

Rapid #: -17539529

CROSS REF ID: **5957509**

LENDER: **HUL :: Widener Library**

BORROWER: **HUL :: Widener Library**

TYPE: Book Chapter

BOOK TITLE: Silence and voice in the study of contentious politics /

USER BOOK TITLE: Silence and voice in the study of contentious politics /

CHAPTER TITLE: THE SACRED, RELIGIOUS, AND SECULAR IN CONTENTIOUS POLITICS: BLURRING BOUNDARIES

BOOK AUTHOR: Aminzade, Ron

EDITION: 1

VOLUME:

PUBLISHER: Cambridge University Press,

YEAR: 2001

PAGES: 155-178

ISBN: 9780521001557

LCCN:

OCLC #: 45756147

Processed by RapidX: 5/5/2021 2:47:23 PM

This material may be protected by copyright law (Title 17 U.S. Code)

8
Rapid #: -17539529**RapidX Upload**

Status	Rapid Code	Branch Name	Start Date
New	HUL	Widener Library	05/05/2021 01:39 PM
... note: only the last 3 transactions are shown below. view details			
Pending	HUL	Widener Library	05/05/2021 01:39 PM
Batch Not Printed	HUL	Widener Library	05/05/2021 02:16 PM
Batch Printed	HUL	Widener Library	05/05/2021 02:16 PM

CALL #: **HM881 .S535 2001****LOCATION:** **HUL :: Widener Library :: 32044060875051**

REQUEST TYPE: Book Chapter
USER BOOK TITLE: Silence and voice in the study of contentious politics /
HUL CATALOG TITLE: Silence and voice in the study of contentious politics
CHAPTER TITLE: THE SACRED, RELIGIOUS, AND SECULAR IN CONTENTIOUS POLITICS:
BLURRING BOUNDARIES
BOOK AUTHOR: Aminzade, Ron
EDITION: 1
VOLUME:
PUBLISHER: Cambridge University Press,
YEAR: 2001
PAGES: 155-178
ISBN: 9780521001557
LCCN:
OCLC #: 45756147
CROSS REFERENCE ID: [TN:5957509][ODYSSEY:206.107.43.109/HUL]
VERIFIED:

BORROWER: **HUL :: Widener Library**This material may be protected by copyright law (Title 17 U.S. Code)
5/5/2021 2:17:33 PM



HARVARD
LIBRARY

Scan&Deliver

hl_access_services@harvard.edu

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Best copy available | ☐ Item has tight binding |
| ☐ Bibliography exceeds page scan limit | ☐ No Table of Contents available |
| ☐ No accompanying notes available | ☐ No accompanying images/plates |
| ☐ Other: | |

Copyright statement: Consistent with copyright law, the purpose of the Scan & Deliver service is to provide a patron a copy of the requested material for *private study, scholarship, or research*.

In providing the Scan & Deliver service, the Harvard Library responsibly administers Section 107 and Section 108 of Title 17, United States Code, and related subsections, including Sections 108(a), 108(d), and 108 (g).

The service applies only to the isolated and unrelated reproduction of a single copy of the same material on separate occasions. It does not apply to the related or concerted reproduction of multiple copies of the same material (whether made at one time or over a period of time, and whether for use by one person or multiple people). Nor does it apply to the systematic reproduction of single or multiple copies.

It is the patron's obligation to determine if any further reproduction, distribution, or other use of this scan in excess of the copyright exceptions, including fair use, might require the copyright owner's permission.

Scanned by:

SH

Date:

05.05.2021

Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics

RONALD R. AMINZADE

University of Minnesota, St. Paul

JACK A. GOLDSTONE

University of California, Davis

DOUG McADAM

Stanford University

ELIZABETH J. PERRY

Harvard University

WILLIAM H. SEWELL, JR.

University of Chicago

SIDNEY TARROW

Cornell University

CHARLES TILLY

Columbia University



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

2001

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA

10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, VIC 3166, Australia

Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain

Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

WID-LC

HM

881

.S535

2001

© Cambridge University Press 2001

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2001

Printed in the United States of America

Typeface Janson text 10/13 pt. System QuarkXPress [BTS]

A catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Silence and voice in the study of contentious politics / Ronald R. Aminzade . . . [et al.].

p. cm. – (Cambridge studies in contentious politics)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-521-80679-8 (hardback) – ISBN 0-521-00155-2 (pbk.)

1. Social movements. 2. Revolutions. 3. Democratization. 4. Ethnic conflict.

I. Aminzade, Ronald, 1949– II. Series.

HM881 .S535 2001

303.48'4–dc21

2001018440

ISBN 0 521 80679 8 hardback

ISBN 0 521 00155 2 paperback

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY
PRESS

JAN 29 2002



Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page xi</i>
1 SILENCE AND VOICE IN THE STUDY OF CONTENTIOUS POLITICS: INTRODUCTION SIDNEY TARROW	1
2 EMOTIONS AND CONTENTIOUS POLITICS RON AMINZADE and DOUG McADAM	14
3 SPACE IN CONTENTIOUS POLITICS WILLIAM H. SEWELL, JR.	51
4 IT'S ABOUT TIME: TEMPORALITY IN THE STUDY OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND REVOLUTIONS DOUG McADAM and WILLIAM H. SEWELL, JR.	89
5 LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS AND DYNAMICS OF CONTENTION RON AMINZADE, JACK A. GOLDSTONE, and ELIZABETH J. PERRY	126
6 THE SACRED, RELIGIOUS, AND SECULAR IN CONTENTIOUS POLITICS: BLURRING BOUNDARIES RON AMINZADE and ELIZABETH J. PERRY	155
7 THREAT (AND OPPORTUNITY): POPULAR ACTION AND STATE RESPONSE IN THE DYNAMICS OF CONTENTIOUS ACTION JACK A. GOLDSTONE and CHARLES TILLY	179

8	CONTENTION IN DEMOGRAPHIC AND LIFE- COURSE CONTEXT JACK A. GOLDSTONE and DOUG McADAM	195
9	HARMONIZING THE VOICES: THEMATIC CONTINUITY ACROSS THE CHAPTERS DOUG McADAM	222
	<i>References</i>	241
	<i>Index</i>	267

The Sacred, Religious, and Secular in Contentious Politics: Blurring Boundaries

Ron Aminzade and Elizabeth J. Perry

Introduction: Religion and Politics

Theories of social movements have been built, for the most part, from studies of western democracies in which the differentiation of secular and religious institutions and norms is unusually pronounced. The result of focusing on such secularized societies has been a tendency to see religions as furnishing social movements with organizational (and occasionally ideological) resources – but little more. Thus scholars have often emphasized ways in which churches serve as mobilizing networks, and have sometimes also noted the importance of religious beliefs and symbols as a source of collective action framing. Less frequently, however, have they ventured beyond a purely instrumentalist perspective to explore the expressive dimensions of religious conviction in processes of contention.

