demanding allegiance from husbands and sons in the name of ethnic principles. The Madonna symbolized the special authority of women, but also served as an occasion for prayer, expressing anger, seeking forgiveness, and securing comfort. In commemorating the Madonna, the festa provided with a brief respite from the usual burdens and a figure that commended continuing self-sacrifice.

The Madonna of 115th Street was written as a contribution to American religious history, rather than economic sociology, but is rich with implications for the latter. Shades of Marxian concerns about oppression, resistance, and false consciousness are evident, as are Durkheimian themes of ritual solidarity, moral community, and division of labor, and Orsi’s discussion of the domus is reminiscent of Weber’s treatment of substantive rationality. The analysis is similar to that of historical and anthropological studies of village life. It demonstrates that economic relations are embedded in deeply valued social relationships. In the case of Italian Harlem, demands for a more highly educated, professional, and occupationally specialized labor force eventually did much to undermine the stability of the community, as did changing patterns of racial and ethnic housing. Yet the strength of community ties was also evident in the number of Italian Americans who stayed in the neighborhood, passed up opportunities to take higher-paying jobs elsewhere, and continued to interact regularly with neighbors and relatives. The study does not opt for one-sided answers to questions about resistance and accommodation, but suggests that both happened and that their simultaneity accounts for some of the power of the festa. The study also illustrates the shift away from separating religion from economic life, emphasizing the intertwining of the two in popular religion and the domus. It conceives of religion, not as an internalized set of beliefs and values guiding individual actors, but as social practices that unfold in everyday life and on ritual occasions (Orsi 1997).

Marie Griffith’s God’s Daughters (1997) illustrates how the kind of analysis evident in Orsi’s study can be extended beyond a geographically defined community. Griffith’s book examines a social movement composed of evangelical and Pentecostal women in the United States known as Women’s Aglow. Founded in the early 1970s, the Women’s Aglow Fellowship coincided with the women’s liberation movement and over the next two decades developed in concert with women’s inclusion in the paid labor force to become the largest interdenominational women’s mission organization in the United States. Women’s Aglow espoused a conservative theological orientation that encouraged submissiveness within the home among women and discouraged their participation in the labor force. Yet its members adapted to changing economic circumstances and, Griffith argues, found ways to resist the strict rules and codes of the movement itself. How was this possible?

Like Orsi, Griffith emphasizes the role of ritual and the religious practices accompanying it. The central ritual for Women’s Aglow members was the collective prayer service that took place during
weekly meetings of local chapters, many of which ranged from 10 to 20 members. Through praying about their concerns, hearing others pray, telling their personal stories, and studying biblical examples, the women learned a model of "healing and transformation" (17) that empowered them. The stories they told and heard became templates for their own self-identity. Consequently, they came to believe that they could change and often did change. They stood up to abusive husbands, tried harder to be good mothers, went back to school, took jobs, switched churches, and made friends. The prayer groups provided a safe, supportive space in which to imagine being different and the stories furthered the process of imagination.

Griffith's study does not suggest that prayer groups necessarily lead to upward socioeconomic mobility. In many cases, "transformation" meant adjusting emotionally to a bad situation, rather than deciding to escape that situation. Her study, however, illustrates one way in which people in groups may create ideas that reinforce new self-concepts that in turn open new possibilities for economic behavior. It suggests that economic and religious ideas may not be understandable in terms of inherent affinities. Instead, religious convictions become the occasion for social interaction that results in unanticipated consequences. Her study strongly asserts the importance of agency, not simply as a form of willed behavior, but as a manifestation of personal resources (especially a strong self-concept) that become mobilized in religious settings.

Whereas Orsi and Griffith include economic behavior as only one of many social aspects of the groups they studied, Prema Kurien's *Kaleidoscopic Ethnicity* (2002) is more directly concerned with the relationships between religion and economic behavior. Kurien examined differences in temporary migration patterns to Persian Gulf countries, remittance use, and migration-induced social change by comparing three communities in the Indian province of Kerala: Mappila Muslims, Ezhava Hindus, and Syrian Christians. Kurien's comparison of these ethnoreligious communities was prompted by discovering in early phases of her fieldwork that patterns of migration and their effects on sending communities could not be understood in terms of the degree of traditionalism or modernization in these communities. Instead, she found that ethnic and religious differences channeled behavior in significantly different ways. The Muslim village had a high degree of group solidarity and family structure that was patrilineal, patrilocal, and patriarchal. With high fertility rates and low education levels among women, coupled with strong religious sentiments among both men and women, nearly all the migrants to the Middle East from the village were men, many of whom went with the help of relatives, illegally, or under the guise of making religious pilgrimages. Their remittances flowed to a wide circle of people in the village, were used for religious purposes, and resulted in caste cleavages being eroded. The Hindu village had lower group solidarity, more competition and conflict among groups in the village, matrilocal households, smaller families, and greater equality between men and women. Migrants from the village were predominately male, and they paid professional agents to find them jobs. Their remittances supported elaborate religious rituals involving gift giving among a relatively small circle of family and friends, all of which altered members' position in the caste system but did not fundamentally change the system. The Christian community was more individualistic, had nuclear families that were patrilocal, but also had more egalitarian gender relationships, which included later marriages and more younger women in white-collar occupations. Migrants from the Christian community were recruited directly by Middle Eastern companies and included more men and women in approximately equal numbers. Remittances were largely retained by the nuclear family and used for savings or dowries; the effect of this pattern was to reinforce the existing caste system.

Kurien's study clearly suggests the importance of taking account of the social relationships in which economic behavior is embedded. She rejects arguments that reduce religion to a set of world views or that simply point to everything being connected to everything else. In trying to sort out what matters in her three case studies, she emphasizes that religious and ethnic traditions were long-standing customs that deeply influenced the social structure of each village. These influences were especially evident in defining group boundaries and the status distinctions accompanying these boundaries. Kin networks and gender differences proved to be especially important in understanding the further effects of migration. These networks and differences were relatively stable, but were also reinforced by religious festivals that, in turn, determined to some extent how money would be spent and how honor or shame would be bestowed. Refracted through these social relationships, the patterns of who migrated, how they found employ-
ment, what they did with their earnings, and how these earnings subsequently influenced social statuses differed dramatically from village to village (see also Kearney 1986).

