Chapter 16. Religions and social progress: Critical assessments and creative partnerships

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Summary

This chapter starts from the premise that some 80 percent of the world's population affirms some kind of religious identification, a percentage that is growing rather than declining. Emphasizing the significance of belief and practice in everyday lives and local contexts, we analyze the impact of religion and its relevance to social progress in a wide variety of fields: family, gender, and sexuality; diversity and democracy; conflict and peace; everyday wellbeing; and care for the earth. We also identify a series of cross-cutting themes that establish a foundation for policy-making.[4]

In the **Introduction**, we set out our overall goal, which is to provide ways to assess the nature and significance of religion in the specific local contexts in which social progress is pursued. Careful assessment includes attention to everyday practices, not just official doctrines. We demonstrate that religion—as identity, practice, belief, and membership -- is integral to the social lives of a vast portion of the world's population. Religion is in itself a cultural good; thus, social progress must include nurturing spaces in which individuals and collectivities can pursue religious ends.

Section 16.2 on **"Family, gender, and sexuality"** affirms that domestic and gendered relationships have always been shaped by religious rules, rituals, and prohibitions. Here we offer tools for assessing both religious obstacles and the potential for partnership in the quest for progress in these most basic of social locations. Setting aside a lingering binary between secular progress and religious reaction is the first step. A burgeoning literature reveals a strong defense of the nuclear family on the part of some religious organizations, but also progressive reinterpretations and tactical uses of existing tradition on the part of others.

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Section 16.3 deals with **"Religion, diversity, and democracy,"** demonstrating the range of religious ecologies that arise from population movement and media connections. As multiple religious communities encounter each other, the goal remains constant: to discover how religiously diverse people learn to flourish in each other's company. This implies the development of governing structures that are accountable to, and representative of their citizens. We consider different understandings of multiculturalism and secularism, in addition to democracy itself, noting that religious traditions themselves have capacities to promote democratic governance. Not least, "street-level ecumenism" (pragmatic cooperative activity) is often more effective than a dialogue between religious or secular elites.

Section 16.4 is concerned with **"Religion, conflict, and peace."** A clear conclusion emerges: religion is neither inherently violent nor inherently peaceful, but includes practices, beliefs, values, and institutions that can lead in either direction. A careful assessment of the particular context and the particular religions in play is likely to enhance social progress. Close attention is paid to sites—geographical, political, and social—of potential destructive violence and effective peace-making. The sometimes tense relations between human rights and religion are central to the discussion.

Section 16.5 turns in a different direction to examine the many dimensions of **"Everyday wellbeing: Economy, education, health, and development."** We argue that economic wellbeing, education, and healthcare are goals shared by religious groups and are often woven into religious worldviews. That said, there are many places where religious ideas and practices are at odds with secular norms. Finding common ground is difficult, but well-chosen partnerships can vastly extend the reach of programs that enhance wellbeing. States, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith communities, and religiously-infused local cultures all have a role to play.

Section 16.6 is concerned with **"Care for the earth"** itself, recognizing that religious understandings of the earth and faith-based activism on behalf of the environment share much with secular groups. Effective partnerships enhance the capacities of the diverse players in this field. More profoundly, at least some faith communities assert a moral stance which contests the very framing of "environment-as-resource" in global capitalist society, challenging thereby entrenched systems of power, knowledge, and technology.

Section 16.7, entitled **"Themes and implications: An action toolkit"** captures the essence of the chapter. It starts by drawing the threads of the chapter together in five interconnected themes: the persistence of religion in the twenty-first century; the importance of context in discerning outcomes—underlining the role of social science in this; the urgent need for enhanced cultural competence and improved religious literacy; the significance of religion in initiating change; and—especially—the benefits of well-judged partnerships. Each of these themes concludes with an action toolkit.

In sum, we argue that researchers and policy makers pursuing social progress will benefit from careful attention to the power of religious ideas to motivate, of religious practices to shape ways of life, of religious communities to mobilize and extend the reach of social change, and of religious leaders and symbols to legitimate calls to action. The continuing need for critical but appreciative assessment and the demonstrable benefits of creative partnerships are our stand-out findings.

16.1. Introduction

The pursuit of social progress and human flourishing is inevitably intertwined with religion. Well over 80 percent of the world's population is connected to some sort of religion, a percentage that is growing rather than declining.[5] The consequences of those connections and commitments are, however, enormously varied, at least in part because the connections themselves are widely different in intensity and character. This chapter provides a guide to that variation and impact.

Most religious adherents, even nominal ones, see their religious traditions as a basic good, providing blessings to themselves and others. In the very places where social and political life is most precarious, religious communities can provide key protections and forms of self-help; and in the most comfortable of places, religious communities often become sites of celebration and solidarity. At the same time, religious movements, communities and leaders can present important obstacles to progressive change. Understanding the variety of contributions and challenges presented by religion is essential to work for social progress. Neither good nor ill can be assumed at the outset. Analyzing existing evidence regarding the conditions and consequences of specific religious configurations will be a primary task of this chapter.

We will argue that religions can play a distinctive role in reaching and mobilizing portions of the population not always well-supported by governmental or economic institutions. Thus the pervasive grassroots presence of religious leaders and collectivities is a critical resource for those seeking change. This observation is paired with a second theme

[5] The peak year for non-religious populations is 1970. Since then, religions of all kinds have been growing, including Christianity in Eastern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa, Buddhism and other religions in China, and Islam in the Middle East and Africa. These trends are driven in part by non-religious people converting, but mostly they are a consequence of standard demographic forces such as births and deaths. Despite shrinking populations of Christian believers in Western Europe and North America, these forces are likely to result in sustained religious growth globally through 2050 (Johnson, Grim, and Zurlo 2016).

that will run through this chapter. The goals and methods of secular change agents may not always match perfectly with the goals and methods of religious organizations, a fact that must be recognized from the start. But in most contexts there are areas where creative partnerships are possible, many of which can be highly productive.

We begin this introductory section by thinking carefully about the nature of religion itself and its relation to things deemed secular. A narrow focus on official doctrines and memberships is not sufficient for current religious circumstances, especially beyond Europe and North America. That broader scope—looking seriously at everyday religious life across the globe—will call into question the modern assumptions both that secularization is inevitable and that it is a necessary path to progress. Indeed, as Chapter 15 has made clear, assumptions based in a modernization narrative are often obstacles that blind scientists to the agency and creativity of social actors.

These assumptions are not easily shed, however. Social science itself was birthed with ideas about religion and secularization at its core, and as the modern social sciences developed in post-Enlightenment Europe, it seemed natural to speak of religion and secularity as occupying separate—and competing—domains. Religions were primarily understood as systems of belief based on supernatural assumptions and organized into major systems of authority and power. These were seen as standing in natural opposition to empirical, scientific, and political ways of understanding and ordering the world. This opposition and the gradual triumph of science and expertise were theorized as secularization. In Peter Berger's (1969) influential statement of the theory, the forces of the modern world would eventually remove the necessity for supernatural explanations, and those who still believed in forces beyond this world could either hold those beliefs as privatized opinions or gather in "sheltering enclaves" with fellow believers. Religion itself would lose its ability to be a powerful force shaping the secular public world.

Even Berger himself has renounced much of the theory that bore his imprint, noting not only the robust presence of religious affiliation around the world, and the visibility of religiously-inspired political movements, but also the persistence of the most dramatically supernatural forms of religion *alongside* modern ways of knowing (Berger 2014). While some would describe this as a "resurgence" of religion, we prefer to argue that the old modernization narratives never captured the religious realities of the larger world in which questions of social progress must be addressed today.

