

# International Foundation for the Advancement of Reflective Learning and Teaching



## Diploma in Social Studies Programme

### **Module Seven: Economics and Politics 7.1 Religion 7.2**

### **Modular Reading Requirement, Guide and Assignment**



## Level 2: Module 7, Diploma in Social Science Programme

Level 2 consists of: three modular components (6, 7, & 8), two assignments, a portfolio submission and a final examination.

- **Three modular components**

### **Module 6**

Society and Social Change/ Social Stratification 6.1

Society and Social Change/ Social Globalisation 6.2

### **Module 7**

Economics and Politics 7.1

Religion 7.2

### **Module 8**

Personal Review (This is a personal review for examination revision and is **not** to be returned to your tutor for grading)

- **Portfolio Submission**





You must present your portfolio with your final examination. See the Introduction to Social Studies for suggestions on completing your Reflective Portfolio. It is essential that you keep a copy in case of loss or damage. The Portfolio will not be returned and your grade will be awarded **with** your Examination Results. Ensure the portfolio is fully completed before you commence your examination as you will not have time to do so during the examination period.

- **Final Examination**

Your tutor will forward an examination registration form with the return of your completed Module 5, which should be duly completed and returned before the specified date, you will require a photocopy of your birth certificate or passport, two recent passport photographs and the registration fee.

# Economics and Politics 7.1 / Religion 7.2

## Obligatory Readings

Economics and Politics 7.1	
<p><b>Reading 7.1A, Introduction to the Economy and Politics</b></p> <p>ARLT Resources: Introduction to the Economy and Politics, 7.1A</p>	 ARLT Resource Site
<p><b>Reading 7.1B, Work and Economic Life, Chapter 20</b></p> <p>Anthony Giddens "Sociology" Textbook, p 883-993</p>	
<p><b>Reading 7.1C, Politics, government and Social Movements, Chapter 22</b></p> <p>Anthony Giddens "Sociology" Textbook, p985-1027</p>	
Religion 7.2	
<p><b>Reading 7.2A, Religion Chapter 16</b></p> <p>Anthony Giddens "Sociology" Textbook:p673-719</p>	

## Economics and Politics 7.1



## Reading 7.1A, ARLT Resources: Overview of Economics and Politics

---

The economy is the social institution that ensures the maintenance of society through the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. The economy is composed of three sectors. The primary sector is the part of the economy in which workers extract raw materials and natural resources directly from the environment and uses them without much processing. Its activities include agriculture, fishing, forestry, and mining. The secondary sector of the economy transforms raw materials into finished products and is essentially the manufacturing industry. Finally, the tertiary sector production is the part of the economy that provides services rather than goods; its activities include health care, teaching, and information technology services. Generally speaking, the less developed a society's economy, the more important its primary sector; the more developed a society's economy, the more important its tertiary sector.

The first thing we need to understand is that every society has certain basic economic decisions to be made if people are to go on living. Societies all have to produce, distribute, and consume goods and services. This leads basic questions: What shall be produced? How shall resources be allocated? How should income be distributed? Which is the better way to make decisions about the economy: market or planning? Each of these is explained in greater detail on the Resource Site.

The relationship between the economy and the government can be explained by exploring the two major political-economic systems in modern societies: capitalism and socialism. Capitalism has three elements: private property, profit seeking and competition. Socialism is a political-economic system in which major economic enterprises, for example, public utilities are both owned and regulated by the state and there are programmes to help the poor and disadvantaged. Considerable private ownership and operation of economic enterprises may coexist with large-scale government ownership. In practice, no one society is purely capitalist or socialist, so it is useful to think of capitalism and socialism on a continuum. Some societies lean toward the capitalist end of the continuum, while other societies lean toward the socialist end. For example, nations in western Europe leaning towards socialism have high tax rates to help finance their social programmes as they attempt to combine the best features of capitalism and socialism while avoiding their faults. The United States is a capitalist nation, but the government still regulates many industries to varying degrees. The industries usually would prefer less regulation, while their critics usually prefer more regulation. The degree of such regulation was the point of controversy after the failure of banks and other financial institutions in the US and Europe in 2008 and 2009. Communism is a political-economic system that contrasts sharply with capitalism, just as capitalism can be called a market economy, communism is a planned economy. Fascism is a political-economic system with the fundamental principle "state absolutism"- *the state has meaning and interests that transcend the welfare of its citizens*. Fascists regimes are totalitarian since any democratic process for the selection of rulers would be dangerous to the state's interests as the rulers define them. Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy are two outstanding examples.