**Fundamentalism**

Studies of fundamentalism are at first glance an odd place to look for interesting relationships between religion and economic life; yet several considerations have made them attractive: fundamentalism appears to violate assumptions about the decline of religion in modern societies, it may provide opportunities to examine the effects of economic disadvantage on religious beliefs, it may somehow constitute a form of resistance to modern secular society, and it may at least be organized in relatively well-bounded communities that make it attractive as a location for ethnographic research. While earlier studies posited a rather straightforward relationship between economic disadvantage and attraction to fundamentalism as a form of otherworldly solace, research conducted more recently has emphasized more complex relationships.

Nancy Ammerman's *Bible Believers* (1987) was one of a number of studies of fundamentalism conducted in the 1980s as a result of interest sparked by the rise to political prominence of the Reverend Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority movement and a more general reawakening of political activity among American fundamentalists and evangelicals. Ammerman rejected arguments by Hunter (1963) and others who viewed fundamentalism as a belief system embraced by people who remained outside the mainstream of modern economic and cultural influences. She suggested that twentieth-century fundamentalism was more aptly characterized as a religion composed of people who actively rejected these modern influences. Through ethnographic research, she examined how fundamentalist beliefs and practices played off exposure to modernity. The people she studied held regular jobs, usually in lower-middle-class occupations, interacted regularly with nonfundamentalists, and sent their children to public schools. Yet they maintained an alternative "plausibility structure" (Berger 1966) that helped them reject the values and lifestyles of their neighbors and coworkers. This plausibility structure consisted of a clearly articulated set of religious beliefs oriented around the literal truth of the Bible, extensive interaction with other members of their congregation, and high regard for their pastor, who served as a strong authority figure. In return, they acquired a sense of ultimate meaning in life that exceeded the gratifications they received from their work. Ammerman observed that the group imposed strict gender distinctions on members, calling on women to be submissive and perform nearly all household work, yet (like Griffith) she discovered that the church was also a source of empowerment for these women, particularly through church work and prayer circles that gave them opportunities to redefine themselves.

Ammerman's study provides an interesting look at what it may take for people to develop and maintain alternative values from those associated with the market economy. Fundamentalists at the church she studied did this partially and on a piecemeal basis. Unlike members of communes who may retreat from the larger economy by developing their own means of livelihood and pooling assets, Ammerman's fundamentalists remained involved in the larger economy. They nevertheless contributed ample of time and money to the church, and sometimes made decisions that lowered their children's chances for upward mobility.

The contribution of studies such as Ammerman's is partly to demonstrate that traditional religion and modern economic behavior relate in more complex ways than earlier scholarship may have recognized. Lynn Davidson's *Tradition in a Rootless World* (1991) offers a further contribution of this kind. Davidson conducted participant observation and in-depth interviews among two communities of Jewish women who had chosen to become Orthodox. Nearly all the women were from middle- or upper-middle-class backgrounds, had earned college educations or graduate degrees, and in many cases had already begun successful careers in professional-level jobs. Yet they became discontent, dropped out of these careers or career paths, took lower-paying or menial jobs, and became intensely devoted to Orthodox practices. Davidson was interested in learning what had caused them to drop out and how they made sense of their decision to do so.

She found that dropping out was usually the result of a personal or family crisis, such as a divorce or separation, a romantic relationship ending, an illness, or a death in the family. These crises precipitated deeper questions about meaning in life, which the women said could not be addressed satisfactorily through ordinary careers or consumer behavior. Religion offered them a sense of focus and a source of comfort they had been unable to find elsewhere. Davidson suggests that it was the interaction with other women and feeling of root-
edness in a tradition that mattered most, rather than religious beliefs (many were unsure of God’s existence). The women nevertheless had to undergo a process of resocialization to become comfortable with their new identities. This process, Davidman says, consisted of focusing increasing attention on private life, substituting religious involvement and more traditional roles as mothers and wives for the earlier family relationships that had gone awry. Interestingly, then, dropping out of mainstream economic life worked better at reconstructing their private lives than it did at providing an alternative way of being engaged in public life.

While Ammerman and Davidman add complexity to previous understandings of the tensions between fundamentalism and economic activities by emphasizing the role of gender, a different approach to these tensions is evident in Susan Harding’s *Book of Jerry Falwell* (2000). Harding conducted ethnographic research at Falwell’s Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, in the early 1980s and then turned to examining the wider fundamentalist movement through its sermons, television programs, books, and other publications. Her research pays closer attention to the content and rhetorical style of these materials than most other studies of fundamentalism do (see also Witten 1992). She concludes that there is power in the words themselves, and not just in the social processes involved in fundamentalist communities. She shows, for example, how an interview with a fundamentalist pastor who used the occasion for proselytization drew her in, established a verbal relationship between herself and the pastor’s story of himself, and then supplied language that she discovered herself using later to describe her own emotions. Harding emphasizes two ways in which fundamentalist discourse bears on economic behavior. One is a tight, internally consistent set of stories that provides an alternative explanation for world events, including the trajectory of history. Thus, it becomes possible for fundamentalists to believe that history is moving toward final judgment at the hands of God, rather than only experiencing a series of business cycles, and to view an urban setting like New York City as a place of evil rather than evidence of progress. The other is to incorporate advanced thinking about economics and technology into their own ministries. Through an examination of television ministries, for instance, she shows how makeup, camera angles, and styles of speech effectively mimic those of secular television programs while offering a different message.

The significance of studies such as this for broader inquiries in economic sociology lies in at least three areas. First, fundamentalists (and evangelicals, who are somewhat closer in beliefs and lifestyles to those of other Americans) make up a large minority of the American population (not to mention in other parts of the world), which means that studies of general economic patterns may need to take these communities into account. Second, the tensions and processes of resistance and accommodation identified in studies of fundamentalism may be similar to those in other settings, such as communities, ethnic groups, families, or even occupational groups (such as some helping professions) in which relationships with broader market structures are negotiated. And third, these studies suggest some of the ways in which socialization and resocialization occurs—which may resemble processes in high-involvement work settings, such as hospitals, military units, fire companies, and graduate programs.