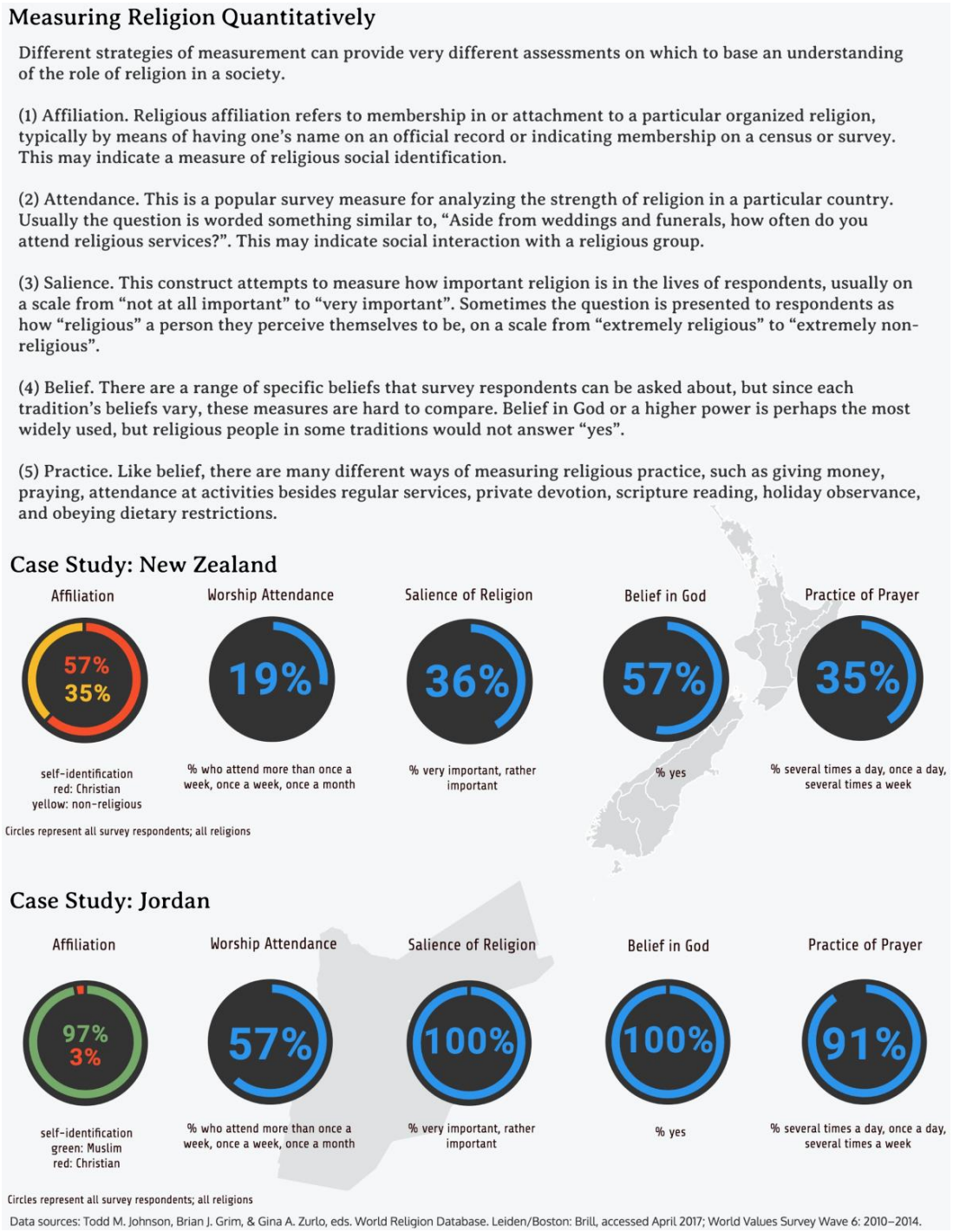
16.1.1. Defining religion and its relation to social progress

One of the most challenging tasks in addressing the question of religion and social progress is establishing the terms of the conversation. Social progress, as previous chapters have argued, must be disentangled from its Enlightenment presumptions in order to encompass a broader understanding of movements toward freedom, dignity, and relationships of solidarity and mutual wellbeing. Once we leave aside the premise that every part of the world will develop along universal lines set out by Western Europe's history, we also have to disentangle ideas about progress from ideas about secularity. That task begins with a careful reassessment of how religion is defined and identified.

16.1.1.1 Expanding definitions of religion

The existing social science literature depends to a large extent on research methods developed in North America and Europe. At their best, these encompass some of the complexity that characterizes the religious dimensions of society. Sophisticated survey-based measures are often very useful for producing a broad snapshot; but as Figure 16.1 demonstrates, surveys can produce widely varying pictures of the same place, depending on which aspect of religion is taken to be most critical.

Figure 16.1 Measuring Religion



In this chapter, when we say "religion," we will have in mind both the very broad range of institutions, beliefs and practices that social scientists have typically thought of as religion *and* the much larger domain of everyday beliefs and practices that constitute lived religion. This means that the particular contexts and the particular challenges of people's lived experience matter. Religions have their impact as a part of the life projects of

individuals and groups. This has several effects on how we look at religion. First, we expect ordinary practice to diverge from the ideas of religious professionals, in that we expect ordinary practitioners and religious professionals each to appropriate beliefs and practices that help them respond to the demands of their particular personal and institutional context (McGuire 2008). Religious ideas and practices are *situated*, meaning (among other things) that every religious tradition is internally diverse. They are also active and constantly *changing*. As new people enter a context through migration or new ideas are encountered through media, ordinary practitioners and theologians alike engage religion in active ways. They are not simply enacting established beliefs and rituals, but through their action, they are contributing to the ongoing creation and re-creation of them (Bender 2010).

Religion as it is lived is also a very *practical and material* thing, not simply an otherworldly preoccupation. It may address this-worldly goals ranging from overcoming substance abuse to seeking justice, from socializing children to escaping violence (Smilde 2007a). Daniel Levine captures well this sense of religious practice. "The lived experience of religion," he writes, "is closely linked to ways of managing ordinary life." As a result, "it is not just that religious beliefs spill over from neatly confined church spaces to infuse action in other parts of life. On close inspection, the distinction between otherworldly and this-worldly… does not hold up very well" (Levine 2012: 8).

Religion is intertwined not only with everyday activities but also with ordinary places and things. In Singapore, for instance, Thai Buddhist talismans are simultaneously objects of supernatural power and items of lucrative economic trade (Yee 1996). In places like Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia as well, religion is often located in the midst of the global marketplace. Sacred things hold blessings and merit, but are also material objects that can be bought and sold; indeed religion itself can be subjected to commodifying tactics (Kitiasa 2008). People do not just live their religion by thinking and believing or by joining

an official religious organization. An embodied, practical perspective on religion includes rituals, spaces, and emotions as well (Vasquez 2010; Brenneman 2012).

Our study of religion in this chapter begins, then, by recognizing the pervasiveness of spiritual sensibilities and the fact that this spiritual realm is, for much of the world, as real and powerful as any political or economic force. In turn, its forms are in constant flux and negotiation, interacting with the political, economic, social, and cultural structures through which progress is pursued.

16.1.1.2 Understanding secularity

To understand religion properly, we also need to reflect on our understandings of "secularity." Throughout the world, governments, agencies, and ordinary people may assert the necessity for domains where religious presence and authority are excluded. The shape of that territory is highly variable, defined by a given society, not by something inherent in the activities themselves (Burchardt and Wohlrab-Sahr 2013). Both secularity—a perceived state of affairs—and secularism—a desired state of affairs -- can be thought of as orientations emerging from Western modernity but with variations elsewhere. The secular is descriptive of domains of life in which there are no perceived religious dimensions. For example, advanced Western countries usually define economic transactions as quintessentially secular, but in many other cultures they have important religious significance. National constitutions often attempt to set legal boundaries between secular and religious domains, but such boundaries vary widely, both in law and in practice. And of course there can be great variation between individuals and between groups even within a given culture regarding what is treated as religious and what is secular. We expect to find variation from one context to another in whether it makes sense to talk about a secular world at all, and where the line between secular and sacred should or could be drawn, a point made well by Talal Asad (2003).

In short, neither secularity nor religion has a natural domain or function. Religion should rather be understood as beliefs and practices oriented to transcendent realities. Virtually anything humans confront, create, or do can be given religious meaning. Conversely, since anything can potentially be religious, there is nothing that is inherently and always secular. This does not mean that everything *is* religious (or secular), only that many things *can* be.

It is still the case that humanity's "limiting conditions"—death, suffering, injustice—are likely to be explained and confronted in religious terms. Progressive efforts to reduce the rate of death, suffering, and injustice frequently draw on religious traditions. Religious practices may be aimed at this-worldly challenges, including survival in violent contexts and demands for basic rights (Rubin, Smilde, and Junge 2014). Equally, the most ordinary biographical and social achievements—family formation, birth, community celebration, and everyday work—are very often shaped by religious ritual.

Discarding assumptions about an inherent religious/secular divide is especially important for scholars who aim to understand cultures outside "the West." Scholars from the North Atlantic region are often too quick to dismiss as instrumental, insincere, or "backward" the religions of people whose basic necessities are not satisfied by markets or states and who address their problems through religious practices. Careful attention to those practices, and to the religious communities in which they are lived, can often yield important insights.

Nor are the spiritual sources to which people turn just a phenomenon of the less-developed world. A widely popular range of rituals, pilgrimages, shrines, and practices characterizes a milieu of "spirituality" that is present in European and North American societies as well (Heelas and Woodhead 2004). Some of those who participate are also active members of established religions, but many seek to connect with something beyond themselves without naming that something in theistic terms.

The relationship between religion and social progress must be approached, then, with full cognizance of both the presence and the variability of religious beliefs, communities, practices, and leaders. No universal boundary defines the religious and the secular, nor is there any clear justification for regarding some societies as religious and some not.

16.1.2 Religion and social progress

As set out in Chapter 2, for many humans religion is in itself a cultural good, and in that sense, social progress must include nurturing spaces in which individuals and collectivities can be free to pursue religious ends. Establishing societies in which diverse religious expressions can be freely pursued should be seen as a fundamental aim of social progress; and we will examine the evidence that such religious freedom enhances prospects for other social goods. The chapter will go on to argue that religious communities can be spaces of valued solidarity and mutual esteem, another of the fundamental goods toward which social progress aims. In addition, we will assess the circumstances under which religious communities can be partners in providing for the wellbeing of the community.

We will also examine the ways in which religions can be impediments to basic principles of equal dignity, for example when they stand in the way of women or limit freedom of expression or block participation in democratic governing. Indeed, the same mechanisms that create religious solidarities can also limit toleration, restrict educational exploration, or lead to violent conflict. We will examine the various ways religious power may be allied with political projects to diminish wellbeing for denigrated populations. Throughout, we will assess religions in their local, embodied particularity in order to evaluate the possible ways they may or may not enable human flourishing.