In this chapter our focus is on cases drawn from Chinese and African societies that have diverged from the secularized path of change in the West. China (in both its communist and precommunist incarnations) has not institutionalized the sort of church-state separation and attendant freedoms of religion that are taken as hallmarks of liberal democratic polities. In Africa, even where institutional differentiation and religious freedom are evident, popular beliefs about other-worldly entities and sacred legitimations of secular authority continue to inform routine and nonroutine politics. The reasons for these distinctive patterns of church-state relations and belief systems need not concern us here, but one result is that the intersection of religion and politics assumes quite different – and in some respects more transparent – consequences in our cases than may be evident in many western democracies. We highlight a variety of ways in which religious and sacred elements figure centrally in social movements and other

types of contentious politics. Although we draw liberally from both African and Chinese examples, we do not undertake a systematic comparison of these two very different cultural regions (each of which, of course, is also marked by tremendous internal diversity). That important task awaits future consideration.

Our purposes here are twofold. First, we wish to introduce less familiar, but extremely rich, cases for analysis. Second, we explore the boundary between the sacred and secular in order to understand the implications of the fluid nature of this boundary for secularized and nonsecularized polities alike. In the conclusion, we propose some general (if speculative) lessons that we believe apply across the divides of culture and regime.

Let us begin with a few definitions. By *religion*, we refer to the beliefs, practices, rituals, and social organizations of people who are drawn together by a religious tradition. Such traditions offer other-worldly, transcendent answers to fundamental questions concerning the meaning of life and death (Kurtz 1995). Religious communities stand in contrast to *secular* entities whose basic operating principles are not justified by religious convictions. *Secularization* is the process by which religious and secular institutions and norms are differentiated into separate spheres. This process, it is important to emphasize, does not necessarily involve a diminution, marginalization, or privatization of religious beliefs and practices (Casanova 1994). Moreover, both religious and secular groups designate certain things as *sacred*, or worthy of awe and veneration (Koenker 1965).

In this chapter, we examine the role of the religious and the sacred in a variety of movements, some of which are generally thought of as basically secular in character. We hope to underscore the importance of non-material factors in cases that have usually been understood largely in terms of economic grievances. Let us be clear that we are not proposing some new framework for explaining movement emergence; we believe that the familiar concepts of opportunities, networks, and framing are as useful for religiously based movements as for their secular counterparts. But we do insist that attention to the religious and sacred dimensions of contentious politics provides important clues in solving the puzzle of how movements interpret opportunities, appropriate and build mobilizing structures, and capture and sustain popular commitment over time. Dynamic models of contention (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; as well as other chapters in this volume) highlight the significance of certification, brokerage, and the social construction of opportunity and threat as key mechanisms in the

Blurring the Sacred, Religious, and Secular

development of collective action. Religious and sacred factors often play a major part in all of these mechanisms.

Of course, religions are seldom inherently or exclusively subversive (Smith 1996). Religious beliefs contain multiple contradictory messages that can be appropriated for conservative as well as revolutionary purposes. Religions have diverted people's attention from their misery and supported an oppressive status quo, just as they have also encouraged people to collectively challenge injustice and oppression. There are numerous, well-documented instances of the stabilizing role of religions, from Confucianism in traditional China to catholicism in medieval Europe to contemporary southern African Zionist churches whose healing systems individualize and depoliticize social problems (Schoffeleers 1991). These exist alongside millenarian, messianic, and heretical religious movements that have enabled people collectively and disruptively to challenge their oppression (Adas 1979; Kobben 1960; Lanternari 1963; Lewy 1974; Wallace 1956). Scholars have delineated ideal types of religions of the status quo, religions of resistance, religions of revolution, and religions of counterrevolution (Lincoln 1985:266–92) and documented how different interpretations of the same religion can produce acquiescence alongside rebellion and generate conflicts between “official” and “popular” religion (Garrett 1985). For example, Dwight Billings (1990) shows that evangelical protestantism in the United States fostered militancy among coal miners in central Appalachia but inhibited labor activism among textile workers of the Carolinas. Religion, in short, can serve as either an “opiate of the masses” or “amphetamines of the people” (Stark and Christaiano 1992).

Our concern is not to analyze the heterogenous political character of religions or the sociopolitical conditions under which religion fosters quiescence or opposition. Our goal rather is to examine, in a preliminary and suggestive fashion, the features that distinguish religious and secular contentious political claims making, the sacred dimensions of secular forms of contentious politics, and the implications of these differences and similarities for the concepts informing current studies of social movements and revolution.

Scholars of revolution have investigated the politically disruptive potential of religion for decades, documenting the religious content of the English Civil War and the French Revolution and the revolutionary impact of early protestantism. But social movement studies only recently have begun seriously to analyze religion and contentious politics. Reasons for the silence include the influence of structural-functional theory in

the social sciences, fragmented subfields that make possible the divorce of the sociology of religion from political sociology, and the overly rationalist and instrumentalist assumptions of much of social movement theory.¹ In addition, research on social movements has been carried out by secular academics laboring in highly secular institutions, where religion is sometimes dismissed as epiphenomenal.

The limited research on religion and politics that has been done by social movement scholars highlights the role of religious organizations in the mobilization of various movements and the ways in which religious resources and institutions have been appropriated by movements with secular goals, such as ending racial segregation or achieving national independence. Less attention has been paid to ways in which the cultural dimensions of religion inform secular claims making, including the role of the sacred in shaping oppositional identities, emotion rules, temporal orientations, logics of action, and perceptions of threat, opportunity, and success. In this chapter, we hope to redress the imbalance.

The Distinctiveness of Religious and Secular Contentious Politics

Is there anything to the distinction between religious and secular contentious politics? Despite many similarities (which we will explore in greater detail), we believe that certain features of religiously inspired collective action do distinguish it from its secular cousin, if not categorically, then at least by degree. Though our answers should be taken as provisional, we think that there are both organizational and cultural features of religious-based contention that differentiate it from more secular forms. These include the unusual institutional legitimacy of religious-based organizations, which creates distinctive threat and opportunity structures, and the ability of religious movements to appeal to an other-worldly, transcendental ontology, which has implications for commitment processes, challenges to authority, and logics of action.