**Faith-Based Organizations**

The study of faith-based organizations has been motivated by concerns quite different from studies of fundamentalism. Whereas fundamentalist congregations may have only an implicit connection with economic behavior, faith-based organizations bear directly and explicitly on such behavior. Faith-based organizations in the United States are broadly of two kinds: those that engage in service activities and those that focus on community organizing.

The discussion of faith-based service organizations has been prompted by shifts in public policy, particularly the Charitable Choice provision included in welfare reform legislation in 1996 and Bush administration efforts to expand faith-based initiatives in 2001. While much of this discussion lies outside the present chapter and has been considered elsewhere (Cadge and Wuthnow 2003; Wuthnow 2004), several studies have examined faith-based organizations in ways that contribute to new understandings of the relationships between religion and economic life.

Jerome Baggett’s (2001) study of Habitat for Humanity situates this religiously initiated nonprofit service organization within a larger discussion of the voluntary sector, which he (following others) contrasts with the for-profit or market sector and the governmental sector. Noting that both Weber and Tocqueville mention the importance of religious teachings about charity to the historic
formation of this sector, Badgett argues that religious parachurch organizations make up an important and growing part of the voluntary sector. Why is this the case and what accounts for the success of some organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity, is the question Baggett seeks to answer. He rejects functionalist economic theories (Weisbrod 1988) that attribute the existence of nonprofit organizations simply to their ability to fulfill economic goals not suited to for-profit organizations. He instead emphasizes Habitat’s religious vision, which gave it legitimacy among church leaders who supported it and helped recruit volunteers; its critique of government and the market, which gives it a distinct niche to fill; and its three-tier organizational structure, which imitates businesses and government agencies. More than these, though, he argues that Habitat succeeds by providing tangible ways in which both volunteers and recipients feel empowered. This sense of empowerment also comes about symbolically because volunteers and recipients feel they have extended themselves in bridging class boundaries. Baggett suggests, however, that Habitat is subject to constant pressures from the marketplace: “The market reaches into this institution when the organizational decisions that were freely made at its founding are constrained toward greater commercialization, and when professionalization curtails ... grassroots participation” (178).

Diane Winston’s (1999) study of the Salvation Army tackles questions similar to those of Baggett, but moves further from conventional treatments of the market and its tensions with religious organizations. Tracing the Army’s history from its arrival in New York in 1880 through the 1950s, when it was poised to emerge as the nation’s largest faith-based nonprofit service organization, Winston argues that the Army’s success runs counter to earlier scholars’ assumptions about the incompatibility of religion with urban commercial society. The Army succeeded, she suggests, by developing new practices that were suited to this environment: street revivals and open air meetings that took advantage of New York’s high population density, its network of soup kitchens and rescue homes for indigent immigrants, fund-raising kettles and bell ringers stationed near department stores, brass bands and colorful garb that attracted journalists, and programs that imitated theater productions. In the process, the Army did not simply become secular, but “sought to saturate the secular with the sacred” (4). It did so by deliberately transgressing boundaries previously separating commercial life from religion. Salvationist parades became flamboyant incursions into commercial territory; women dressed in military uniforms jarred Gilded Age sensibilities, and minstrel shows and vaudeville with religious themes blurred boundaries between piety and entertainment.

As a contribution to economic sociology, Winston’s study is most provocative in its emphasis on the ways in which inventive social practices rearrange social categories. A religious organization like the Salvation Army, she contends, should not be regarded simply as a dependent variable that was more influenced by commercial culture than the reverse. Rather, she wants us to see that social change comes about through effective leadership (agency) that not only mobilizes resources but also uses these resources to challenge preconceived ideas about the arrangement of social life. In the case of the Salvation Army, this challenge came about not so much through talk as through performance. Public events, clothing, buildings, and even food became ways of enacting new meanings and relationships. Urban religion was born, and in the process the commercial arena also gained a kind of sanctity it had not known before. Winston’s study is thus an example of how recent work that focuses on social practices rather than ideas and beliefs blurs the boundaries between religion and economic activity.

Studies of faith-based community organizing pose a different set of questions that focus more squarely on ways in which religion comes into opposition with economic arrangements. Following the Alinsky model of community organizing developed in the 1950s and 1960s, faith-based community organizing in the United States has enlisted between one and two million volunteers in recent decades. Through regional networks of churches, volunteers undergo training to work with labor unions, stage protest demonstrations, and engage in political action aimed at achieving economic justice for the poor. While studies of these organizations are usually framed in terms of religion and politics (Hart 2001) or religion and race (Wood 2002), they also raise interesting questions about religion and economic behavior.

Mark Warren’s (2001) study of the Industrial Areas Foundation Texas Network argues that faith-based community organizing is a potentially important way of opposing economic exploitation in contemporary society. The problem, Warren suggests, is that economic inequality not only dries up economic resources in low-income communities but also reduces the likelihood that low-
income families will have social networks and community organizations through which to mobilize their political interests. He finds that in Texas, churches remain one of the few community organizations in low-income communities. Churches’ ideology favors helping the poor, and church structures sometimes span racial and social class lines. Yet churches often focus only on personal piety rather than political mobilization. IAF leadership and training played a key role in helping these churches mobilize.

Paul Lichterman (2005) also tackles the question of how religious groups move from focusing on personal piety to taking a more active role in their communities and thus opposing economic inequality. Through an examination of two interfaith coalitions in Wisconsin, he suggests that being interested in helping the needy is not enough. Religious groups that engage in service and advocacy can do so with little sense of what Lichterman calls social membership; that is, participating as a group with other groups on behalf of some larger collectivity. Moving to this level of social awareness, he suggests, depends less on organization or doctrine and more on interactive processes that transform individuals and group identities.