Religion that seems especially incompatible with social progress is often designated "fundamentalist." This implicit contrast to mainstream or more established religion is misleading. The term is best used to refer to a type of highly salient religious identity and

practice that claims to be based on inerrant "fundamentals" in a religious tradition (Marty and Appleby 1991).[6] While fundamentalist religion clearly poses a challenge to liberal modernity, it also provides forms of self-help or political mobilization in dire and oppressive contexts that mainstream religion and other secular ideologies either ignore or simply conform to.

This points to another important way in which religion is implicated in social progress. We will provide evidence for the utility of religious communities as critical spaces in which the very parameters of progress can be discussed, debated and given moral grounding. As the authors of Chapter 22 tell us, social progress requires the ability to think about how "it could be different." It requires that a society engage in moral deliberation and moral judgments. Progress is not simply a matter of finding the right technological formulas. Imagining what a society could become requires reaching beyond oneself, beyond the everyday world as it is. Progress implies a sense of meaning and purpose that has, even if unstated, moral valence. There are many ways such deliberations and transcendent imagination can be fostered, but for much of the world's population religious communities and religious rituals are the spaces in which humans do the work of envisioning this-worldly transformation.

This can be illustrated by thinking about social progress in African contexts (Olupona 2012, 2014). At the center of many African cosmologies is the lifelong quest for a good life that is engaged in by individuals and communities. From birth to death, the blessings of health and long life, wealth, and children are intended to strengthen and support communal structures, and seeking to acquire such blessings without embedding them within the larger society is condemned. Spiritual belief and ritual undergird ways of pursuing peace and tranquility among neighbors, participation in a community of respect, fairness and

[6] Equating "fundamentalism" with political radicalism or violent extremism is especially misleading. On the relationship between religion and violence, see Section 16.4 below.

accountability, and being in healthy harmony with the earth itself. Religion and social progress are mutually implicated.

The basic framework that informs this chapter, then, is the assertion that progress and religious tradition are not *of necessity* antithetical. Even when the religious and cultural context sounds alien to the ears of Western-educated experts, assessing likely benefits and partnerships—as well as likely resistance or danger—requires critical grounded knowledge. Religious traditions and religious authorities can and do block needed changes that would increase the larger flourishing of a community. This chapter will assess both those blockages and the often-overlooked ways in which religious institutions, beliefs, and practices are partners and facilitators of the work of social progress. We begin that task by examining the many issues that link religion with the most intimate areas of social life, moving in subsequent sections to the larger arenas of political, economic, and ecological concerns.

16.2. Family, gender, and sexuality

As Chapter 17 on the "Pluralization of Families" points out, the vast majority of the world's population lives the majority of life within family units, of varying shapes and sizes. And as *this* chapter demonstrates, a large majority of the world's population is also religious. Intimate human relationships have always been shaped and surrounded by religious rules, rituals, and prohibitions. If anything, religions' concern with family, gender, and sexuality has increased in the modern period. This shift coincides with the pluralization of family forms, more fluid gender identities, the drive to achieve equality between the sexes, and other changes documented in Chapter 17. Inevitably, this has generated internal tensions and debate within many religious traditions and has affected their adherents. Understanding the ever-changing intersections among religions, gender, sexuality, and family life is central to making the sort of progress envisaged in that chapter.

Advances in this field have however been hampered by the modernist theory criticized in Chapter 15, with its lingering binary between secular progress and religious reaction—the former considered automatically positive for the wellbeing of women, children, and gay people, the latter negative. Our approach takes advantage of the recent and burgeoning multidisciplinary research on religion and gender which considers not only male-led, hierarchically-organized forms of "official" religion, but also everyday lived religion, in which women, men, and young people seek to change or reform religion, make tactical uses of it, or bypass its official forms altogether (Ammerman 2007; McGuire 2008; Woodhead 2014). This enables us to offer a critical assessment of religion's past, present, and future social impact.

16.2.1 Religion and the modern family

Historically, religion has been associated with every form of family and almost every imaginable form of sexual and gendered relation. The Bible, for example, variously supports concubinage, polygamy, monogamy, singleness and celibacy, and even discusses child sacrifice and murder.

In the modern period, however, the heterosexual nuclear family came to dominate the religious as well as the secular imagination (see Chapter 17). Official forms of religion and their male leaders played an important role in shaping the ideal. In the West the Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century led the way by criticizing celibacy—including all-female religious orders—and sacralizing the patriarchal family unit (Roper 1992). In modern industrial societies many religious leaders endorsed the male breadwinner model, exalting women's domestic responsibilities, and affirming strong parental authority over children. By the late twentieth century, most male-led official religions had come to accept the permissibility of women's paid work outside the home, but many continued to endorse in

some form a doctrine of the "complementary" but essentially different roles of men and women.

The defense of the so-called "traditional" family was strongest in fundamentalism (originally a movement within Christianity dating from the start of the twentieth century, but with manifestations in most of the other world religions since then). Although it is most often associated with the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the sacralized nuclear family model finds religious defenders worldwide. It has also been linked with colonial and postcolonial nation-building projects—both secular and religious—where women have been relegated to the "domestic and spiritual realm" (Chatterjee 1989: 239; see also Sarkar 2001; Menon 2010). The family unit is presented as a God-given norm with clear boundaries which must be vigorously defended by the faithful. It is attributed a sacred status, with anything which threatens it categorized as profane—including sexual infidelity, "secular" state policies, egalitarian gender ideologies, feminism, and homosexuality.

Away from official religious teachings and pronouncements, however, the lived realities of religious families allow for a great deal of negotiation, even circumvention of strictures. For example, in the face of changes that have led to the pluralization of family forms, ordinary Catholics often ignore the Catholic Church's condemnation of contraception, homosexual relations, and remarriage after divorce (Clague 2014). There are LGBTQ movements in most religions, as well as liberal religious wings, which disagree with "official" teachings on topics such as women's roles and same-sex marriage. Sometimes this pluralization of family forms within religions has gained official sanction as, for example, in the development of plural forms of Muslim "marriage".[7]

[7] See the "Muslim Marriages Project" directed by Annelies Moors: http://religionresearch.org/musmar2014/project-information/.

Religious clashes over different family ideals have become potent sites of political mobilization. They can spill over national boundaries and give rise to unexpected alliances, such as coalitions in defense of the traditional family which cross previously sharp religious and theological boundaries. In addition, the politics of sexuality and gender can become entangled with other political fissures. In contemporary East Africa, for example, homosexuality is often linked to the perceived ills and injustices of Western colonial societies, and to threats against religion, nationhood, and African masculinity (Ward 2002).

There are currently many "hot" conflict points where family and gender-related ideals clash violently. They include abortion clinics, reproductive health legislation, legalization of same-sex marriage, and women's dress. The clash is most vivid when fundamentalist forms of religion oppose what they see as modern forms of sexual "decadence." The results can be murderous, as in forms of Islamic terrorism targeted at gay clubs and "decadent" Western cultural venues.

16.2.2 Religion and gender

Questions about family relations are intertwined with questions about the nature of gender, and here too religion plays a role. Women are not universally more religious than men, but expressions of religion often vary by gender. In each tradition and context, religious practice and piety figure somewhat differently in the lives of women and men, with the "gender gap" (with women more actively religious than men) greatest in Christianity (Pew Research Center 2016).

16.2.2.1 Conservative religion

Studies of women in conservative religious groups have challenged many assumptions. Researchers have discovered a variety of ways in which women both benefit from and sometimes subvert masculine-dominated forms of religion. In her study of a North American fundamentalist Christian community, Nancy Ammerman discovered that "most

women learn to influence family decision-making while still deferring to their husband's authority" and "find ways to live with the tension between fundamentalist norms for family structure and modern norms of individuality and equality" (Ammerman 1987: 146). Other studies, like those of Elizabeth Brusco (1986) or Bernice Martin (2001) in Latin America, find that women can benefit by appealing to religious norms to tame machismo and domesticate their menfolk, turning them into better fathers and husbands. Lynn Davidman (1991), looking at women in Orthodox Judaism, finds that women benefit from the way in which the tradition sacralizes women's roles as wives and mothers in stable family units, a conclusion also supported by studies of the burgeoning ultra-orthodox movement in Judaism (e.g. Heilman 1999).

Recent anthropological studies on the postcolonial situation in Egypt and the Middle East assess women's engagement with conservative Islam to understand how they respond to liberal assumptions (one could say blind-spots) on modernity, piety, femininity and agency. For example Saba Mahmood's (2005) study of women in Egypt's piety movement highlights how women learn to inhabit conservative norms as a way of forming the self as worthy and responsible. In doing so women are not only able to claim a place in previously male-only spaces such as the mosque, but become agents of change in their households and communities. Lara Deeb's (2006) work on women in the suburbs of Beirut discusses similar engagements to argue that such religiosity is to be understood as a re-enchantment of modernity, where the "Western woman" is invoked both as foil and impetus to create an authentically Islamic and modern way of life in which pious selves are fashioned.[8] Samia Huq's (2011) study of the cultivation of piety among educated, urban Bangladeshis shows that while women remain attached to traditional families headed by men, they exercise

[8] In a recent experiment involving approximately 2,500 adult subjects in Egypt, Masoud, Jamal, and Nugent (2016) found that individuals were more likely to favor women's leadership when they were shown that it was consistent with Qur'anic teachings.

greater individualistic reflection, in relation both to the domestic sphere and to the cultural and economic conditions which have historically used sexual appeal to render women and wives subservient.