¹ Sociologists of religion have studied a wide variety of different types of groups that embrace a transcendent vision and hold their enterprises to be sacred in some collectively deviant way. Our concern is with those groups that engage in contentious politics, that is, "the public, collective making of claims that would, if realized, affect the interests of people other than the claimants." (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 1996) Thus, our purview encompasses "preapocalyptic" warring sects that engage in a holy war against the "forces of evil," but not "postapocalyptic" other-worldly communal sects that seek sanctuary by establishing "heavenly kingdoms" beyond the reaches of the secular world (Hall 1978:206-07).

In many societies, religious groups enjoy a unique institutional legitimacy that translates into a number of distinct advantages when it comes to contentious politics. The character of opportunities facing religious and secular movements may be very different due to recognition by state authorities of the sanctity of religious spaces where they cannot intervene, even if they suspect these to be sites of oppositional political mobilization. This recognition often constrains state repression of church-based movements, as was the case in Poland under the communist regime and in Central and Latin American states, where authoritarian regimes were limited in their ability to repress political dissidents who used the church as a base of resistance (Smith 1991). During the Iranian Revolution, observes Salehi (1996:51, 54), politicized Shiiia clerical leaders “would preach emotionally and fearlessly, delving into issues that people would not otherwise have dared to discuss in public” but “these leaders were untouchable, unless the government was prepared to face large and immediate riots.” In the case of contemporary China, Tibetan lamaseries and Xinjiang mosques, while not beyond the reach of the communist state, provide some shelter for separatists seeking both religious and political autonomy. When religious leaders associated with these institutions enjoy an international reputation and following (as has certainly been true of the Dalai Lama since his receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize), the stakes are raised for government interference in their activities.

Church-based movements may enjoy other opportunities deriving from their religious connections. For example, to the extent that such movements can maintain their religious status while pursuing secular goals, they may benefit from exemptions from taxation and conscription. Their tax-exempt status may allow them to mobilize financial resources more easily than overtly “political” organizations, while their followers’ claims of “conscientious objection” may enable activists to avoid military service and hence continue their oppositional political activities.

The opportunities available to movements are temporally structured by social calendars, but the nature of these calendars may differentiate religious-based and secular movements. For secular movements, political calendars based on election dates or larger societalwide cycles of protest (Tarrow 1998b:141–60), have been linked to the opportunities that shape the temporal pattern of protest activities. For religious-based movements, calendars based on holy days and months may play a more important role in structuring political opportunities. During the Iranian Revolution, protest followed a temporal pattern set by such a religious calendar. Islamic

ceremonies performed on the seventh and fortieth day after the death of those killed in demonstrations, as well as ceremonies and mass gatherings associated with the sacred months of Moharram and Ramadan, structured the protests of 1977–78, providing the occasion for political preaching and confrontations with security forces (Salehi 1996:54–57). A similar pattern is observable in the case of Bolivian tin miners, whose days of traditional religious observances have become identified with political events that express class consciousness and solidarity. “The ritual calendar,” observes June Nash (1989), “becomes a schedule for acts of protest that have frequently upset governments and disturbed a covenant in industry.” The outbreak of many White Lotus-inspired rebellions in China, as Susan Naquin (1981) has noted, is better explained by the calendrical implications of sacred scriptures (*baojuan*) than by prevailing economic or political conditions. Masters of the White Lotus teachings (a folk Buddhist millenarian faith) would predict the coming of a new age (or *kalpa*) based upon their interpretation of scripturally specified astrological and other omens. During the passage to this new epoch, in which it was believed that the Buddha of the Future (Maitreya) would finally reign supreme, only the faithful could escape death from the accompanying calamities. The call to meet the kalpa, like the call among christian millenarians to prepare for an imminent Second Coming and thereby avoid the perils of Armageddon, created a frenzied sense of urgency.

The resource opportunities available to church-based movements may differentiate their temporal pattern of growth and decline from that of secular movements. The support of congregations and church leaders, more than shifts in public opinion or divisions among secular political elites, often pattern the temporalities of religious movements. “A social movement which is church-based (such as the sanctuary movement)”, writes Barbara Yarnold (1991:x), “may have a longer life span than other social movements, losing momentum not due to a lack of public support, but due to a loss of interest on the part of religious leaders.”

But the distinctions between religious and secular movements go beyond such instrumentalist factors as access to organizational opportunities and material resources. The central way in which religious-based political movements differ from secular ones concerns claims to an other-worldly, transcendental ontology. Religions posit the existence of an invisible spiritual world and “a more or less hidden causal relation between human events and supernatural determinants” (Lanternari 1985:153). The issue is not whether such a supernatural world actually exists. As long as

Blurring the Sacred, Religious, and Secular

people believe it does and act accordingly, invisible spirits can shape political life. In Soweto, Johannesburg, dead people ("shades") are widely believed to affect the living directly, serving as intermediaries between humans and the supreme being (West 1975). Adam Ashforth's (1996) study of witchcraft in Soweto documents how beliefs and discourses about unseen powers help to shape community power relations and constitute the boundary between public and private realms.

Religion is based on faith and supernatural knowledge. Dreams, visions, trances, and bodily shaking are often accorded a privileged status as guides to the spiritual world. Religious leaders do not have to rely only on rational persuasion since their followers can be "moved by the spirit" rather than persuaded by rational arguments. Religions offer adherents comprehensive answers to fundamental questions about death and the meaning of human existence. Given the highly salient nature of these beliefs and their imperviousness to falsification, they often sustain the level of commitment required for high-risk activism and violent challenges to secular authority.

A transcendental ontology that includes belief in an afterlife allows leaders to make extraordinary demands on followers, whose interpretations of opportunities, threats, successes, and failures may not be firmly grounded in "objective" political conditions. The altered sense of costs, benefits, and possibilities made possible by a transcendental ontology and supernatural powers can create intensely committed followers willing to sacrifice for the cause, including willing martyrs with altered understandings of obstacles and opportunities. "For many religious believers," writes Christian Smith (1996:10), "the overwhelming intractability of the world as it is can, in some circumstances, melt into pliant transience before the face of the holy, the sacred, the eternal. Divine imperative . . . can, under some conditions, . . . relativize what might otherwise seem insurmountable." For example, members of the faith-based peace organization Pax Christi USA have an attitude toward success that does not reflect a utilitarian cost-benefit logic, as is clear from a popular saying in their ranks: "We are called to be faithful, not effective" (Pagnucco 1996:218).