Warren and Lichterman contribute to our understanding of economic sociology by reminding us that religion interacts with economic life through political means. In their studies, churches occupy a private or nonpolitical space in most cases, and church members function as isolated individuals—patterns consistent with views of how economic modernization marginalizes religion. Taking a more active stance in opposition to economic inequality and injustice, therefore, requires churches to develop a political voice. Doing so is likely to require outside expertise, training, and leadership, overcoming what Warren refers to as utopian preferences for participatory democracy, and moving toward Lichterman’s idea of social membership.

Religion and Markets

A variety of studies have focused in new ways on the intersection between religion and markets. Recognizing that markets are a form of economic organization that spills into other realms of life, the authors of these studies have emphasized how religion adapts to these influences. Some studies extend current thinking about markets by suggesting that not-for-profit enterprises like religious organizations compete for customers much like for-profit firms do, and thus develop forms that resemble markets. Other studies take up the idea of market niches and show that niches develop not only through market competition but through the symbolic strategies of religious organizations and through contingent rearrangements of economic and political factors. Yet another line of investigation has examined the marketization of religious practices themselves.

One strand of research has drawn loosely on the idea of market competition to explain the persistence of religion in the United States and relative growth or decline among particular religious groups. This research emphasizes the fact that the United States is characterized by religious pluralism and suggests that pluralism results in a kind of competitive market, similar to markets in the economic sphere, which encourages entrepreneurship and leads to overall religious vitality (Warner 1993). In The Churching of America, 1776–1990, Roger Finke and Rodney Stark (1992) examine the rising proportion of Americans who claimed church membership during the nineteenth century and compare the relatively high rates of growth during this period among Baptists and Methodists with lower growth among Episcopalians and Presbyterians. They also examine various other Protestant sects and Catholics and discuss the decline of mainline Protestant denominations in the last third of the twentieth century. Their key analytic device is what they call religious economies. In the United States, they argue, religion is unregulated (unlike in European countries where state churches limit free expression of religion), and thus the relative size of denominations is a function of the choices of individuals. That being the case, religion can be viewed as a kind of market in which religious organizations compete for members. More specifically, the fate of religious firms is a function of their organizational structures, their sales representatives, their products, and their marketing techniques. Thus, the relatively high growth rates of Baptists and Methodists in the nineteenth century can be understood as a function of a less restrictive denominational polity, a more aggressive strategy of evangelization and church planting, and a theology that provided people with more persuasive reasons to join (see also Stark and Finke 2000).

A similar argument has been put forth by Iannaccone (1994) in an examination of growth and decline among Protestant denominations in the 1970s and 1980s. He finds that members of “extremist sects” are more likely than members of
mainline denominations to devote more time and money to their churches, socialize more with fellow church members, and be less involved in secular organizations. He argues that these findings can be explained by an application of rational choice theory that emphasizes the value of doctrinal and behavioral strictness for discouraging members from being free riders.

Critics (Chaves 1995; Chaves and Cann 1992) argue that hypotheses drawn from rational choice theory are sometimes difficult to disprove or that its applications are limited to a relatively narrow range of religious activities (such as denomination al choice). Economic sociologists also stress that differences in independent variables (such as "strictness") still have to be explained and usually require paying attention to cultural factors and institutional arrangements. A study that illustrates the value of bringing in considerations of this kind is Christian Smith's American Evangelicalism (1998). Like Iannaccone, Smith is interested in accounting for the growth and high levels of religious commitment among conservative Protestants. But through a national survey and in-depth interviews, Smith shows that strictness provides an adequate explanation. Self-identified evangelicals are more active than self-identified fundamentalists, despite not being as strict, and these evangelicals are scattered throughout a number of different denominations. Drawing on Fischer's (1975) concept of subcultures, Smith suggests that self-identified evangelicals have developed an identity as an embattled subculture. They maintain this identity through beliefs and activities that pit themselves against worldliness in the wider culture and against what they perceive as relativism in liberal churches. Within this subculture, they are actually quite diverse and in many ways similar to other Americans, but public pronouncements and a few hot-button issues (such as abortion) maintain their symbolic separation from the wider culture. This subculture, Smith suggests, defines a niche for them in the larger religious market that encourages participation and growth. Smith's study, therefore, illustrates how religious leaders actively create and maintain a market niche for themselves and their followers, rather than being governed by market forces that only bear on the choices of isolated individuals.

Another adaptation of niche theory is illustrated by my study of the comparative success or failure of social movements associated with the Protestant Reformation, Enlightenment, and rise of socialism in Western Europe between the sixteenth and early twentieth centuries (Withnow 1989). In this study, economic conditions emerged as important factors in the growth of religious and other ideological movements, but not straightforwardly through market expansion or industrialization. Instead, economic conditions influenced the relative position of status groups, and this influence created space for movements that capitalized on the changing circumstances. I developed arguments about the ways in which niches emerge for social movements by piecing together ideas about the population ecology and institutional environments of organizations with ideas about state building and the political economy of world systems. I suggested that shifts in the configuration of economic resources lead to changes in institutional arrangements, especially conflicts and stalemates between rising and decline elites. Under these conditions, a social space emerges in which social movements can develop. Once a space of this kind emerges, multiple social movements usually occur, which can be analyzed in terms of a three-phase process of production, selection, and institutionalization. The economic environment does not dictate which movements are successful, but movement leaders do attempt to articulate appeals that make sense of changing economic conditions. New ideas are produced by these social movements, not as simple reflections of social conditions but as reconstructions of social horizons, discursive fields that set the parameters for (often polarized) public debates, and figural actors or textualized versions of movement leaders, heroes, and martyrs. Through comparisons of the economic, social, political, religious, and intellectual histories of European countries and regions during the three periods under consideration, I was able to show how the political economy of niche formation helped to account for variations in the rise of the Reformation, Enlightenment, and socialist movements.