The "bargains" struck with official pious and conservative modes of femininity and family (Kandiyoti 1988) do not, however, eliminate risks, costs, and violence for women. R. Marie Griffith's (1997) study of the Charismatic-Evangelical Christian "Women's Aglow" movement concludes: "If, in certain ways, prayer and testimony seem to create possibilities for the liberation and transformation worshippers claim to experience, they may just as readily work to opposite ends, further institutionalizing the roles and boundaries that constrict women's space" (1997: 210). Although it provided a safe space in which some women could speak to one another about violence and abuse within the pious household, the remedy was limited.

Gender-based violence does not seem to be especially linked to particular religions or strands within them. No large-scale systematic study exists, but work on domestic violence in Christian groups in North America (e.g. Sevcik, Rothery, Nason-Clark, and Pynn 2015) suggests that rates are not significantly higher than outside such contexts.[9] Studies of clerical abuse in Ireland (e.g. Keenan 2012) reveal an interlocking system of inequalities in which religion is just one factor. The extreme example of religiously-legitimated male domination and violence against women in fundamentalist groups like ISIS and Boko Haram is now beginning to be studied (e.g. Stern and Berger 2016), but larger patterns and processes are not yet well understood.

Thus, even when they can be subverted and used tactically, and though secular solutions may be worse than what they replace, conservative religious legitimations of

[9] This study helpfully points out that responses to domestic violence are best when they draw on the particular religious or secular beliefs of the community.

difference and inequality between men, women, and children often stand as blocks in the way of progress.

16.2.2.2 Liberal and reform movements

Internal religious critiques of sexism date back at least to the nineteenth century. Worldwide, effective calls for equal human dignity have sometimes taken religious as well as secular forms. Fresh energy was poured into religious movements for progressive change from the 1970s onward. In the wake of the Iranian revolution of 1979, for example, an epistemological and theoretical shift took place in Islamic thought which involved the historical contextualization of Islam and women's roles and responsibilities in Muslim societies (e.g. Mernissi 1991; Ahmed 1992). This fed into an ongoing attempt to dissociate Islam from structural inequalities and cultural practices sanctioning discrimination against women (Barlas 2002; Moghadem 2005; Najmabadi 2005).

In Christianity a great deal of effort was injected into campaigns for women's ordination as priests, which proved successful in most Protestant denominations between the 1920s and 1990s, but not in the Roman Catholic or Orthodox Churches (Chaves 1997). These campaigns were accompanied by the development of "feminist theology," in which Christian doctrines, ethics, and liturgy were read and reinterpreted through an explicitly feminist lens (Parsons 2010). In Buddhism, there were successful efforts to revive orders of Buddhist nuns (Mohr and Tsedroen 2009; Kawanami 2013). Female religious orders remain important in several religions, including Roman Catholic Christianity, where they focus women's collective energy and often work actively for greater equality—sometimes against the wishes of male authority.

In Islam, recent reform movements include Musawah, initiated in Kuala Lumpur and currently headquartered in Rabat. Musawah aims to reform Muslim family law, working with legal experts, Islamic clergy and scholars, and anthropologists and historians. By highlighting

the diversity of legitimate Islamic juristic opinion and by engaging in research on the ground, it seeks to shift the construction of marriage and gender relations from one in which women are obedient and subjugated to one more compatible with scriptural injunctions to show love, mercy, and equal respect for both genders (Anwar 2009; Mir-Hosseini, Al-Sharmani, and Rumminger 2015). Musawah continues to advocate reform in family laws in many parts of the world and has had some notable successes, for example in legal reform in Morocco.

Such initiatives are not without critique from other Muslims, however. Lila Abu Lughod (2015) argues that movements such as Musawah and the Global Muslim Women's Shura Council resort to a human rights model that separates Muslim women from their own cultures and obscures the structural, political, and economic factors—played out at a global level and in the everyday—that contribute to women's suffering. And Saba Mahmood (2006) points out that an imperialist logic is at play when Islamic cultural practices such as veiling or "honor killings" are declared in need of remedy, thereby justifying Western military and other kinds of intervention in Muslim societies. Outside agents seeking progressive change would do well to listen carefully to the everyday narratives of women's lives, mindful that faith-based organizations themselves are often sites where progressive change begins.

Internal movements for religious reform have generally focused on women and femininities, and less attention has been paid to men, masculinities, and gender relations in a broader sense. Where there has been explicit attention to masculinity, it has often been in order to defend a patriarchal family model. In the wake of feminism, such defense in conservative Christian circles is often couched in terms of the support of strong but "responsible" forms of male headship. Van Klinken's (2013) study of African Christian masculinities in the context of AIDS reveals a strongly heterosexual, masculinist Protestant Christian mode of male headship, and a gentler Catholic one which is "queered" by devotion

to Mary and the general use of more feminine imaginary. Gender never means just women, and religious effects on the gender order cover a wide spectrum.

16.2.3 Sexuality

Religious leaders and teachings have often been prescriptive about both sex and sexual identity. Many religions continue to frown upon sex outside of marriage, but most have abandoned the enforcement of sexual prescriptions within marriage. That said, the Roman Catholic Church's insistence on "natural" rather than artificial forms of birth control remains an important exception.

Growing diversity and fluidity in relation to gender and sexual identity and practice has called forth a more vocal response. Opposition to homosexuality is by no means confined to religion, but it is a feature of all fundamentalisms and a great deal of mainstream religious opinion as well. But there are also dissenting voices, who reread traditional religious sources to problematize "homophobic" readings. For example, the story of the Prophet Lut/Lot and the City of Sodom which is present in the Qur'an as well as the Bible can and has been read not as a condemnation of "sodomy," but as a story of oppressive power, miserliness, inhospitality, and arrogance where male sex acts are vilified for the abuse of power they represent in that particular context. In his study of *Homosexuality in Islam,* Kugle (2003) begins with the Qur'an's injunction that humanity should respect and celebrate diversity, going on to show how later commentaries highlighted the existence of hermaphrodites (a third gender). The Sunna (sayings and examples of the Prophet Muhammad) also mention men who are akin to women and men who are not attracted to women, without elaborating on the reason for their lack of desire. Resources, such as these, from within religious traditions, can provide a bridge between religious populations and secular reformers.

There are bridges in everyday practice, as well. LGBTQ movements are now found within all religious traditions, sometimes pressing for reform of official religion, and

sometimes setting up alternative religious communities and networks. A recent study of the religious and sexual identities of young people across many religious traditions (Yip and Page 2013) found that those in conservative religious groups generally found their faith a support in helping them defend their identity in wider society, claiming, "If God made me like this, this is who I am meant to be."

Such movements and the issues they represent are often major conflict points within religions, as well as in secular societies. The global Anglican communion of churches, for example, has become internally riven over the legitimacy of homosexual practice and same-sex marriage (Hassett 2007). In Islam, organizations like the UK-based Imaan and the Safra Project for women, along with the U.S.-origin Al-Fatiha Foundation, are similarly controversial. The latter, founded in 1998, offers a platform for believing and practicing LGBTQ Muslims transnationally, with several chapters in the United States and offices in Canada, the UK, Spain, and South Africa. However, an international Islamic group called Al-Mouhajiroun, which seeks an Islamic Caliphate, declared in 2001 that members of Al-Fatiha were apostates. In spite of these pressures, a handful of mosques in the United States and South Africa have openly gay imams. They remain marginal, however, and are strongly opposed by many well-respected contemporary voices of Islamic authority.[10]

16.2.4 Alternative religions and spiritualities

Alternative religious movements can serve as incubators for social change, and over the course of history there have been religious communities which have experimented with various forms of sexual, gender, and family relations—including promiscuity, polygamy, polygyny, communal childrearing, and of course, various forms of celibacy.

[10] See for example Jama (2015) and Henking (2012).

Religions run chiefly by women—and often for women—have been rare (Sered 1994), but their relative weight and importance in the religious landscape has increased in modern times. Some are self-consciously new, but most involve at least a partial revival of indigenous traditions. Today they include goddess movements, Wicca, various forms of ecologically-oriented "holistic" spirituality, and movements focused on healing of the earth and of "body, mind and spirit" (e.g. Reiki, Yoga, religious forms of mindfulness, neo-paganism and other revived forms of indigenous religion and "nature religion"). Some are focused on individual wellbeing; others combine this with political and ecological activism.

This second wave, starting with Wicca in the 1940s, expanded on nineteenth-century movements such as Theosophy and Christian Science which were founded and dominated by women. More recent charismatic figures like Starhawk (1979), the feminist activist and witch, offered new rituals and practices which women and men could adapt to their own lives, relationships, and socio-sexual situations. A study of alternative spiritualities in Britain in the early twenty-first century found that 80 percent of their leaders and participants were women (Heelas and Woodhead 2004).

From being counter-cultural in the first half of the twentieth century, the "alternative" spiritual milieu has expanded its influence to become increasingly mainstream in many countries. Its spread has been assisted by its easy relations with new media, old and new healing and wellbeing practices, and the opportunities opened by entrepreneurial consumer capitalism (Lofton 2010). "Spirituality" is now found in everyday education, healthcare, and popular culture throughout Europe and North America and more widely. It involves a quiet but effective shift away from male religious authorities and official forms of religion to authority located in the conscience of each individual, in connections with one another, and in tapping the "energy" of the cosmos. Typically, but not necessarily, such spirituality takes an

appreciative and affirming view of equal gender relations and is relaxed about the pluralization of family forms and intimate relations.