The existence of a religious ontology that recognizes spiritual forces beyond the material world also makes possible appeals to a transcendent authority. Such appeals may support the status quo, as in the case of European monarchs' claims to rule by divine right, but they can also provide the basis for challenges to secular authority. "Much of the struggle around religion and politics," observes Daniel Levine (1985:99), "centers in some way on legitimation. Legitimation is contested at many levels, in struggles

to claim the moral authority of religion and divine will (however defined) for different sorts of group practice and commitment and for alternative structures of power." Religious change can have important, often unintended and indirect, political consequences, legitimating new forms of authority and political participation. The prophets of African traditional religions have frequently appealed to divine authority to challenge secular leaders and call for moral restoration in response to crises associated with colonial conquest. As divinely inspired critics claiming transcendental authority, they were relatively immune from the traditional authority of the elders and able to challenge the secular authority of colonial rulers. Acting more in accordance with religious prophecy than in response to an open political opportunity structure, they inspired their followers to think and behave in politically disruptive ways.

Religious claims of sacred transcendence can alter logics of action by providing an expanded sense of the possible, enlarged notions of space, and extended time horizons (Hall 1978). The means-ends calculations that scholars often assume inform the behaviors of actors may not be applicable to those whose logics of action privilege the existence of nonmaterial, or spiritual, forces and domains. The conviction that redemption awaits in the hereafter has served to bolster the commitment and courage of believers as disparate as medieval crusaders and kamikaze pilots. The explicit invocation of the supernatural contributes to an enlarged sense of possibilities that can at times become politically threatening. As Nancy Chen (1995) has shown in her investigation of "qigong" (Chinese breathing and martial arts routines), practitioners feel transported into an other-worldly realm, an intangible, spiritual zone into which the communist authorities cannot intrude. That this escape to a supernatural realm is potentially subversive is indicated by the government's much-publicized establishment of special hot lines where alert citizens are requested to report their suspicions of dissident "qigong masters" (Perry and Fuller 1991). Similarly, the recourse of some contemporary sectarian movements (for example, Heaven's Gate followers in southern California) to the use of outerspace and cyberspace represents a search for alternative (if scientific) zones of nonstate interference.

Spirit possession is another way in which logics of action can be transformed by the creation of altered spatial, and often temporal, boundaries, as members of the faithful find themselves taken over by other beings who may issue from radically different times and places. In the case of Melanesian cargo cults or the Sioux Indian Ghost Dance, long deceased

ancestors were considered the source of spirit possession. Their return to earth, it was believed, would augur a total reversal of familiar spatial patterns: Fish would suddenly fly in the air and birds would swim in the sea. Political hierarchies would be similarly overturned; the natives would henceforth rule over the white man (Mooney 1991; Worsley 1968). In Zimbabwe, leaders of the struggle for independence espoused a socialist ideology, but spirit mediums provided nationalist forces with a system of ritual practices to gain the protection of the ancestors and guerilla fighters described experiences of being saved by ancestors and supplied with goods by their ancestors' spirits (Lan 1985). Anticolonialist movements were often buttressed by invulnerability cults in which it was held that spirit possession and other somatic rituals – such as qigong routines in the case of the Chinese Boxers or war medicine (*maji maji*) in the case of East African resistance to German colonialism – would ensure imperviousness to bullets. This belief, although seemingly easily disproved, has enjoyed a remarkably wide currency in nativist movements around the globe.

That these spiritual accoutrements can be very helpful in launching and sustaining resistance movements has certainly not been lost on state authorities, who have often moved decisively, even precipitously, to contain them. Thus the very factors that provide special opportunities for the religiously inspired can also provoke special dangers. The threat of state repression is ever present, especially in less secularized societies where the permitted sphere of religious activity may be unclear. Indeed, more than a few religiously inspired rebellions have (ironically enough) been triggered by state suppression efforts; groups with no initial hostility toward the authorities find themselves forced into a battle for their very survival. This was the situation of numerous sectarians in imperial China, whose uprisings were frequently a response to state-sponsored persecution of heterodox beliefs (Overmyer 1976). And it remains true in contemporary China, as the draconian repression campaign against Falun Gong practitioners makes clear.

Blurring the Boundary: Resources, Rituals, Ideologies, and Identities

While the distinctions between religious and secular movements are, we think, significant, there are also large areas of overlap. Many scholars have pointed out that a similar process of resource mobilization underpins

the activities of secular and religious-based movements. The sources and availability of resources may differ, with religious-based movements having ready access to assets unavailable to secular movements, including established church leaders who can effectively mobilize their "flock" should it turn its attention to contentious politics. But the process itself appears to be similar. Scholars have noted the many organizational resources that church-based movements receive from religious institutions, including trained and experienced leaders, financial resources, congregated participants, solidarity incentives, preexisting communications channels and authority structures, deviance-monitoring mechanisms, and equipment and facilities (Smith 1996:13–16). Aldon Morris (1984) has shown how the black church provided the U.S. Civil Rights Movement with critical resources, including an organized mass base, leadership, finances, meeting places, and a rich culture. Liebman and Wuthnow (1983) analyze the new religious right in the United States using the conceptual tools of resource mobilization theory. Scholars have also documented the role of religious organizations and communication networks in spreading the core ideas of the sanctuary, peace, and fundamentalist christian movements in the United States (Yarnold 1991) and the contribution of pacifist religious organizations to sustaining the American peace movement during times of war (Kleidman 1993). Mayer Zald (1982) proposes a marriage between resource mobilization theory and world systems theory to fine tune our understanding of the rise of major religious movements.

Secular movements of protest also frequently appropriate emotionally powerful symbolic resources from religious communities. Scholars studying collective-action framing have documented the uses of religious symbols, icons, music, and rituals in many movements and revolutions, including the French Revolution (Vovelle 1976), the Revolution of 1848 (Berenson 1984), the American Civil Rights Movement (McAdam 1982; Morris 1984), the Iranian Revolution (Arjomand 1988; Moaddel 1993; Salehi 1996), and the Solidarity Movement in Poland (Osa 1996; 1997). Edward Tiryakian (1988; 1995) treats revolutions in Iran, Nicaragua, and the Philippines, as well as the "velvet revolutions" of 1989 in various Eastern European countries, as analogous to religious revivals, as moments of collective effervescence and social renewal when the social order is delegitimated and the profane becomes transformed into a sacred context. Secular nationalist movements often invoke myths of origin that link participants to an imagined past commemorated with quasisacred symbols and rituals. The observance of national holidays, such as Bastille Day in

France, Fourth of July in America, and October 1 in China, in a fashion not unlike the celebration of religious festivals, is one manifestation of this broader phenomenon.