Another set of studies has examined the relationships between recent changes in the quality of American religion and developments in markets and related activities, such as consumerism. Drawing on Leers (1981), Berger (1963, 1999), and others, this research suggests that insights about markets may be useful for understanding the ways in which people regard their religious commitments and put them into practice. Some of this work emphasizes the fluidity and apparent shallowness of religious commitments, contrasting these commitments with ones of an earlier era that supposedly demonstrated more stability and a more unified sense of self or character (Hunter 2001). These de-
Picton's associate superficiality with broader cultural changes brought about by mass-marketed goods and advertising. They sometimes also link religious superficiality to self-interest and an emphasis on personal feelings, which are said to be reinforced by market capitalism (Bellah et al. 1985).

Some researchers, however, argue that religion has merely adapted to the commercial culture, changing form but not necessarily being weakened or strengthened in the process (Schmidt 1995).

In *Spiritual Marketplace* (1999), Wade Clark Roof attempts to make sense of a wide variety of late-twentieth-century religious developments by viewing them as if they had taken place, as it were, in a giant supermarket. Building on previous work that described a “new voluntarism” (Roof and McKinney 1987) in American religion and a “generation of seekers” (Roof 1993), Roof emphasizes that choice, religious switching, and eclecticism became more common than in the past among people who came of age in the 1960s. Unlike Ian Nacoone, he is less interested in explaining the particular denominational choices people make (recognizing that there are only some of the ways in which choice affects religion) and more interested in understanding the phenomenon of the spiritual marketplace itself. He suggests that the spiritual marketplace can be understood in terms of the social world, producers, the audience, and cultural objects. Globalization, which brings non-Western religions to Americans' attention, is an example of a change in the social world. In examining producers, he emphasizes authors, publishing houses, bookstores, and television, all of which have emerged alongside more conventional sources of religious information. The audience, he says, is characterized by self-reflexivity, by which he means awareness of having to make choices, and by anxieties from living in a world of abundant choices. Cultural products that appeal to this kind of consumer include ones that appeal to personal spirituality rather than organized religion, that mix spirituality with health and therapy, and that offer new understandings of gender, sexuality, or ethnicity. Roof suggests that the spiritual marketplace is redrawing the map of American religion, for instance, separating those with more dogmatic or traditional beliefs from self-styled spiritual seekers. He also associates the new contours of spirituality with possible consequences for the economic sphere, such as people feeling dissatisfied with work and money or taking longer to decide on meaningful careers.

Examining some of these same aspects of the spiritual marketplace, my research on American religion has sought to understand changes in the economic sphere in conjunction with changes in other social institutions and then to examine the effects of these changes on religion and spirituality.

In *The Restructuring of American Religion* (1988), I extended an earlier argument about the relationship between transitions in international economic arrangements and social movements (Wuthnow 1987) to examine ways in which shifts in an industrial to a service economy, uncertainties about the rules governing international trade, educational upgrading, realignments among elites, and accompanying opportunities for moral experimentation destabilized adherence to traditional denominational and ethnic communities and resulted in new schisms that cut across many of these communities. While this work treated economic factors largely as causal variables, it sought to move away from arguments about direct influences of modernization or commercialization to ones emphasizing social uncertainties brought about by a kind of shifting of gears in economic arrangements. In *After Heaven* (1998a), I turned from public religion to questions about personal spirituality, arguing that a spirituality of dwelling that had become prominent during the 1950s as a result of the Cold War and an emphasis on homes and child rearing was gradually replaced by a spirituality of seeking that drew inspiration from the influence of social mobility, and social movements of the late 1960s and 1970s, and that remained strong despite political movements in the 1980s that tried to impose moral discipline. In a related work (Wuthnow 1998b) I examined changes in family arrangements, economic organization, politics, and communities, suggesting that expanding markets and technological changes in the capacity to exchange information had resulted in porous institutions that permitted goods, people, and information to flow across institutional boundaries with greater frequency and ease; under these conditions, religious loyalties also became more fluid. These arguments emphasized how economic conditions influence religious practices, but tried to suggest that this influence was mediated by families, neighborhoods, the mass media, social movements, and religious organizations.

While studies of the relationships between religion and markets have been a rich area of investigation, it is clear that scholars disagree on which aspects of markets to emphasize and how exactly to demonstrate their effects on religious behavior. Most studies, however, appear to take for granted...
that causal influences flow more obviously from economic arrangements to religion than the reverse. That being the case, studies nevertheless dismiss straightforward or one-to-one correspondences between economic conditions and religion, arguing instead that religious movements, entrepreneurs, political agencies, and individuals all play an active role in constructing religious meanings.

WORKING LIFE

Changes in working conditions and the labor force, such as the rise of a professional-managerial class, longer working hours, expansion of the service economy and nonprofit sector, and inclusion of women in the paid labor force, have prompted a number of studies that attempt to relate religion to these changes. As studies of fundamentalists suggest, some of this research has been concerned especially with apparent conflicts between traditional religion and women’s inclusion in the labor force. Other research has examined the effects of religious commitment on decisions about the balance between work and family life or on work satisfaction and attitudes toward money. Much of this research draws inspiration from classical theory, such as Weber’s discussion of Protestant teachings about asceticism and divine calling. For consider churches and synagogues as places where values are shaped. However, some of the new assumptions about religion that I discussed earlier are also evident in this literature.