## Reading 7.1B Work and Economic Life, Chapter 20 {Textbook}

---



Chapter 20 is framed against a backdrop of rapid socio-economic change. The opening vignette is an affecting extract from Robert Roberts's *The Classic Slum*. Jockey's lifelong career in the same job, standing on the same square of floor in a factory in a corner of Salford in the UK, stands in stark contrast to the fast-moving and uncertain state of the contemporary economy. Throughout, the aim is to present an

approach to economic life with a highly contemporary feel, and one that gives full value to issues of gender.

There follows a fairly brief rehearsal of the work/non-work distinction and some conceptual ground clearing with distinctions between paid employment and the **informal economy**. Other hidden forms of work such as self-provisioning; housework and voluntary work are highlighted. The general term **work** is defined broadly as tasks requiring mental or physical effort, as opposed to **occupation**, which reflects participation in formal paid employment.

Ann Oakley's study of housework is a Classic Study here, demonstrating another element of the home/work split inherent in industrialisation. The issue of unpaid labour is discussed, as well as recent attempts to place a market value on such activities. The experience of housework prior to labour-saving devices is also described and reference is made to the influential concept of the 'second shift'.

With this introduction complete, the main areas covered are **the social organization of work processes, changing patterns in the broader occupational structure and labour market** and, finally, the **broader social significance of work, especially with regard to precarious employment and, indeed, unemployment**.

The first section outlines the rise of a complex **division of labour** in the modern world and the expansion of economic interdependence this produces. The text traces the evolution of **mass production** techniques and discusses the observations of both Marx and Durkheim on the tendency for these to engender **alienation** among the workforce. The evolution of the division of labour continues, neatly captured by Adam Smith's pin-making example and we are led to its logical conclusion in the emergence of **Taylorism** and its mass production partner **Fordism**. A brief résumé of these techniques is followed by a recognition of their weaknesses – the high start-up costs, the rigidities and so on. (This echoes the critique of bureaucracy offered in chapter 18 for those who might be interested.) Such **low-trust systems** are contrasted with **high-trust systems**,

where workers operate with greater autonomy and co-operation. An extensive boxed feature on industrial conflict highlights and amplifies the tension between these two types of system.

The emergence of the **post-Fordism** paradigm in a global era is presented and critiqued. There is a discussion of some of the specific techniques and initiatives that have become subsumed under that particular umbrella. More use of collaborative work groups has been popular since the 1970s, epitomized by the **quality circle**, a concept alien to Taylorist assumptions that workers need to be stripped of opportunities for creative input. Such techniques evolved into flexible forms of production. These systems tend to be marked by high-skill levels and rapid turnover of product designs. The coexistence of **flexible production** and **mass customization** within post-Fordism is explained and illustrated.

The next section looks at the changing nature of working life, starting with decline in trade union membership in the industrialized countries over the latter part of the twentieth century. Factors underlying this historic shift include the 1980s recession in economic activity, the increasing intensity of international competition as firms move outside the developed world for cheaper sources of labour and the policies of right-wing governments determined to curb what they saw as the excessive power of trades unions. The British Miner's Strike of 1984-5 was a highly symbolic moment, widely seen as a victory for the British government and defeat for trades unions.