16.2.5 Conclusion

Study of the lived realities of religion reveals that in spite of official teachings of many male-dominated "world religions", religious communities and people very often arrive at pragmatic compromises surrounding family, sexuality, and gender relations. Broadly speaking the main religious stances and orientations may be summarized as "Consolidating" (legitimating existing inequality), "Tactical" (working within existing constraints to subvert them), "Questing" (seeking alternatives for personal benefit rather than structural change), and "Counter-cultural" (working for progressive structural change) (Woodhead 2007). Assessing a local group's particular religious orientation(s) to gender, family, and sexuality is essential to any effort at social reform, and essential to finding points where values converge and where religious organizations have needed capacities. That means recognizing that the most important differences run not just between but *within* different religious traditions (including all the "world religions"), and even within a family unit itself.

16.3. Religion, diversity, and democracy

In this section and the one to follow, we address the complex connections between religion, politics, and social progress. We begin with a focus on religious diversity, looking first at the reasons for this and then at the shifts in religious realities across the globe. Following this, we turn to the ways in which diversity is managed in different parts of the world, paying particular attention to "multiculturalism" and "secularism," recognizing that both are various. That discussion leads in turn to the relationship between religion(s) and democracy itself—an issue already touched on in Chapter 14. Then in Section 16.4, we elaborate on questions of human rights, violent conflicts, and peace-making.

In the course of this section, the reader's attention is drawn to Sidebars in which concrete situations are developed in more detail to illustrate particular points.

16.3.1 Diversity, mobility and migration

The mobility and migration of people constitutes a major theme running through the work of the IPSP—unsurprisingly in that the presence of migrants and the tensions surrounding them have become critical flashpoints at the beginning of the twenty-first century, challenging societies to develop effective modes of political and social governance. Religion must be considered a significant factor in this process. Just as migration can be propelled by a faltering economy or civil unrest, it can be spurred by political and cultural persecution of a religious group. And just as migration can remake families and cultures, it also remakes religious traditions and political processes.

A distinguished body of research now exists on the multifaceted relationship between religion and migration (Warner and Wittner 1998; Beckford 2016). One theme stands out: the effects constitute a two-way flow, often mediated by the communication technologies that link communities across territory. Religions inspire, manage, and benefit from the migration process, but at the same time beliefs, identities, and practices are reshaped by the associated dislocating of populations. Take, for example, the evolution of religions that are "traditionally" linked to particular global regions or national contexts. What happens when members of a religious majority learn to live as a minority in a new place, in which culture and religion are no longer interrelated? It is important to look in detail at the ways in which organizational forms and leadership styles adapt. Equally significant are the currents that feed back into the country of origin and their effects on the home community.[11]

[11] An extensive body of material examines these mutual influences. Stoeckl (2014) explores Orthodox communities; Sinha (forthcoming) introduces a wide literature on diaspora Hinduism. Warner and Wittner (1998) and Yang and Ebaugh (2001a; 2001b) offer valuable insights regarding new immigrant communities in the United States.

The role of religion in the reception of migrants is the subject of Part V of Beckford's (2016) first volume, and a particularly instructive example can be found in Margarita Mooney's (2013) study of Haitian immigrants in three very different places: Miami, Montreal, and Paris. Mooney notes that the differentiation between religion and the state in the United States (a structural variable) allows faith-based organizations to assist and advocate for Haitians in Miami. In contrast, both Quebec (characterized by secular nationalism) and France (dominated by a more assertive secularism), discourage community organizations based on religious or ethnic identifications. The greater scope for action allowed to the primarily religious mediating organizations established by the Haitian community in Miami more effectively assisted the reception of newcomers. Thus macro, meso, and micro levels are brought together in the understanding of religion as a crucial variable in the successful resettlement of migrants.

A further point is important: diversity does not always depend on physical contact between people. Religious differences can exist "virtually" as well as on the ground. Modern means of communication make us aware of previously unfamiliar religious practices and populations. Where citizens have little personal knowledge or experience of religions, media representations—dominated by what commands immediate attention—shape attitudes (Knott and Poole 2013). The growing use of media technologies in the portrayal of and the communication between religions is a vital element in the management of religious differences. It also plays a role in the constant reconfigurations of the religious field per se.

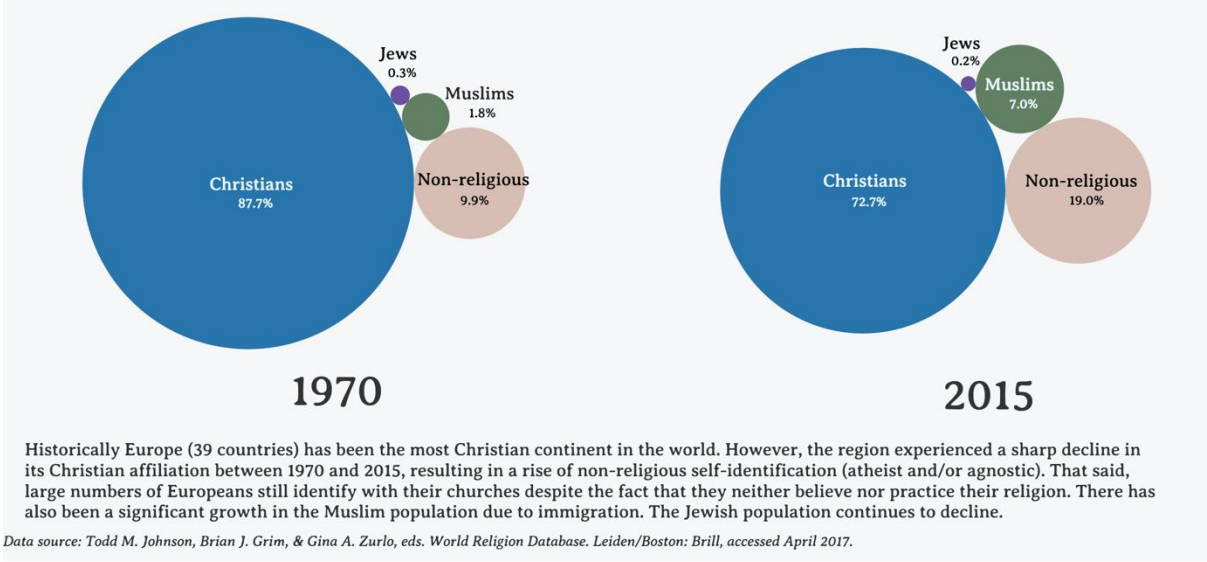
16.3.2 The many faces of religious diversity

The presence of religious diversity is far from uniform (Grim 2015). In most parts of the world diversity is growing, in others declining, and in still others it remains relatively

stable. The following examples illustrate these patterns articulating the wide variety of reasons for both growth and decline during the period 1970-2015.[12]

At one end of the spectrum are those societies that were relatively stable for a long period of time, but which are now becoming more religiously diverse. Western Europe is an obvious and high profile example. Here there has been economically motivated in-migration since the mid-twentieth century, bringing not only substantial numbers of Christians from the global South but a growing Muslim presence (Roy 2007). The political consequences are considerable, but are experienced differently in different nation states (See Sidebar 16.1).[13]

Figure 16.2. Religious diversity in Southern, Western and Northern Europe, 1970 and 2015



Historically Europe (39 countries) has been the most Christian continent in the world. However, the region experienced a sharp decline in its Christian affiliation between 1970 and 2015, resulting in a rise of non-religious self-identification (atheist and/or agnostic). That said, large numbers of Europeans still identify with their churches despite the fact that they neither believe nor practice their religion. There has also been a significant growth in the Muslim population due to immigration. The Jewish population continues to decline.

Data source: Todd M. Johnson, Brian J. Grim, & Gina A. Zurlo, eds. World Religion Database. Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2017.