In a U.S. study of the relationships among moral understandings, religion, work, and money (Wuthnow 1994a, 1996), I suggested that it might be helpful to move past economic explanations that attribute work to workers’ desire for money and thus to view work differently from a simple form of utility maximization. I argued that evidence from a wide variety of studies indicates that people do not work only for money but work in order to give what I termed a legitimate account of themselves—to friends and family, coworkers, and themselves. Through in-depth interviews I showed that people do have readily available accounts of why they work, why they work where they do, and what they like and dislike about their work. These accounts connected people’s work with their sense of self-identity. However, they were also heavily influenced by the workplace itself, leading people to adopt what I called a “workplace self” that was often disconnected from other values and other aspects of their selves. For instance, people in large corporations sometimes spoke of their workplaces as if they were “mom and pop” or family stores and emphasized the “ladder” they were climbing instead of how their work might be furthering the good of society or their own fulfillment. Similarly, people constructed accounts about their money and their purchases, but these accounts were more private than the accounts people gave about their work; indeed, there was a noticeable taboo against talking about money. In the absence of public discussions about money, people tended to construct their accounts largely from advertisements that encouraged them to do comparison shopping rather than think about relationships between goods and larger values. I also examined historical changes in the ways people talked about work and money, similarities and differences between working-class and middle-class Americans and between new immigrants and native-born Americans, and suggested how a small minority of Americans have tried to re integrate their thinking about work with broader considerations from religion, art, literature, and politics. The study suggested that places of employment and economic ways of framing discussions of money do have a powerful influence in people’s lives, but sought to show that these influences come about through cultural practices that mask the degree of choice people actually have. In short, people feel that they are exercising choice, but in fact, see how the range of choices they consider is limited.

Michele Lamont’s (2000) study of working men in the United States and France is also concerned with the ways in which people come to understand their work and themselves. The black and white working men she interviewed in the suburbs of New York and Paris were keenly aware that they were employed in low-status occupations. Thus, Lamont was interested in how these men were able to diminish the importance of people in higher-status occupations and make claims about their own worth. She found that black and white workers alike emphasized hard work, personal integrity, and traditional morality as ways of compensating for low socioeconomic status. Religious belief and involvement was especially important in reinforcing their claims about adherence to traditional morality. Being part of a church, for instance, provided these men with talking points to use in arguing that they really were more moral than others who presumably did not attend church. Black workers were more likely than white workers to draw on religious language and within this language to emphasize religious scripts about caring and family loyalty rather than individual morality.

Lamont's study points to the importance in economic sociology of considering the status differentials involved in all economic transactions and to examine how people may neutralize or minimize these differentials. Work is embedded in the larger set of activities and scripts through which people acquire feelings of self-worth. People may emphasize the money they earn as an indication of worth or of the cultural tastes that this money supports (as she found in a previous study of professional men; Lamont 1992). Status claims may also emphasize the sheer fact of working hard and doing hard work or activities that may be only peripherally associated with their work, such as hobbies or religion. These sources of self-worth are not matters strictly of private assessment but are part of the social worlds in which people live. They create what Lamont calls a "world in moral order" (17)—a sense that the world is structured and ordered in ways that place a person on the side of good rather than evil.

Research has also contributed to understandings of the conditions under which people may opt out of work oriented toward maximizing economic interests in favor of altruistic pursuits. In The Heart of Altruism (1996), Kristen Monroe investigates the outlooks of people during World War II who risked their lives to rescue potential victims of the Holocaust. She argues that psychological and economic explanations that account for such heroic acts in terms of self-interest are unconvincing. She shows instead that rescuers had through family experiences, education, and other socializing experiences developed an overriding sense of common humanity. Thus, they were unable to pass opportunities to rescue humans whose lives were in danger. In Acts of Compassion (1991), I examined the seeming contradiction between the United States being a culture driven by economic self-interest and expressive individualism (Bellah et al. 1985) and its high and apparently rising levels of voluntary caring for the needy. Through in-depth interviews and a national survey, I showed that individuals and caregivers were often the same people, rather than two competing segments of the population. The in-depth interviews revealed that people reconcile these two sides of themselves by developing heteroglossic stories about their motives for being altruistic. Heteroglossia permits them to have multiple motives and to register self-interest while also denying it. Nonprofit organizations also help to reconcile altruism with individualism by circumscribing the roles caregivers are expected to play. In Learning to Care (1995), I further examined the process by which people may decide to enter caregiving careers. Through a national study of teenagers, I discovered that community service programs create opportunities for young people to move past idealistic understandings of caring that were common in their families and to develop role-specific views of caring that relate both to their self-identity and their familial values. These community service projects train young people in the kinds of role expectations they will need as they enter careers, but encourage them to channel these expectations toward caregiving careers. Rebecca Allahyari, in Visions of Charity (2000), presents a similar idea through her ethnographic study of adult volunteers in service organizations. She demonstrates that volunteers construct moral selves that link their emotions with moral rhetoric that in turn redefines their sense of self-worth.

Research on working lives underscores what economic sociology has also asserted about work and money, namely, that their meanings are worthy of examination (Zelizer 1994). These meanings may be reduced to economic preferences for purposes of modeling economic behavior. But if we wish to achieve a more complete understanding of human life, we need to take into consideration the meaning-making capacity of our species. People construct accounts of their work and money. These accounts are often shaped by the workplace and marketplace in ways that reinforce commitment and derail people from thinking about other pursuits. However, some studies also point to the ways in which behavior that cannot easily be understood in terms of economic calculation, such as altruism, is chosen and regarded as legitimate.

**Policy Domains**

Apart from the personal pursuits that characterize individuals in their religious congregations or at work, religion and economic life frequently come together in debates about public policy. Examples include discussions of debt relief for economically disadvantaged countries, which have been put forward by religious organizations, movements nurtured in religious settings that sought to overcome racial discrimination and promote equal economic opportunities, and efforts to halt wars or human rights violations that were deemed by religious groups to be worthwhile even though they may have contradicted arguments rooted in economic self-interest. Although the relationships be-
tween religion and economic policy occur at a different level of social organization, studies suggest that some of the same thinking about religious practices and cultural constructions applies.

An important example of work bringing religion together with policy concerns is Melani McAlister’s (2001) study of American attitudes toward the Middle East during the last half of the twentieth century. McAlister argues that U.S. policies toward the Middle East were shaped by U.S. oil interests and perceptions of the Middle East as a holy land. Her study is thus concerned with pivotal episodes in which these two sources of American attitudes—the economic and the religious—came together. She examines “biblical epics,” such as Ben Hur, Quo Vadis, The Ten Commandments, and other films, in the 1950s; the Middle East in African American cultural politics during the era of the civil rights movement; the oil crisis of the 1970s; U.S. relationships with Israel in the 1970s; the Iranian revolution and its aftermath in the 1980s; and the Gulf War and its aftermath in the 1990s. She analyzes a wide variety of materials, including films, popular magazines, newspaper articles, television news, museum exhibits, religious fiction, and sermons. She concludes that U.S. imperial power in the Middle East has been refracted through new lenses that have permitted Americans to make sense of their interests in the Middle East, to see continuity with long-standing images of the region, and to adjust these images to fit new understandings of themselves.