The Chinese communist movement, while staunchly antireligious in its official Marxist ideology, offers a rich illustration of how secular revolutionary movements can draw on indigenous religious symbols and rituals. As noted in the chapter on leadership, one of the key tasks of revolutionary leaders is to provide meaningful frames for collective action; often such schema are derived from religious traditions. Similarly, as Daniel Levine (1985) has observed, leadership legitimation frequently hinges on religious sanction. During China's revolutionary struggle, recourse to religious symbolism was sometimes a self-conscious instrumental strategy by leaders seeking to mobilize mass support for their cause. Communist strategist Liu Shaoqi conceded that religious myths could prove useful in attracting sectarians to the revolution. Liu (1938) noted with evident approval that in those places where rumor held that Red Army Commander Zhu De was a direct descendant of the Ming founder, Triad and White Lotus believers were inclined to lend their support to the communist cause. Similarly, one of the early leaders of the peasant movement, Peng Pai, encouraged the popular belief that he was a quasidivine bodhissatva as a means of recruiting the Buddhist faithful to his enterprise (Marks 1984). The phenomenon was not unique to China, of course. Kenyan nationalists glorified their leader, Jomo Kenyatta, in a hymn book that included the song "Come unto Jomo," sung to the tune of "Come unto Jesus" (Mazrui 1972:6). In Zaire General Mobutu referred to himself as "the Father and God of the nation" (Sanneh 1991:208).

Often, however, the resort to religious symbols and practices is not a calculated tactic by clever leaders, but an unwitting expression of deep-seated cultural influences. The political rituals of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, a movement whose goals included the suppression of all vestiges of religion, evidenced the unconscious appropriation of much older modes of religious worship. As Anita Chan and her coauthors (1984) describe Cultural Revolution routines in one South China village: "Before every meal, in imitation of the army (where the Mao rituals were reaching extraordinary proportions), Chen Village families began performing services to Mao. Led by the family head, they intoned in unison a selection of Mao quotations; sang 'The East is Red'; and as they sat to eat they recited a Mao grace." Similarly, in his memoir of the Cultural Revolution, Liang Heng (1983) describes how his father – an urban intellectual sent

down to the countryside for "reeducation" – conveyed urban secular customs to his new peasant neighbors. After converting an old Confucian ancestor-worship shrine into a place of adulation for Mao Zedong, "He put up fresh posters of Chairman Mao and [Defense Minister] Lin Biao wearing soldiers' uniforms . . . Then he turned to face the Great Helmsman and the Revolutionary Marshal and bowed, with utmost gravity, three times to the waist. There was a general titter of nervous laughter. Father looked so serious, and the peasants had never seen anyone bow to anything except the images of their own ancestors. But they were eager learners, for they loved Chairman Mao."

The prophetic traditions of traditional religions are often appropriated by secular revolutionary movements. In China, as Maurice Meisner (1986) has noted of the Long March, "the survivors' consciousness that they had lived while so many more had perished lent a sacred character to their revolutionary mission and gave rise to an almost religious sense of dedication . . . Mao was the prophet who had led the survivors through the wilderness." It was during the Cultural Revolution, despite the movement's avowed hostility toward religion, that adoration of "prophet" Mao Zedong attained unprecedented heights. Adaptation of the prophetic traditions of indigenous religion is also evident in African anticolonial struggles, in which prophet mediums have played an important role. At the end of the nineteenth century, spirit mediums were military leaders and advisors in southern Rhodesian revolts and in the Maji Maji uprising in Tanzania (Iliffe and Gwassa 1972; Ranger 1967; Wright 1995).

Secular movements frequently use sacred documents or icons to mobilize popular support and legitimize their power. During the Cultural Revolution, the so-called "little red book" containing quotations from Chairman Mao was treated as tantamount to holy scripture. Zealous young Red Guards waved copies of it when launching their persecution drives against alleged counterrevolutionaries. And across much of the countryside, peasants earned extra compensation from their production teams if they could recite passages of the little red book by heart. In Eastern Africa, Julius Nyerere, leader of Tanzania's nationalist struggle for independence and subsequently of a secular socialist state, never appeared in public without his famous magic cane, widely believed by supporters to give him supernatural powers. Charisma, as Weber recognized, has a seemingly magical aspect that surfaces even in highly secular movements.

Commemorative events often take on a sacred character in revolutionary nationalist movements. (On the key role of events in movement

development, see the chapter on temporality.) In China, the Long March (1934–35), a saga in which the Red Army retreated some six thousand miles from its Jiangxi Soviet base area to a new revolutionary capital in Yan'an, acquired a legendary fame that resembled a religious milestone. Although the Long March was prompted by military defeat, it became an inspirational symbol of the revolutionary endurance and heroic self-sacrifice that would ensure eventual victory. More than thirty years later, student Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution commemorated the event by undertaking ritualistic “new long marches” in an attempt to establish their own revolutionary credentials. In Kenya, nationalists planned to celebrate Kenyatta Day on October 20, 1965 with a “last supper” commemorating the last meal that President Kenyatta had before his arrest during the Mau Mau uprising, but the event was altered due to protests from Christians (Mazrui 1972:6).

Pilgrimages, an important feature of religious observances, have been popularly appropriated by oppositional political forces to venerate secular leaders whose memory may serve as a reminder of prior alternative policies. In contemporary China, for example, in Mao's home province of Hunan, a monastery dedicated to the deification of the chairman has attracted tens of thousands of pilgrims in recent years. The devotees, who come from hundreds of miles away, undertake a three-day fast before the journey to demonstrate their piety. Once at the monastery, “some pray for the safety and harmony of family members while others ask Mao to cure chronic diseases. The latter group are given a glass of ‘holy water’ after their prayers. Those who feel Mao has listened to their prayers thank him for the kindness received” (*Eastern Express* 1995:39). When more than 1,000 armed police stormed the monastery in a drive to expel the throngs of pilgrims lodged at the temple dormitory, peasants from surrounding counties rushed to defend their sacred site. Local government authorities considered blowing up the temple, but later dropped the idea for fear it might trigger civil unrest.²

² That such fears are not unfounded is suggested by an intriguing resistance movement in which the 29-year-old peasant leader claimed to be Mao Zedong's son who had come forward to lead a new rural uprising. The would-be Mao penned treatises on the “thirty great relationships” (Mao Zedong had limited himself to ten) and assumed the titles of party chairman, military commission chair, state chairman, political consultative conference chair, and premier. The imposter also sent letters to various government offices praising the radical ideas of the Gang of Four, attacking Deng Xiaoping's market socialism, and calling for armed rebellion, student boycotts, and workers' strikes (Li Kaifu 1992:132–33).