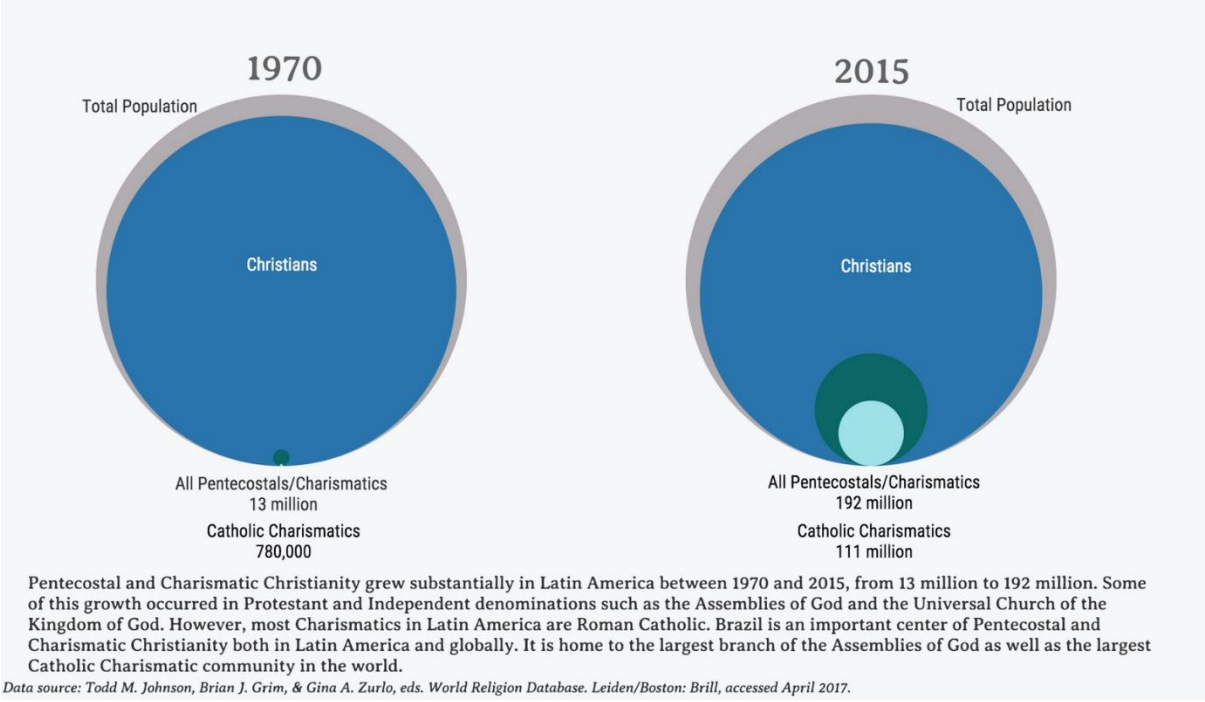
Coterminous with this transformation, though much less noticed until the late twentieth century, has been the diversification of Latin American Christianity. Here a solidly

[12] These draw on the material brought together in Johnson, Grim, and Zurlo (2016). Additional religious demographic data can be gleaned from the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA), Pennsylvania State University (www.thearda.com/); Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) (www.esds.ac.uk/); Integrated Public Use Microdata Series International (IPUMS), Minnesota Population Center, University of Minnesota (https://international.ipums.org/international/); and ZACAT Data Archive for the Social Sciences (GESIS), Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences (http://zacat.gesis.org/).

[13] For a comparison of European approaches to the United States, see Casanova (2007).

Catholic global region is now experiencing the rapid growth of Protestantism, mostly in its Pentecostal forms (see Figure 16.3). Once again there is variation from country to country, but the changing nature of the continent overall—including the effects on Catholicism itself—reflects a wider global shift.[14]

Figure 16.3 The growth of Pentecostalism in Latin America, 1970 and 2015



Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity grew substantially in Latin America between 1970 and 2015, from 13 million to 192 million. Some of this growth occurred in Protestant and Independent denominations such as the Assemblies of God and the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God. However, most Charismatics in Latin America are Roman Catholic. Brazil is an important center of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity both in Latin America and globally. It is home to the largest branch of the Assemblies of God as well as the largest Catholic Charismatic community in the world.

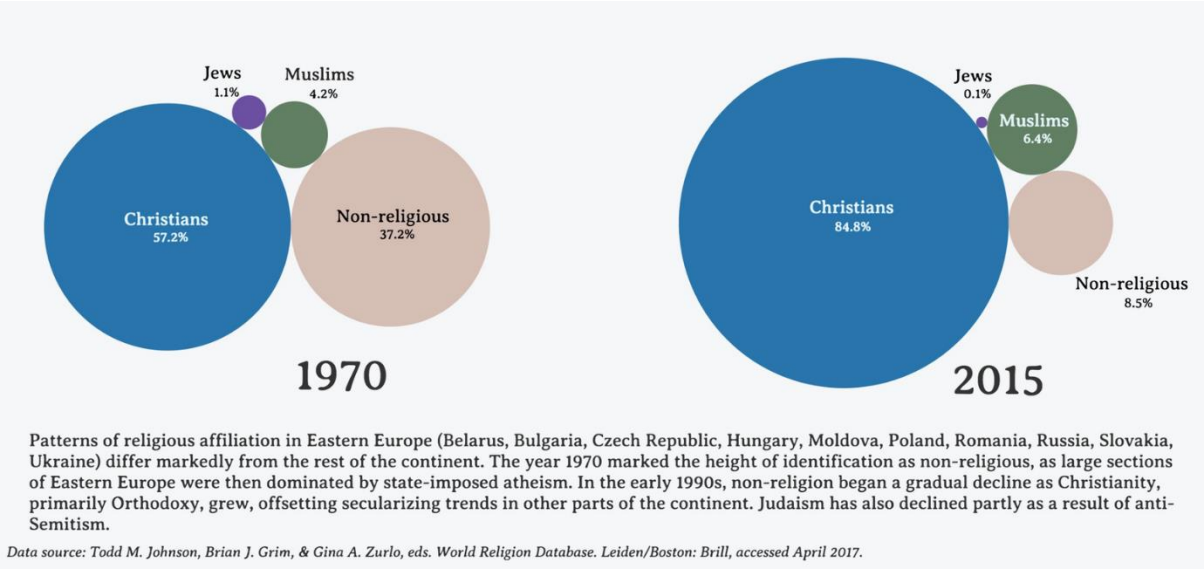
Data source: Todd M. Johnson, Brian J. Grim, & Gina A. Zurlo, eds. World Religion Database. Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2017.

Aspects of these changes can be seen in a second set of examples: those parts of the world which were sites of aggressive and politically motivated secularization for most of the twentieth century but which are now experiencing religious restoration and growth. Since 1989, formerly hegemonic Orthodox churches have reasserted themselves strongly in Russia and Eastern Europe, but at the expense very often of minority religions (See Figure 16.4). In China, the process is more complex. Not only does the Communist Party in China remain resolutely atheist, but its attitudes toward religions deemed "foreign" are different from its dealings with Confucianism, Daoism or Buddhism (Yang 2012) (See Sidebar 16.2). That

[14] See Section 16.3.4 below, as well as Sidebar 16.6.

said, China is a part of the world where Christianity is growing noticeably not least in its Pentecostal forms (See Figure 16.5).

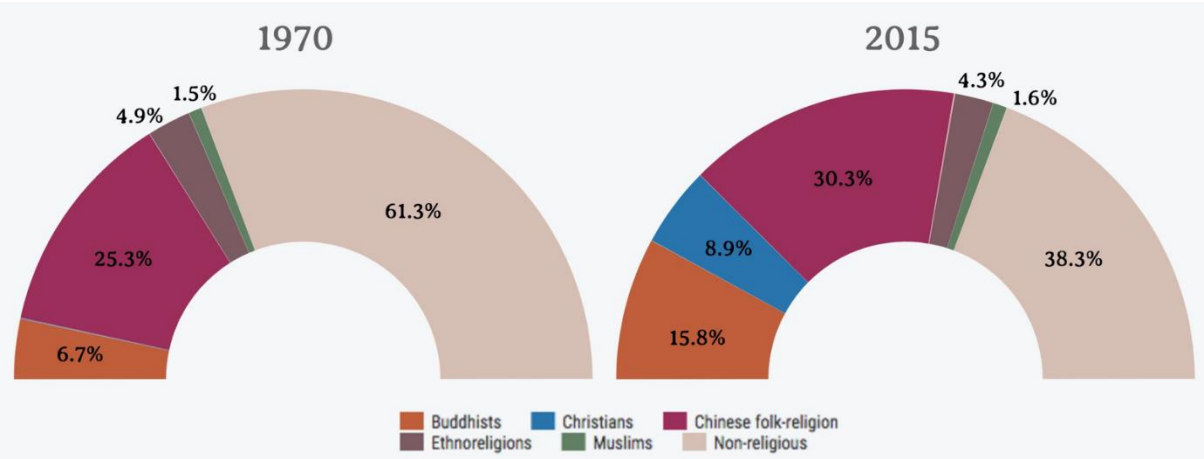
Figure 16.4. Religious diversity in Russia and Eastern Europe, 1970 and 2015



Patterns of religious affiliation in Eastern Europe (Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Ukraine) differ markedly from the rest of the continent. The year 1970 marked the height of identification as non-religious, as large sections of Eastern Europe were then dominated by state-imposed atheism. In the early 1990s, non-religion began a gradual decline as Christianity, primarily Orthodoxy, grew, offsetting secularizing trends in other parts of the continent. Judaism has also declined partly as a result of anti-Semitism.

Data source: Todd M. Johnson, Brian J. Grim, & Gina A. Zurlo, eds. World Religion Database. Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2017.