McAlister’s study is situated explicitly in relation to Edward Said’s (1979) influential treatise on Orientalism, which in turn serves as a link to Max Weber and modernization theory in sociology. Said argued that a long tradition of European and American scholarship, which developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and ranged from literature and history to the social sciences, depicted the world in a way that privileged and legitimated economic and geopolitical power. In these depictions, the world was divided in two unequal halves, Occident and Orient. One was economically developed, superior; the other, underdeveloped, subordinate; both were described monolithically, and the two stood in a symbiotic relationship, the identity of each depending on the other. Weber’s characterization of Western religion as more rational and more conducive to modernization than Eastern religions is an example of the kind of work Said criticized. McAlister identifies two problems with Said’s analysis that in her view render it unsatisfactory for understanding American percep-


tions of the Middle East in the postcolonial period. First, his argument that East and West were each viewed as homogeneous entities does not fit Americans’ actual and perceived emphasis on internal diversity. Second, his argument that the West has consistently been depicted in masculine terms while the East has been depicted in feminine terms needs to be reconsidered in light of shifting understandings of gender in the United States.

McAlister shows that American attitudes toward the Middle East adjusted and became more complex during the second half of the twentieth century in conjunction with changing understandings of race, gender, and religion. During the civil rights movement, for example, African American leaders drew on biblical themes of exodus that envisioned continuity with the Holy Land as paradise and symbol of freedom, while growing numbers of African American Muslims sought to distance themselves from oppressive Christianity by identifying with the Muslim Middle East. In the 1970s, the popularity of the Treasures of Tutankhamun exhibit prompted new discussions of the Middle East that, taking place in the aftermath of the 1973 oil embargo, reinforced a rhetoric of imperial stewardship over resources in the Middle East. Racial themes continued in new discussions of whether the ancient Egyptians were black or white. During the same period, American support for Israel came to be understood within a new framework. Israel became “les a symbol of religious and cultural affiliation for Americans (as it had been in many ways in the years immediately following the Holocaust and the founding of the state) and more an emblem for a conservative argument about the legacies of Vietnam. In that logic, Israel, unlike the United States, seemed to many to be a nation that was not afraid to fight—and win” (42).

Themes of adaptation and reinterpretation also figure prominently in McAlister’s analysis of the Iranian hostage crisis and the Gulf War. In the former, a language of threat and containment developed around an emerging interest in antiterrorism and was accentuated by a reversal of Said’s masculine-feminine dichotomy in which American hostages and their families were portrayed with images of domesticity and femininity to construct an “agrieved dichotomy” distinguished by suffering. Portrayals of the Gulf War incorporated America’s new sense of its own racial and ethnic diversity by creating images of “military multiculturalism” that depicted the armed forces as a microcosm of the larger society. McAlister anticipates some of the consternation that emerged
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after the September 11, 2001, attacks on New York and Washington by suggesting that the Gulf War understandings of multiculturalism worked by presenting the Middle East as an outsider and thus excluding consideration of the presence of Arab Americans and other Muslims in the United States.

McAlister integrates these various case studies by borrowing Michael Shapiro's (1994) concept of moral geographies. Each of the various themes that emerges in her analysis constitutes a moral geography or set of "cultural and political practices that work together to mark not only states but also regions, cultural groupings, and ethnic or racial territories" (McAlister 2001, 4). Highlighting these moral geographies is a way of disclosing the silent ethical assertions that guide thinking about a part of the world. In this conception, understandings of the Middle East are not simply frameworks or arguments, but practices that embody public discussion, images, emotion, and behavior. Such practices are often internally contradictory, McAlister says, but on the whole they provide an important cultural underpinning for U.S. national expansion in the Middle East.

The contribution of McAlister's work to economic sociology lies in showing that a foreign policy, such as U.S. policy toward the Middle East, is guided not only by straightforward economic interests, but by an embedding of these interests in cultural frameworks that often carry religious connotations. While her argument might be interpreted simply as one of religion legitimating economic interests, the real contribution of her work is to show how strands of economic and religious reasoning are actually woven together. Her model provides an answer to questions about why economic interests are so robust, even in the face of changing cultural understandings and criticism. Imperial power is not easily diagnosed or criticized because of its capacity to surround itself with these complex threads of meaning. Resistance rooted in new understandings of racial and gender identity was absorbed into American attitudes toward the Middle East, criticizing earlier notions of American power, but at the same time transforming the United States into a postcolonial power intent on defending its interests. Her work suggests the importance of examining pivotal moments in which public debate emerged around policy issues and of focusing not only on specific policies themselves but on the collateral images from film, religion, and other sources that frame attitudes toward policies. Understanding these pivotal events requires paying attention to the producers of culture, such as filmmakers and religious leaders, and looking at interaction among these producers, rather than focusing only on a single source, such as religion or film.

John Evans (2002) illustrates a different approach to the relationships between religion and economic policies in his study of bioethics. Although human genetic engineering (HGE) may be less obviously a matter of economic policy than U.S. relations to the Middle East, the technology underlying HGE and its implications for business are indications of its relevance. Evans observes that in the 1960s theologians were among the first to raise ethical questions about HGE and did so in reference to broad considerations about human nature. Between the early 1960s and mid 1990s, though, public debates about HGE policy came increasingly to be dominated by professional bioethicists who focused on more practical issues, such as feasibility, cost, risk reduction, and byproducts. The shift can, in one sense, be viewed as a straightforward process of rationalization (including secularization) of the kind Weber described (from a consideration of ends to a focus on adjusting ends to fit means). Evans argues, however, that this shift from what he terms substantive rationality to formal rationality did not come about automatically. Rather, it occurred through a series of discussions that resulted in increasing intervention by government agencies. Between the late 1950s and early 1970s, theologians and scientists mostly debated the issue in substantive terms having to do with broad arguments about ends. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, scientists advocated the creation of government advisory commissions. These commissions asked for a formally rational type of argumentation that, in turn, resulted in the emergence of a new profession called bioethics. As professional bioethicists came increasingly into the picture, they challenged arguments about broad human ends as being too vague, but gradually institutionalized their own conceptions of ends, which included beneficence and autonomy. With growing interest in HGE within the research community, autonomy increasingly replaced beneficence.