Scholars have also highlighted striking parallels between religious and secular ideologies. Said Arjomand (1993:52), among others, characterizes communism and fascism as secular salvations, "nontheistic political religions of the twentieth century." As Robert Tucker (1961) astutely observed, Marxism, although ostensibly opposed to religion as the opiate of the masses, nonetheless bears a striking resemblance to elements of the Judeo-Christian faith. Karl Marx's own upbringing within this religious tradition surely helped to shape his vision of communism as a kind of paradise in which people would finally reclaim their lost (alienated) human nature. Although the proletariat, rather than the risen Lord, served as the messiah in Marx's framework, there remained the familiar promise of salvation (or liberation) for the faithful (revolutionaries) and damnation (or liquidation) for the infidels (counterrevolutionaries). Common to both philosophies is a belief in the inevitable march of history to ward a utopian future in which only the true believers will inherit the earth. Since faith – based on either secular beliefs about the inevitable laws of history or sacred beliefs about divine purpose – is probably the *sine qua non* of the kind of personal commitment and sacrifice called for in revolutionary and religious crusades alike, the similarities are not surprising.

Nationalist ideologies often emphasize faith as a powerful weapon in the arsenal of those whose material armaments lag far behind those of their opponents. Anticolonialist nationalisms, observes Calhoun (1997:109), often produce or reproduce a division between spiritual and material life, recognizing the military and technical strength of foreign powers while valorizing the spiritual realm, where the moral and cultural strengths of the nation are located. Indian nationalists, for example, proclaimed "the domain of the spiritual its sovereign territory" (Chatterjee 1994:5). In constructing new political communities, nationalists frequently asserted their cultural independence from colonial powers in terms of religion.

It is also not uncommon for religious-based political ideologies pragmatically to incorporate secular elements. The Islamic traditionalism, or "fundamentalism," that informed the Iranian Revolution, for example, was heavily influenced by secular models of constitution making and produced a synthesis of radically different legal traditions (Arjomand 1993). The Taiping Rebellion (1850–62), which resulted in the deaths of some twenty-five to thirty million Chinese, rendering it the costliest civil war in human history, was based on a syncretic ideology that borrowed elements from its targets. Led by a disappointed Confucian examination candidate by the

name of Hong Xiuquan who subsequently declared himself the younger brother of Jesus Christ, the Taipings evidenced a complex amalgam of beliefs and practices. Ostensibly committed to ridding China of its heathen traditions, the "God Worshippers" (as the early Taipings were known) attacked ancestral shrines, Buddhist temples, and other non-Christian vestiges. In many ways, however, they also drew actively upon these pre-existing institutions. The Taiping land reform program, although claiming authority on the basis of God's gifts to His children, was nonetheless squarely within the tradition of generations of Confucian reformers. And, once settled in their "Heavenly Capital" of Nanjing, the Taipings instituted a bureaucratic examination system which, albeit drawing in content upon the Bible and the religious writings of Hong Xiuquan, was in form strikingly reminiscent of Confucian exemplars. Moreover, the Taipings' representation of their Manchu opponents as pagan goblins was modeled in no small measure on Buddhist demonology. The free-wheeling theology of the Taipings led to the undoing of the movement when one of Hong Xiuquan's chief lieutenants, claiming to be possessed by no less a spirit than the Holy Ghost, challenged Hong's dominance and triggered a frightful internal bloodbath. Repression of the rebellion by combined Manchu and British forces followed.

A distinct advantage of religious-based movements, observes Christian Smith (1996:17-18), is that shared religious beliefs can readily provide "a sense of ease, trust, and loyalty that greatly facilitates group communication and solidarity" and expedites "the process of coming to a shared 'definition of the situation.'" Yet a similar process of identity formation and framing characterizes the formation of movements espousing secular revolutionary ideologies. Although secular revolutionary movements do not appeal primarily to other-worldly, spiritual sources of authority, political ideologies rooted in teleological beliefs, such as the inevitable historical demise of capitalism and triumph of the revolution, can create ardor akin to the fervor motivating participants in religious movements. The identity transforming experiences of dedicated movement activists who acquire a staunch belief in the inevitable triumph of their cause often resembles religious conversion. Although their identities and goals remain secular in character, the belief that they possess superior knowledge about the inevitable course of history constitutes a quasireligious grounding for their revolutionary identity and commitment.

The boundary between secular and religious protest is further blurred by the reality that activists in secular movements do not lead

compartmentalized lives with rigidly separated political and religious identities. Furthermore, premovement identities typically inform political activism. People usually join social movements not as isolated individuals, but as prior members of communities or as activists who remain embedded in communities that continue to encourage religious identities. Given the common phenomenon of bloc recruitment, and the fuzzy boundaries often separating religious and secular within local communities, recruits to nonreligious movements often bring important aspects of their identities and cultures from preexisting religious communities with them. This is the case even for activists in ostensibly highly secular political movements, such the South African Communist Party. Africans who joined this party and rose to leadership positions within it were the products of mission education. They did not sever their ties to missionary cultures, and oppositional theologies informed their work within this avowedly secular political movement (Kelly 1991:7). The Bolivian tin miners studied by June Nash (1989) combined ideologies of socialism and communism with traditional rituals and beliefs based on a world of devils, deities, and enchanted beings, making use of longstanding religious observances to build class solidarity. "Popular religion," observes Clarke Garrett (1985:71), "does not make a clear separation of the religious from the secular. It is so much a part of daily existence that it can appear to outsiders like clergy and historians not to be religious at all."

The boundary between religion and politics is socially constructed and only makes sense within the framework of a given ideological order. In less secularized polities in which routine exercises of political power are embedded in religious symbols and beliefs, the distinction between heresy and rebellion dissolves. In African societies where British colonial officials bolstered the powers of traditional chiefs via a system of indirect rule, the exercise of chiefly political authority was closely connected to traditional religious ideologies and practices. Participants in religious movements and colonial authorities both correctly understood religious challenges to the symbolic and ideological dimensions of chiefly authority – such as the destruction of ancestor shrines or disruption of communal rituals – as political, as well as social and cultural, rebellion. Karen Fields (1982) carefully documents how the Christian millenarian Watchtower movement of Latter Day Saints inspired the insurrection of 1917–19 in Zambia (formerly Northern Rhodesia). Prayer meetings, hymn singing, speaking in tongues (*chongo*), prophetic preaching, drumming, and mass baptizing became seditious expressions of civil disobedience. "By the very act of

Blurring the Sacred, Religious, and Secular

being baptized,” writes Fields (1982:345–46), “converts received a new form of government . . . accepting baptism in 1917–19 from a Watchtower preacher was the same as transferring one’s ordinary political allegiance.”