Probably the most notable element of recent changes in working life has been the rapid and wide-ranging expansion of female labour market participation. Amongst men, the trend has been away from manual work and latterly also away from routine non-manual labour. These trends have levelled off in recent years, with women remaining overrepresented in routine white-collar jobs and men overrepresented in skilled manual work. A number of issues connecting women and work are touched on. The separation of home and work contributed to the marginalization of women from paid employment, a pattern gradually reversed during the twentieth century. However, women have remained concentrated in part-time employment and 'gendered occupations' represented by the '**5 deadly 'C's of cleaning, catering, caring, cashiering and clerical work**'. Within the economy, women remain concentrated in poorly paid routine occupations. Much recent empirical data is included in these sections. Either work becomes routinized and recreated as 'women's work' or heartlands of female employment slowly have their status eroded over time. Labour-force participation is higher among childless women, though many more females return to their full-time jobs after childbirth than a decade ago. Women dominate part-time employment, though their reasons for remaining in such jobs remain the source of controversy.

The work of Catherine Hakim and her critics is covered here. Despite women's advances across the economy, the top posts remain the preserve of men. Evidence is presented to support a discussion of the interaction between childcare and career opportunities. An account of equal opportunities legislation is followed by statistics on pay differentials between women and men, and the increasing female element of the poverty figures. Recent evidence from UK ESRC cohort studies and from government research shows a

mixed message. Women in the most recent generation have benefited from the legislation passed in the 1970s, but the pay divide remains substantial over a lifetime.

An overview of the main trends in the occupational structure, namely the shift from manufacturing to services, brings the section on the changing nature of work to a close. The decline of manufacturing industry as an employer can be explained both by competition from the Far East and the increasing rate of technological change. There is another brief rehearsal of the emergence of a new era marked by the knowledge economy and the work of Andre Gorz on the declining importance of work in the formal economy is included as a boxed section. Clearly implicit in this debate is the place of skill and information technology and the relationship between the two. The Classic Studies box on Braverman's Marxist deskilling thesis and the related text gives these a thorough airing.

The final main section of the chapter rolls together a number of issues on the edge of the labour market. Given the widespread concern about those who find themselves either temporarily but repeatedly, or indeed totally, excluded from the labour market, the importance of work to individuals' lives cannot be neglected.

The main value from work is summarized in terms of:

- money
- its activity level
- variety
- temporal structure
- social contacts
- personal identity

Further sections follow on the phenomena of job insecurity and **unemployment**. The former is defined, discussed and evaluated using large-scale ESRC-funded research. While in numerical terms job insecurity appears to be blown out of proportion, the text stresses the importance of perceptions in the equation. The history of unemployment is traced from the 1930s through the adoption and subsequent abandonment of Keynesianism. The shortcomings of unemployment statistics are made clear and the concentration of joblessness among certain key groups highlighted.

There is a discussion of unemployment as a form of experience. The effects upon individuals, communities and the wider society are presented, with a stress on the differential experience of classes and age groups.

Many of the changes in the economy are summarised in the closing discussion of Sennett's term 'the corrosion of character'.

The vignette from this book about Enrico and Rico, which opened the chapter in the previous edition, is replayed here and neatly captures many of the contradictions inherent in this field of study.



## Reading 7.1B Politics, Government and Social Movements, Chapter 22 {Textbook}

---

This chapter opens with one of the core political concerns of our times – the West’s involvement in Iraq since 2003. Multiple issues coalesce around this event’s competing models of democracy, the geopolitics of oil, and the perceived legitimacy of international governmental organizations. And all this cemented by the power of the media.



**Government** and **politics** are defined at the outset, the scope of the latter being broader than the activities of state officials, which tend to be the preoccupation of the former. Also covered early on in the chapter is the concept of the **state**. In the case of contemporary **nation-states**, this involves the exercise of **sovereignty**; the population has rights and duties as citizens, and there is a shared sense of nationalism.

Three perspectives on the concept of **power** are discussed, those of Weber, Lukes and Foucault, and in the case of the latter links are explicitly

made with other applications of his approach in other chapters.