Figure 16.5. The growth of religion in China, 1970 and 2015[15]



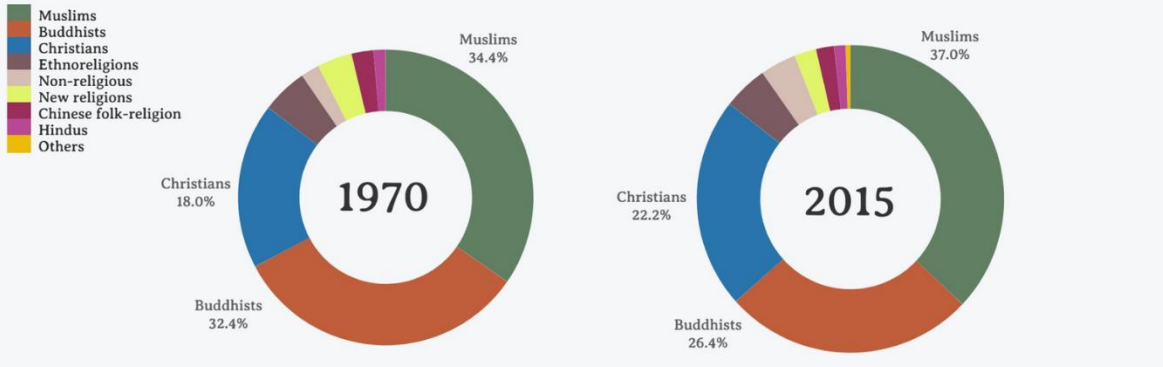
Religious adherence of all kinds in China has been steadily increasing since 1970. The practice of more "traditional" Chinese religions like Buddhism, Chinese folk-religion, and Confucianism has increased. Christianity grew dramatically in China from 1970 to 2015, from under 1% of the population (876,000) to nearly 9% (123 million). The Chinese constitution states that citizens have "freedom of religious belief" but limits protections for religious practice to "normal religious activities." Religious groups must register with the government and belong to one of five state-sanctioned "patriotic religious associations": Buddhist, Taoist, Muslim, Catholic, or Protestant.

Data source: Todd M. Johnson, Brian J. Grim, & Gina A. Zurlo, eds. World Religion Database. Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2017.

[15] It is notoriously difficult to estimate the number of Christians in China and figures range widely. Although there are multiple disputes surrounding the Chinese numbers, we rely on the World Religion Database (Johnson, Grim, and Zurlo 2016). The WRD takes into consideration both registered and unregistered Christian affiliation. Further, the WRD places Christianity in China in the context of other religions, thereby serving as the most uniformly reliable source.

A third set of cases is located in parts of the world where religious diversity most certainly exists but is nothing new. In Southeast Asia, for example, there has been little overall change over this period (see Figure 16.6). That said, what might be called "constitutive" diversity continues to evolve as migration—at times propelled by repression—moves religious traditions along with people. It is equally clear that colonialism altered the religious ecology in this part of the world (and elsewhere) in ways that can still be seen (see Sidebar 16.3).

Figure 3.5 Religious diversity in Southeast Asia, 1970 and 2015



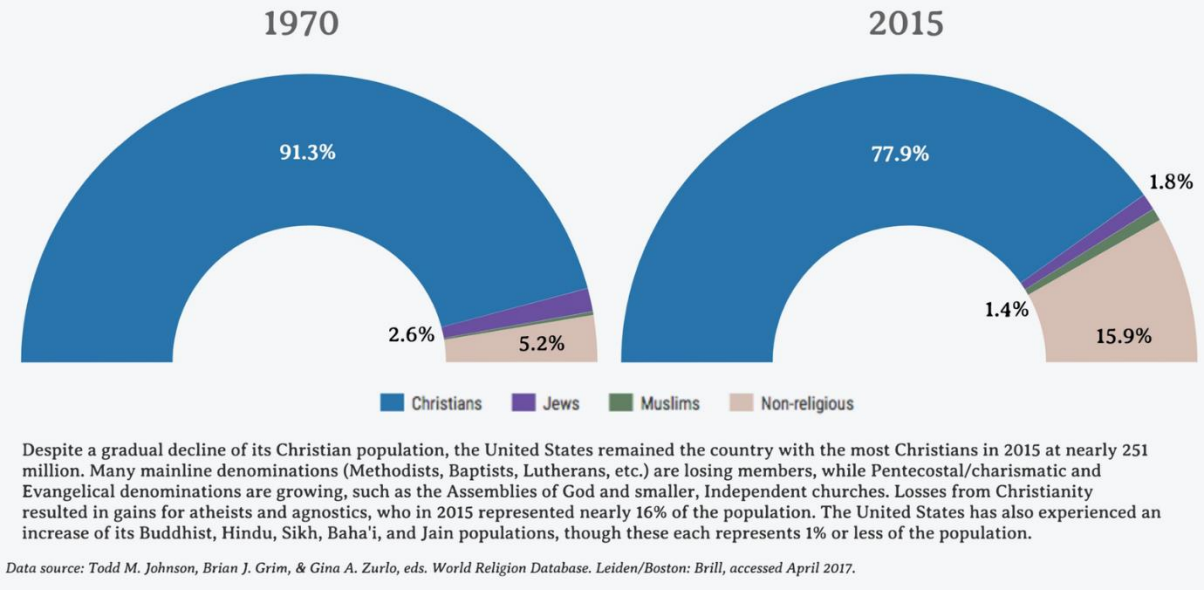
Religion	Affiliation 1970	% of pop. 1970	Affiliation 2015	% of pop. 2015
Muslims	96,895,000	34.4%	234,463,000	37.0%
Buddhists	91,150,000	32.4%	167,017,000	26.4%
Christians	50,723,000	18.0%	140,921,000	22.2%
Ethnoreligionists	14,047,000	5.0%	29,984,000	4.7%
Non-religious	7,100,000	2.5%	24,622,000	3.9%
New religionists	10,665,000	3.8%	14,587,000	2.3%
Chinese folk-rel.	6,754,000	2.4%	12,171,000	1.9%
Hindus	3,756,000	1.3%	7,471,000	1.2%
Others	431,450	0.2%	2,253,580	0.4%
Total	281,521,450	**100.0%**	633,489,580	**100.0%**

South-East Asia (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam) is one of the most religiously diverse regions in the world. Between 1970 and 2015 the region experienced little change in its religious make-up, though there has been proportional growth in both Islam and Christianity due to high birth rates and conversions, respectively.

Data source: Todd M. Johnson, Brian J. Grim, & Gina A. Zurlo, eds. World Religion Database. Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2017.

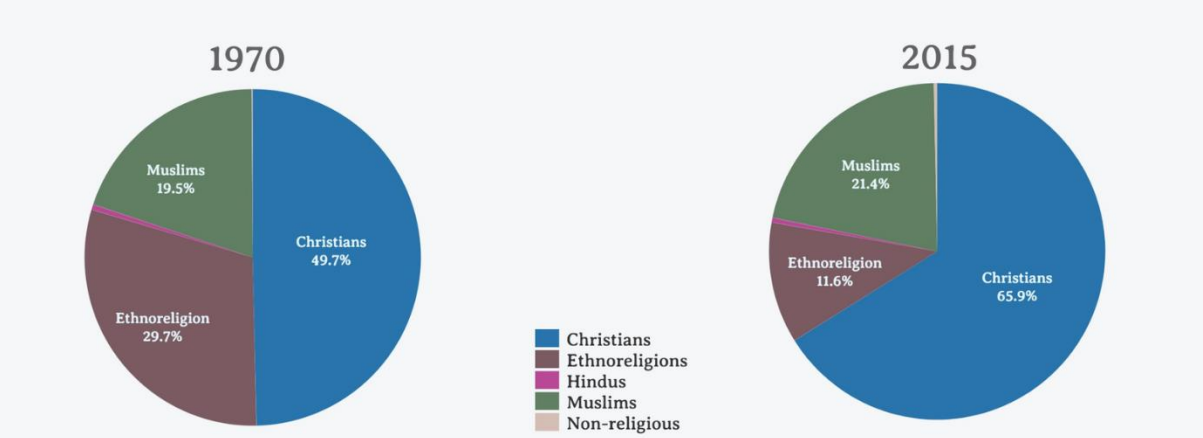
The United States is very different, but it too is a society built on diversity, as wave after wave of migrants found their way there—initially across the Atlantic and more recently from very different parts of the world (see Figure 16.7). Diversity is part of American self-understanding: individually, collectively, and constitutionally (see Sidebar 16.4). In recent years, the challenges have included the accommodation of faiths other than Christian, especially Islam—a problematic step for some Americans.

Figure 16.7 The changing diversity of the United States, 1970 and 2015



The final group of cases reminds us that increasing diversity is not uniformly the case; the reverse process also occurs, but once again for widely differing reasons. In large swathes of Africa, for instance, there is decreasing diversity due to a "modernizing" process that encourages adherence to "world" religions rather than to a plethora of local traditional faiths (see Figure 16.8). That said, careful attention should be paid to the details of each country—they are far from uniform.