There are few systematic comparisons of faith-based and secular social movement organizations, but those that have been done in secularized societies find similarities as well as differences. Ron Pagnucco’s (1996) comparison of the political behavior of 273 faith-based and secular peace groups in the United States found that faith-based organizations were just as likely to use conventional tactics of political bargaining but more likely to also embrace unruly tactics of nonviolent direct action and “moral witness.” Brenda Donnelly’s (1987) comparison of Christian and non-religious organizations involved in social protests in the post-Civil War United States found that religious organizations were less likely to be successful than nonreligious groups but that religious identification and ideology does not directly account for the difference. In her account, the disparity in outcomes was connected to the multifaceted goals of the Christian challengers, which were more difficult to attain. Religion did, however, indirectly affect the outcomes, for church-based groups’ embrace of multiissue concerns was connected to their pursuit of “universalistic” goals whose primary beneficiaries were not members of the organization.

Further Blurring the Boundary: Moral Domains, New Social Movements, and Science

Religions have always served as major sources of moral codes and injunctions, providing people with ethical standards by which to assess their own and other peoples’ behaviors and with meaning systems that offer comprehensive answers to fundamental questions about life and death. Not surprisingly then, even in highly secularized capitalist societies, religions have often served to fuel social movements. As Sidney Tarrow (1998a) notes of the United States, “separation of church and state and the free coinage of religious denominations in the presence of an expanding capitalist society . . . created a durable religious movement sector in shifting relations with the political struggle.” In contemporary secularized polities, the multiplicity of secular movements with predominantly moral agendas and the development of new technologies concerning life and death further blur the boundary between secular and religious movements.

Even when framed in a rhetoric of rights suggesting state-based claims, ostensibly secular movements, such as those advocating gay rights, animal rights, abortion rights, or womens' rights, are advocates of moral imperatives about sexual conduct, marriage, dietary restrictions, and how to live one's daily life, thereby encroaching on ethical domains that are also the province of religious authorities. Blurring the boundary between the religious and the secular, these movements place in the public sphere contentious issues that implicate the state and its regulatory apparatuses as well as church authorities.

A number of scholars have identified a form of religious consciousness in the "new social movements" of advanced industrial societies (Beckford 1990; Hannigan 1991) Many so-called "new social movements," they point out, contain certain tendencies or branches, such as ecofeminism or deep ecology, that are holistic in their visions and explicit about their spirituality. Hannigan (1990; 1991) argues that the new social movements, like the new religious movements, are a product of eroding boundaries between the private and public domains. In his view, new religious movements are attempting to "sanctify" the secular public realm while new social movements are trying to democratize activities once considered to be in the private sphere.

As we have endeavored to show in this chapter, there is nothing "new" about the blurring of private and public, or religious and secular, domains. The centrality of the sacred in religious and secular movements alike has long called into question such distinctions. Although the ramifications may be more obvious in nonsecularized polities, they apply to secularized societies as well. In the case of the United States, the abolitionist movement, the suffrage movement, the temperance movement, the civil rights movement, and the antiwar movement all demonstrate the blurring of such boundaries well before the advent of the so-called new social movements.

In secularized settings, social movements have often spoken not only to issues of citizenship and the distribution of scarce resources, but also to control over the moral domains implicated in decisions about life, death, and human freedom. Recent scientific developments have only intensified the tendency of both church-based and secular movements to contest or support the state's authority to regulate such matters. Late twentieth century technological developments have meant the growing intrusion of scientific technology in the creation, manipulation, or prolongation of life and the prevention or hastening of death. As science

intervenes in birth and death via new fertility drugs, abortion pills, genetic engineering, artificial insemination, and euthanasia, movements and the state are forced to address issues concerning the meaning and value of life – a centerpiece of religious concern. With contentious claims making encompassing the assertion of moral codes that challenge decisions and legitimations based on technical expertise, the boundary between secular and religious movements is likely to become – if anything – even more blurred.

Conclusion: Conceptual Implications and Future Prospects

A good deal of research remains to be done before we can conclusively identify differences between secular and religious-based contentious politics, although the preceding survey suggests more similarities than differences. One potentially fruitful area of comparison concerns the emotion climates, feeling rules, and ritualistic repertoires of religious-based and secular movements (see Chapter 2). Scholars of contentious politics have typically treated activists as disembodied rational actors, but bodily experiences and intense emotional performances often play an important role in securing peoples' commitments to faith-based movements. Somatic rituals may be more pervasive and better developed in faith-based movements. However, there is wide variability in emotion rules and climates across religious denominations, with some emphasizing decorum and others stressing emotional experience. This suggests that there may be as much variation in emotional climates within as between religious and secular movements, but further research is needed. A number of studies have also documented the way in which religious commitments and processes of conversion and deconversion are gendered (Neitz 1993). However, scholars have not yet addressed the question of whether there are gender differences between faith-based and secular movements, with the former perhaps appealing more to “an ethic of care” and the latter more to “an ethic of rights” (Gilligan 1982). The influence of regime type is another promising area for future work. In what ways do different kinds of secularized and nonsecularized states contribute to different patterns of religious contention?

The concepts informing contemporary social movement theory were typically founded in modernist assumptions of a secularized society with fairly sharp boundaries between church and state and declining religious beliefs and practices. What does our preceding discussion of the ability of religion to dramatically reconfigure time and space and to alter logics of

action imply for key concepts like cycles of protest or political opportunity structures? It suggests, for example, that religious movements may follow temporal trajectories based on religious prophecies rather than rising and falling as part of a cycle of protest rooted in secular political events. Religious movements, like secular movements, are shaped by social schedules embedded in routines and networks that connect participants, but the institutional and ideational bases of these connections are not the same.

Our discussion also suggests that appeals to, and legitimations of, sacred authority may challenge conventional rationalist understandings of how political activists perceive the opportunities facing them. Belief in an after-life, in the existence of spirit worlds, or in the intervention of spirits in the world, creates logics of action that concepts like "political opportunity structure," which are based on rationalist and instrumentalist assumptions, fail to capture. Perceptions of opportunities and threats systematically structure collective political action, but we cannot unproblematically infer such perceptions from "objective" political conditions.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of a religious sensibility lies in spotlighting factors that enable sustained commitment to movement causes. In studying religion, we are inevitably drawn to questions of faith, inspiration, and sacrifice. All of these factors figure centrally in the dynamics of contention, whether ostensibly religious or not, but they have been downplayed in instrumentalist models that emphasize grievances, resource mobilization, and political process. Attention to religious dimensions reminds the researcher of the powerful role that nonmaterial forces play in the growth and development of movement identities, as demonstrated, for example, in the 1989 Tiananmen uprising in China (Calhoun 1994).