Lukes’s influential 3-dimensional perspective is presented here as a Classic Study of power. This is followed by a typology of political systems. As the text points out, most societies purport to be democratic in the limited sense of rule by the people. It is probably a reflection of the times that two ideal-types – **authoritarianism** and democracy are contrasted and there is some discussion of the distinction between **participatory democracy** and **representative democracy**. The spread of liberal democracy is sketched for the reader, with an emphasis on the decline and fall of Soviet-style communism. Fukuyama’s prediction that these events marked ‘the end of history’ provides a boxed summary of the reasons for this outcome (p. 853).

This success is to be explained by its association with capitalism’s ability to create wealth, the clamour for greater openness in a globalised society and the provision of more information through mass communications and the Internet. Despite the apparent triumph of liberal democracy, the undercurrents of discontent with the political process which are a current feature of such societies are acknowledged and accounted for here by the same factors that explained its initial spread. The experiences of China, Afghanistan, the Central Asian republics of the former USSR and Iran go to show that, rather than being a juggernaut, democratization is sometimes more like a shuttle bus.

The global spread of democracy coexists with the paradox of voter apathy, cynicism and low participation: for example, turnout in the UK general election dropped below 60 per cent in 2001 and was 61.3 per cent in 2005. However, the global picture is quite varied with some

democracies, such as Australia and New Zealand continuing to record voter turnout at more than 90 per cent.

At this point we turn to British politics and the narrative compresses political developments since the 1970s, taking in the rise and fall of Thatcherism and the emergence of **New Labour**. There is an account of and explanation for the 1997, 2001 and 2005 election results. The hegemony of New Labour is set within the context of **third way politics**.

This is defined as comprising:

- (a) more dynamic restructured government
- (b) strengthening of **civil society**
- (c) a mixed economy balancing regulation and deregulation
- (d) welfare reform
- (e) environmentally sustainable economic development
- (f) international regulation of global affairs

The text now moves to consider the nation-state and globalization. There is a short rehearsal of the ungovernability argument that was popular in the 1970s and this links well to other places in the book where bureaucracy and democracy are contrasted. This leads smoothly on to another element in the crisis of national government, namely geographical scope. In short, borrowing from Daniel Bell, the nation-state is at once too small and too large for the problems which most concern people. The reader will note that these areas are as much weaknesses in the nation-state form as they are in the method of its government.

Box 22.2 looks at the **European Union** as a form of regional politics within an increasingly global form of politics. This section takes up the agenda about the need for **global governance** that was raised at the end of chapter 4 Globalisation and the Changing World (Module 6) and revisits the nature of the kind of IGOs mentioned in chapter 20.

From here, the concept of 'politics' is broadened out to take account of non-conventional ways of political engagement in the form of social movement. This chapter is always more 'of its time' than some of the other sub-fields covered in the book and this expanded section on social movements keeps the book's political sociology right up to date.

The section begins by defining **social movements** as 'collective attempts to further a common interest or secure a common goal through action outside the sphere of established institutions' (page 1010). The suggestion is made that the contemporary world may be becoming more conducive to social movement formation, leading us towards a 'social movement society'.

We turn now to theories of social movements, beginning with Blumer's interactionist theory of **social unrest**. This argues that movements are the product of dissatisfaction with some aspect of society and the desire for a 'new way of life'. Blumer is credited

with introducing the idea that movements have a 'life cycle' from birth to death or at least, assimilation within society.

Smelser's influential '**value-added model**' is presented as a Classic Study, offering the tools for a research programme. His model's six value-added stages are:

- structural conduciveness,
- structural strain,
- generalised beliefs,
- precipitating factors,
- mobilisation for action and
- the failure of social control.

Essentially, Smelser sees movements as the end product of quite a long process involving all of these six factors, the absence of any one of which might derail movement formation.

**Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT)** is a more recent theory originating in the USA and based on an economic model of social movements. RMT is rooted in one basic insight; that to successfully press their claims, social movements need resources, be they money, supporters, skills or activists. Hence, the social movements field – or 'social movement industry' - can be theorized as a competitive one in which movements compete for scarce resources. Critics point out that RMT targets the question 'how' do movements rise to prominence, and don't offer much by way of addressing the question of why movements emerge.

The latter is the basis for the European theory of **New Social Movements (NSMs)**. NSM theory looks to explain the emergence of a range of movements since the 1960s, including those involving students, gay and lesbian rights (in Box 22.3) and disabled people, as well as those associated with peace and anti-nuclear campaigns and environmentalism. NSMs are said to be based on new issues (such as the environment), new looser organisational forms, broader action repertoires particularly focused on direct actions, and the involvement of new social constituencies such as students, older people and the 'new' middle classes.

Some have seen NSMs as evidence for the development of a post-material politics that diverges from the old labourist politics rooted in claims for equality of wealth distribution.

However, numerous critics point out that NSM claims for novelty may well be overstated. Box 22.2 uses the World Social Forum as an illustration of this kind of unorthodox politics in and for the global age and the chapter concludes with a preliminary assessment of the salience or otherwise of the conventional 'left-right' political cleavage.

## Religion 7.2



The symbols of a number of religions are shown. Clockwise from one o' clock , they are:, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Wicca and some other neopagan religions and finally Baha'i. <http://www.religioustolerance.org>

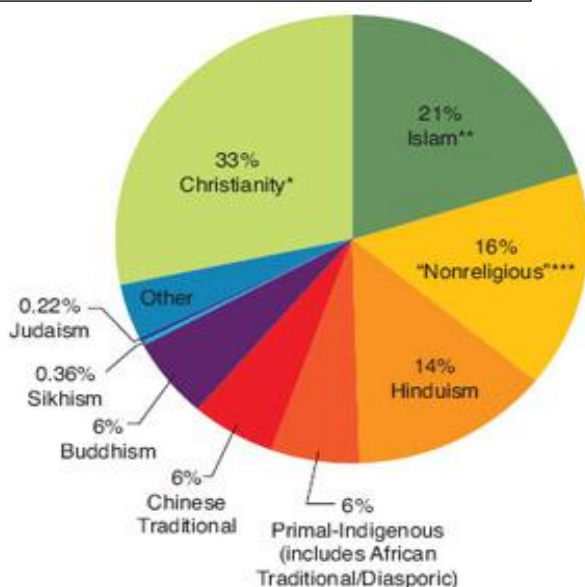
## Religion 7.2

**Religion** is a social institution composed of a unified system of beliefs, symbols, and rituals – based on some sacred or supernatural realm- that guides human behavior, gives meaning to life, and unites believers into a community.

Religion is sometimes thought of as a platform for the expression of **spirituality**, or the relationship between the individual and something larger than oneself, such as a broader sense of connection with the surrounding world.

- i) Spirituality involves inner, subjective feelings and experiences
- ii) Religion involves external beliefs, rituals and deities
- iii) Both religion and spirituality involve **faith**, a confident belief that cannot be proven or disproven but is accepted as true.

World religions by percentage of adherents



\*Christianity includes Catholic, Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, Pentecostal, Anglican, Monophysite, African Initiated Churches, Latter-Day Saints, Evangelical, Seventh-Day Adventist, Jehovah's Witnesses, Quakers, Assembly of God, nominal, etc.

\*\*Islam includes Shi'ite, Sunni, etc.

\*\*\*"Nonreligious" includes agnostic, atheist, secular humanist, people answering "none" or no religious preference. Half of this group is "theistic" but nonreligious.

The comparative and historical stance of the text here takes students into the enormous global diversity of religious belief and practices.

The debates are firmly rooted in a consideration of social change and the position of religion as a phenomenon within modernity.