Evans's study, then, falls squarely within the Weberian tradition of asking questions about potential conflict and accommodation between religious values and economic interests. More so than McAlister's, his argument focuses on explaining a series of specific policy outcomes (decisions to authorize stem cell research, for example). His study illustrates the importance, as economic sociologists
also urge, of situating economic decisions in institutional contexts. When economic decisions become matters of public debate, government is likely to be invited to arbitrate, but its intervention may alter both the terms of debate and the set of participants who are invited to the table. Other studies that point to similar conclusions (although not necessarily with reference to religion) include Seccsland’s (2002) investigation of moral claims in debates about public welfare policy during the Nixon and Carter administrations, Espeland’s (1998) study of water policies in the Southwest, and Moody and Thienot’s (2000) discussion of environmental policies in California and France.

**Future Directions**

The institutionalization of economic sociology as a subdiscipline appears to have (perhaps ironically) been accompanied by a wider variety of scholarship that does not claim this label but contributes in its own way toward greater understanding of economic behavior, including the role of religion in this behavior. Future work will probably be guided to some extent by two opposing tendencies: an elevation of disciplinary walls aimed at defining what counts as economic sociology and what does not, and growth in scholarship that draws eclectically from a variety of disciplines and subdisciplines.

I have tried to suggest that recent studies of religion and economic life stand loosely in the tradition defined by Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and other earlier contributors to the social sciences. But scholarly inquiries develop both by tracing lineage to earlier work and by rejecting that work (Zald 1995). Some of the present diversity is a reflection of the fact that scholars have disagreed about the importance of various interpretations of the classics from virtually the start. I do not propose, therefore, that the studies discussed here represent anything like a new paradigm. Rather, there are certain common tendencies in some of this work and, at the same time, serious points of disagreement.

The common tendencies include paying close attention to what can broadly be considered culture, now conceived less as mental or internalized ideas and values and more as enacted practices of ideological and ritual production, discourse, and symbolization. Economic behavior is understood to be guided less by internalized preferences and more by active interpretation and negotiation that takes place within fields of symbolic messages and imagery. The common trends also include focusing on interactive processes involving economic resources, interest groups, power arrangements, media, gender roles, and religious institutions, rather than assuming that the relationships between economic conditions and religious behavior can be understood in terms of the social psychology of individual actors (Swidler and Arditi 1994). The points of disagreement concern which of these various factors to emphasize, whether rational choice models are helpful or unhelpful, and how much to think about religion’s relative autonomy from economic conditions or its dependence on these conditions.

One conclusion that can scarcely be ignored is that much of the recent work seems to have abandoned claiming to being scientific. Particularities replace the quest for universals and description takes precedence over causal analysis. This makes it difficult to say whether or not the recent work represents progress or not. But it is equally clear that recent scholarship continues to be a rigorous search for verifiable evidence and that it is organized around central questions that bear the marks of earlier studies. In this sense, recent studies contribute to our understanding of religion and economic life by filling in gaps, addressing puzzling empirical regularities, and illustrating the complexity of human behavior.

We should not minimize the importance of studies emphasizing the messiness of economic transactions and preferences. Economics has advanced by bracketing much of this messiness in order to discover aspects of social interaction that can be understood in terms of simple models. Economic sociology reminds us that these models are simplifications of real life. Studies of religion cannot be interpreted as showing that economic life is rational while religious belief is irrational. Rather, these studies show that both religious and economic practices depend on assumptions that in turn are influenced by the communities in which people live and the circumstances in which they work.

Having established that social life is messy, scholars now face the more difficult task of reestablishing some order on that messiness. Thus far, the quest for such reordering has taken place within the context of multiple analytic languages and competing perspectives. This will probably continue. But there may also be a desire among the next generation of scholars for greater closure and consensus. Paying closer attention to frequently used concepts, such as markets, rationality, and resis-
tance, and emphasizing the influences of power, gender relationships, inequality, and the cultural construction of meaning, may be fruitful first steps.

The greatest empirical challenge will be pushing research beyond relatively accessible sites to those that have been more shielded from public view. Churches are relatively accessible, for instance, whereas corporate boardrooms are less so. Interviews can ask individuals about religion’s influences on their private lives, but it is more difficult to learn how the lending policies of major banks may be influenced by noneconomic criteria such as religious or moral values. Studies of remittances appear especially promising; yet it will be hard for researchers to gain access to informal economies that may govern remittances through ethnic or religious loyalties.

One final observation is that economic sociology and sociology of religion have often been guided by scholars’ desire to establish their subdisciplines as legitimate enterprises. This desire has led to a certain amount of understandable and useful disciplinary posturing. What has remained evident, though, are some of the normative concerns that animated the earliest work in these fields—concerns about inequality, injustice, power, resistance, representation, meaning, and fulfillment, to name a few. If these concerns continue, then future scholarship will stand proudly in the lineage initiated by the founders of our field.

NOTE

1. In the chapter I wrote for the first edition of this handbook (Withnow 1994b), I focused on the contributions of classical economic sociology and of the Weberian, Marxian, and Durkheimian traditions to the discussion of religion and economic life and discussed theoretical elaborations of those traditions, chiefly with regard to questions of religion and ethical restraint, theories of action, the relationships between means and ends, rationality, the calling and work, stewardship and money, and the poor and economic justice. The present chapter is completely new and reflects both the substantial research that has been devoted to the relationships between religion and economic life in the past few years and my own rethinking about the dominant orientation of this research.

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