In speculating about religion and politics in the twenty-first century, we must be attentive to the ongoing repercussions of a number of late-twentieth century developments, especially the fall of communist regimes, the end of the Cold War, and the spread of neoliberal "free market" ideologies and practices. Historically, large-scale religious movements have emerged during periods of crisis and transition in the expanding capitalist world order and shifts in relations between the core and periphery (Wuthnow 1980). Given the rapid spread of neoliberal ideology and market institutions at the end of the twentieth century in areas of the "developing world," from China to Africa, that had once pursued state-led development efforts resistant to the capitalist world order, we should expect a surge of nativistic, revivalistic, millenarian, and messianic move-

ments to mark the early twenty-first century. The character of their claims will vary across contexts, but some will undoubtedly generate demands for political as well as social change. This is most likely where traditions of political engagement from the prior era of socialist reconstruction persist or where religiooppositional subcultures drawing on the popular merger of nationhood, language, and national church are appropriated by secular dissident groups (Johnston 1993).

In many parts of the world, neoliberal policies advocated and enforced by global institutions, such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, have meant reduced-state capacities, as structural adjustment policies produce a decline in state provisioning of education, health care, and welfare services. As state-based development projects (for example, those inspired by socialism) are displaced by globally organized economic growth, religious-based conflicts for control over formerly state-run services have increased. Religious-based institutions and movements have used the provision of social services to win new converts or secure the commitment of the faithful, thereby fueling the growth of Christian-Muslim conflict in sub-Saharan Africa and the expansion of Islamic fundamentalist influence and power in Northern Africa. By creating a more diversified multifunctional role for religious institutions, and downscaling secular state activities via the privatization of schools and hospitals, such policies are likely to generate conflicts between church and state as well as among religious-based movements. The phenomenon is already visible in both "advanced capitalist" and "developing" countries.

The globalization of culture is another likely source of future political contention. Globalization is not synonymous with a happy homogenization of religious values; the process also evokes heterogeneity and resistance (Robertson 1989b). The spread of Western-based mass media in Eastern Africa, for example, has stimulated calls from Christian and Muslim clerics for greater state regulation of the distribution of immoral videos from overseas in a time of decreasing state willingness and capacity to regulate markets (Ponella 1996). Globalization is likely to generate contention by simultaneously fostering secularized global identities as well as traditional religious identities. Global movements of migrants are likely to continue to produce more religiously diverse populations in the countries of Western Europe, thereby making civic consensus about the activities of a secular state difficult to attain.

In the West, the decline of Marxist-Leninist ideology has prompted many on the Left to embrace more modest, often local,

goals, to recognize the dynamism, complexity, and uncertainty of late capitalism, and to be wary of claims concerning superior knowledge about the ultimate course of history. Millenarian secular political ideologies may thus play a less important role in left-wing Western political contention of the twenty-first century. Scientific developments, however, are a probable source of future contention between right and left, as movements stake out moral claims about life, death, sexuality, and the natural world that have typically been the domain of religious authorities.

A fundamental tenet of modernist philosophies and the social science theories influenced by them was that cultures were becoming increasingly "scientific," and therefore less religious, in orientation. Whether the disappearance of the spiritual and magical was to be lauded or lamented, intellectuals since the Enlightenment have tended to accept it as an inevitable byproduct of scientific and technological advance.³ At the beginning of the new millennium, however, earlier reports of the death of religion seem grossly exaggerated. Revolutionary movements from Iran to Poland have shown that dramatic political change in the late twentieth century can still be fueled by religious conviction. Looking toward the future, Samuel Huntington forecasts a "clash of civilizations" in which Christianity, Confucianism, and Islam will vie for supremacy. Likewise Ken Jowitt predicts a "new world disorder" in which movements of hatred and rage, often excited by religious creeds, will supersede the Cold War rivalry between communism and capitalism. Mark Juergensmeyer (1993:2) writes of a new Cold War between the secular West and new religious nationalisms, in which "the confrontation between these new forms of culture-based politics and the secular state is global in scope, binary in its opposition, occasionally violent, and essentially a difference of ideologies." As Roland Robertson (1991:289) observes, "grand narratives are not dying in Latin America or Asia, and indeed their (religious) vitality is probably in part a response to a precarious state of the grand narrative in the West."

Even in countries that remain staunchly secular in their political ideologies, such as communist China, something of a religious resurgence is underway. The remarkable growth of protestant christianity has been

³ The term *secularization* is used in three different senses in the literature. Although secularization as a differentiation of church and state is certainly visible in most liberal democracies, other connotations of secularization – involving either the decline or the privatization of religion – do not necessarily follow. See Casanova 1994.

Blurring the Sacred, Religious, and Secular

noted by many outside observers in China, Eastern Africa, and Central and Latin America. Less recognized, but perhaps more socially significant, is the widespread revival of folk religion. In both urban and rural China, the rebuilding of ancestral temples and refurbishing of ancestral graves, installation of altars for the worship of household deities, reemergence of shamanism, geomancy, fortune telling, and other varieties of “feudal superstition” (as the regime derisively characterizes all such practices) is occurring at a head-spinning pace. Albeit small in scale, rebellions inspired by popular sectarian religion have proved to be a persistent headache for the Chinese government during the post-Mao reform era. Of even greater worry to Chinese state authorities are the religiously based separatist movements in Tibet and Xinjiang, both of which have grown larger and more vociferous in the reform period. In view of the ethnic conflicts that have crippled much of the formerly communist world, Chinese leaders are understandably nervous about similar challenges from Buddhists and Muslims within their borders.

Although there is a common perception among twentieth-century Americans that some religious traditions (for example, Islam) tend to spawn contention and violence, whereas others (for example, Buddhism) are more pacific in effect, a cursory survey of the historical record suggests that few religions are immune to strife. Within religious traditions, however, it may well be the case that certain strains, especially millenarian and syncretic variants, are particularly likely to generate contention.⁴ Millenarianism, with its prediction of an imminent transformation of the world under the guiding hand of a messianic figure, encourages both a crisis mentality and passionate loyalty to the prophetic leader. As Eric Hobsbawm (1959) and Norman Cohn (1970) observed, millenarianism shares with secular revolutionary movements a utopian commitment to immediate and total change. The promise of divine assistance only strengthens the former's hold upon its followers. At the same time, movements inspired by syncretic belief systems, which draw inventively upon multiple religious traditions, seem especially conducive to militancy. Whether this is primarily because of the bold, free-spirited inclinations of

⁴ We use the word *syncretism* with caution in view of the criticism that it has drawn in recent postcolonial discourse. Of course, all religions – like other belief systems – are to some extent syncretic in origin. We are referring here to a melange of religious beliefs and practices, constructed through the creative combination of elements taken from previously distinct religious traditions.

the individuals who launch such movements or whether there is something inherently destabilizing about the ideological melanges themselves is difficult to say. In any event, syncretism, and syncretic millenarianism in particular, is likely to remain a prominent feature of religiously inspired contention in the twenty-first century.