This theme is introduced through the cure of a Bengali woman: attributed to the late Mother Theresa, this is accepted as a miracle by the Roman Catholic Church whilst rationalist groups within India question its status. Religion is a sensitive subject for both professional sociologists and students of the discipline and the text encourages a separation between the personal faith and beliefs of sociologists and their activities as sociologists.

**This is a point that devout students may find challenging.**

Diversity presents a challenge for any sociological attempt to offer a substantive definition of **religion**. Beyond that, attempts at definition frequently fall prey to ethnocentric assumptions, which, in the context of Western sociology, can prioritize the monotheistic, supernatural, moral and existential dimensions inherent in the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

The definition provided by the text concentrates on what religion does: religions are a form of culture, enacted through a set of ritualized practices by a community of believers and offering a sense of transcendent meaning or purpose.

The section on 'Theories of religion' turns to the contribution of the discipline's own trinity: **Marx, Durkheim and Weber**. Marx's assertion of the ideological function of religion is set in the context of his intellectual debt to Feuerbach and his use of the notion of alienation as the attribution of human values and ideals to an alien being, a deity. In contrast to Marx, both Durkheim and Weber devoted a considerable part of their intellectual endeavour to the study of religion. Durkheim's analysis stresses the role of religion in promoting social cohesion. Religion constructs a distinction between the **sacred** and the **profane**, with that which is sacred being set apart from and above the world. Durkheim's *The Elementary Form of the Religious Life* is a Classic Study in this chapter. Religion is not just about personal belief but vitally about collective ritual through which group solidarity is maintained and a collective worldview affirmed. Such collective belief is particularly important in the management of social disruption and transition. Unlike Durkheim, Weber based his analysis upon a comparative study of world religions and emphasizes the part religion plays in the transformation of societies. Thus he links the transformation of European societies to capitalism with the cultural conditions created by salvation religions.

In assessing these analyses the chapter argues that they need not be incompatible. It is undoubtedly true, as Marx asserted that religion has been used as a tool by the powerful to oppress other social groups. Equally, examples abound concerning the unsettling and transformative impact of religion as emphasised by Weber. Durkheim's major contribution is seen to be his emphasis upon the social importance of religious rituals. The discussion of the diversity of religions proceeds from the practices in small-scale societies and the role of the **shaman** within them. Both **animism** and **totemism** are associated with these societies most of which are **polytheistic**, although that pattern of belief is also found in Hinduism.

The main characteristics of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the three great monotheistic world religions, are then outlined. The shared theological elements of the religions, particularly the importance of **prophets**, are discussed, as well as the differences between them and the internal differences of each religion. Hinduism is the oldest of the great religions and distinctive in its polytheism and disinclination to separate believers and non-believers. Finally, the discussion of varieties of religion turns to the **ethical religions** of the East, distinguished by their lack of reference to a deity or supernatural realm.

In analysing religious organizations the chapter introduces the classic distinction between **church** and **sect** first advanced by Weber and Troeltsch and the later addition by Becker of the categories of **denomination** and **cult**. Whilst these categories can be useful analytical terms, especially for considering the tension between revivalism and institutionalism in religious organizations, they are also derived from and in many ways embody a Christian norm.

The term '**new religious movements**' covers a broad range of religious and spiritual groups, cults and sects. Some are derived from mainstream religious traditions, whilst others are them creations of **charismatic** leaders. **Religious movements** may be **world-affirming**, **world rejecting**, or **world-accommodating**.

For some theorists, the continuing popularity of these groups show that religion and spirituality remain central to modern life even if in a transformed form; others argue that membership may be profoundly important to the individual but that these groups remain socially marginal. The **New Age movement** is a particular sub-set evolving out of the counter-culture of the 1960s and '70s. Whilst the values may seem to reject the existing social order, the emphasis upon personal growth and freedom absolutely affirms the dominant Western values of our age. Gender is a fundamental organizing category and sexuality an enduring concern of both religious belief systems and institutions. Christianity is based around a masculine deity spoken of as our Father and his son and, whilst Mary is accorded special status, it is as the Mother of God. In church organisations some sects have allowed women to take an active role alongside men, but the major churches have marginalized women's participation. The Church of England has admitted women to the priesthood since 1992; however the Roman Catholic Church remains firmly opposed to this practice. Within the Church of England debate continues about the possibility of women becoming bishops. An even more charged debate surrounds the position of homosexual clergy.

The chapter now turns to consider **secularisation**.

Whilst religious beliefs and organizations continue to play an important part in the social life of many societies, sociologists point to the diminution of their influence over various spheres of social life. Three dimensions of secularization are identified: decline in membership of religious organizations, decline in the broader social influence of religious organizations and decline in religiosity – i.e. the levels of religious belief.

A broad review of religious affiliation across Europe is presented, focusing on the UK, Germany and France, reflecting the predominantly Christian nature of these societies, the impact of the Reformation and the impact of non-Judaeo-Christian minorities especially as a result of post-colonial migration in the last century.

Since the nineteenth century there has been a general and continuing trend in decline in church attendance, this is not an uncomplicated pattern, as some churches have declined more than others, while some newer churches grow in popularity.

Other general patterns can be identified: older people are more religious than younger; women more involved in organized religion than men; and, church attendance and professed religious belief are higher among the more affluent.

Freedom of religious expression is a cornerstone of the US Constitution. It is predominantly Christian with allegiance to a huge diversity of churches and denominations. Across all faiths there are high levels of participation in organized religions, and religious beliefs have a high profile in American public and political life. Recent years have seen a growth in Roman Catholicism, largely due to immigration; liberal Protestant groups are in decline, whilst there has been a growth in **evangelicalism** and membership of these 'bornagain' groups. These have particular political significance: they are conservative in their attitudes towards social issues such as homosexual rights and abortion and content to view international tensions in terms of the struggle between good and evil.

The **religious economy** approach is considered in the 'Using Your Sociological Imagination' Box on page 707-8.

Offering a market model, sociologists who favour this approach see competition both between different religious groups and between religious and secular beliefs as strengthening the market in religious belief and participation. This has the effect, contrary to the classical theorists' predictions, of strengthening religion in modern societies. So what of the secularization thesis? The USA remains significantly out of step with other Western industrial nations in the significance of religion for individuals and in social and political life.

Elsewhere, the influence of religion has declined against the three identified dimensions, but belief remains strong, even when it doesn't involve participation in any particular church; the decline in membership of religious groups only applies to Trinitarian groups and is not the case if non-Western faiths and new religious movements are included; and secularization is certainly not the case in non-Western societies – Islam challenges Westernization, Catholicism remains a potent force in South America, and Eastern Orthodoxy is being widely embraced in the former Soviet Union.

The modern world is characterized by change, instability and diversity – religion provides answers to complex questions about life and meaning, which rationalism cannot do. The turn to fundamentalism and also the new religious movements may be a feature of the instability of the modern world.

Islamic and Christian **fundamentalism** is considered, both being seen as responses to globalization and rapid modernising change. Although Weber never completed his study of Islam, among the early sociological thinkers it is his approach that could have seen the way in which Islam has transformed itself to become a major force in the modern world. Islamic fundamentalist movements have gained influence in many countries but have come to power only in Iran, Sudan and Afghanistan (where it was ousted in 2001 by indigenous opposition forces and the US military).

Some see the potential for conflict between Islam and the West as a key global division, whilst others point to the complexity within Islam and the societies where it is most prevalent and to the relationship between Islam as a religious identity and other political struggles for national or cultural identity. It is clear that despite being a revival of traditional beliefs, this reaction against Western modernization itself takes distinctively modern forms.

Particularly in the US, the growth of both Christian fundamentalism and the development of electronic churches are often associated with politically right-wing values. The New Christian Right asserts a return to 'traditional' values, its touchstone issues being abortion, homosexuality, pornography, humanism and the fractured family.