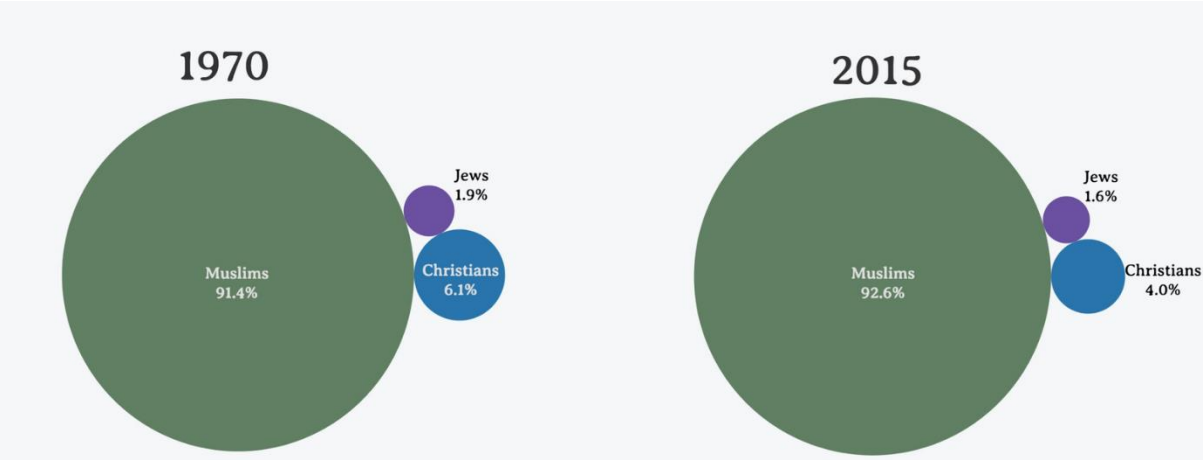
Figure 16.8. Religious diversity in East Africa, 1970 and 2015



Eastern Africa (Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mozambique, Reunion, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe) has experienced a decrease in religious diversity through the continued growth of Christianity and Islam, each of which have received converts from traditional religionists (ethnoreligionists). However, the range of diversity varies within the region, as some countries are Muslim-majority (Somalia, Comoros), some are Christian-majority (Burundi, Kenya), and some have large populations of both (Eritrea).

Data source: Todd M. Johnson, Brian J. Grim, & Gina A. Zurlo, eds. World Religion Database. Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2017.

Figure 16.9. Religious diversity in the Middle East, 1970 and 2015



The political situation of the Middle East (Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Yemen) has significantly influenced its religious composition. Historic communities of religious minorities—particularly Christians, Jews, and Baha'is—have emigrated from the region in large numbers after centuries of relative stability. It is likely that the Middle East will continue to become less religiously diverse over time.

Data source: Todd M. Johnson, Brian J. Grim, & Gina A. Zurlo, eds. World Religion Database. Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2017.

The Middle East, conversely, is characterized by decreasing diversity because of conflict and dispersion. The displacement of historic religious communities, long at home in the region, is a recent and tragic phenomenon (see Figure 16.9).[16]

What emerges from all these examples is the constantly generative nature of religious diversity in the twenty-first century. As political, social, economic and natural forces push

[16] There is a developed discussion on recent developments in the Middle East in Chapter 20.

populations from one place to another, some parts of the world will become more religiously diverse, while others will become more homogeneous. Equally important in any given society are the shifts produced by changes internal to the population. Individuals in new contexts have new religious options, keeping in mind that changing or leaving one's religion is a possibility understood differently in different parts of the world and can by no means be taken for granted (Martin 2013: 185).

In short, religion is a crucially important factor in understanding diversity but it never stands alone. It is part of a bigger picture which must be approached contextually. That said, religious diversity is distinctive, for which reason it is inadvisable to think of religious identities simply as one among other cultural preferences. Differences in religious belief and practice are likely to strike more foundational chords than differences in taste or style. Diversities, moreover, can be found within as well as between faiths. Indeed "liberals" from various faiths may well have more in common with each other than they do with their respective, rather more "conservative" co-religionists.

James Beckford (2003) underlines an additional point: religious diversity (a state of affairs) is to be distinguished from religious pluralism (a normative term implying the acceptance or otherwise of diversity). The descriptive and the normative are all too often confused in the literature. Beckford also separates out societal, organizational, and individual levels of understanding, reflecting the fact that religious diversity presents differently in different domains: state, politics, civil society, culture, interpersonal relations, and so on.[17] It follows that *individuals* may welcome diversity within societies or polities that do not, and

[17] For additional discussions of the politics of religious diversity, see Demerath (2001), Wuthnow (2004), Banchoff (2008), and Finucane and Feener (2014).

vice versa. Some groups may, in fact, advocate for societal toleration so as to protect their own exclusivist beliefs (Yang 2014).

Sidebar 16.1

Post-War Changes in Europe

Grace Davie

For the purposes of this case study, the European "story" of religious diversity begins in the post-war period,[1] when Britain, France, the Netherlands and (then) West Germany looked for sources of labor to support their expanding economies. The UK turned to India and the West Indies and France to the Mahgreb (both influenced by former colonization). The Netherlands looked to Turkey and Morocco, and Germany to Turkey and the (then) Yugoslavia). As a result there was growing religious diversity in all four countries – including Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and many varieties of Christians -- but differently constituted in each case depending on the provenance of the migrant community. This phase came to an end in the 1970s as the global economy faltered.

Some two decades later in-migration into Europe once again gathered speed, but this time the receiving societies included both the Nordic and the Mediterranean countries as well. The rapidity of the change in the Mediterranean countries is worth noting; almost overnight countries of emigration in the earlier period began to receive significant numbers of new arrivals. The enlargements of the European Union in 2004 and 2007 stimulated a rather different movement, this time from East to West Europe, bearing in mind that inflows from whatever direction were significantly curtailed follow ing the financial crash in 2008. A final phase can be seen in the current (2015 on) "migrant crisis" largely brought about by the conflict in the Middle East. The consequences of this influx are still unfolding.

Very little of this movement of people can be considered religiously motivated, with the possible exception of Christians fleeing war or persecution in the Middle East.[3] For the huge majority of incomers the primary reason for moving has been economic. The consequences for religion are, however, immense as an increasingly secular Europe is obliged to come to terms with the re-emergence of religion in public life. The trigger has been the arrival of other significant faith communities, among which Muslims are by far the largest.

Despite the negativity of media accounts it is important to acknowledge the capacities of (West) European societies to absorb considerable numbers of Muslims, enabling them to establish effective communities in different parts of the continent (Joppke and Morawska 2014; Joppke and Torpey 2013). The election in 2016 of a practicing Muslim as mayor of London (the largest city in Europe) is a potent symbol of this "success."

That said, a series of incidents across Europe testify to continuing difficulties. These include the Rushdie controversy in Britain (1989 on), the affaire du foulard in France (1989 on); the murders of Pim Fortuyn (2002) and Theo van Gogh (2004) in the Netherlands; the furor over the cartoons of Mohammed published by a Danish newspaper

(2005), a debate that subsequently spread to Sweden (2007); the challenge to the legality of minarets in a Swiss referendum (2009); the banning of the *burqa* or *niqab* in public in some parts of Europe (2014); and religiously-motivated violence in Paris (2015), Belgium (2016) and the UK (2017). Each of these incidents raises issues particular to the country in question. The underlying concerns are, however, common: they reflect the willingness (or not) of European societies to accommodate a minority whose religious assumptions challenge the status quo, and the capacities of that minority to live in diaspora.

It is important to recall the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in the management of this agenda. Article 9 of the ECHR has two clauses. Article 9(1) ensures an absolute right to hold a religion or belief and a qualified right to manifest this in worship, teaching, practice, and observance. Article 9(2) states that the freedom to manifest a religion or belief is subject to "necessary" limitations.[4] This distinction is key. Equally important is the jurisprudence emanating from the ECtHR in religion-related cases, which are growing in number. Growing religious diversity is a matter of on-going negotiation on the part of national and international legal systems. Foblets, Alidadi, Nielsen, and Yanasmayan (2014) bring together much of the literature on belief, law, and politics in Europe.

A final point is, however, crucial. Political arrangements and legal decision-making are central to the effective management of religious diversity, but the capacities of diverse populations to live alongside each other are equally – perhaps more – important. Why is it, for example, that France is (without doubt) both constitutionally and institutionally more democratic than Britain, but Britain is – or has been until recently – more tolerant than France?

This includes religious tolerance – unsurprisingly in that sizeable religious minorities have existed in Britain for centuries rather than decades. It is also a function of a constitutional rather than majoritarian democracy. Paradoxically it is frequently the non-elected (i.e. less democratic) elements of the British political system – the monarchy, the unelected second chamber and the established church – that consistently defend the rights of religious minorities. An almost irresistible question follows from this: that is to ask which way of working – of managing pluralism – is "better"? Is it the French or the British? It is, however an invidious question. A more constructive approach endeavours to understand the legacies of history (both good and less good) in each European society and to work creatively within these. As we argue throughout this chapter, this is not a case of one size fits all.

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[1] This account draws largely on Davie (2006, 2013) both of which contain extensive references on religious diversity in post-war Europe.

[2] There was in addition politically motivated migration into The Netherlands from the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) and Surinam (both former colonies).

[3] The arrival of significant numbers of Jews in the 19th and early 20th century was differently motivated as Jewish communities fled the pogroms in Russia and East Europe. Sadly antisemitism is currently re-emerging as a distressing feature of European societies.

[4] Article 9/2 reads as follows: "Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others."

[5] This volume contains the report of the RELIGARE project and 28 responses to this. RELIGARE was a European Commission 7th Framework Project on religious diversity and secular models in Europe which focused on innovative approaches to law and democracy. See www.religareproject.eu/. See also the continuing publications of Eva Brems at the Human Rights Centre, Ghent University – www.hrc.ugent.be/staff/eva-brems/, Matthias Koenig at the Max Plank Institute, Göttingen – www.mmg.mpg.de/en/departments/max-planck-fellows/prof-matthias-koenig/ and the extensive bibliography compiled as part of the "Directions in Religion Pluralism in Europe" project - http://grassrootsmobilise.eu/bibliography.

Sidebar 16.2

Accommodating New Forms of Religion: Chinese Dilemmas

Fenggang Yang

The Chinese case is a distinctive example of the interplay between religious diversity and state regulation. Clearly, the historical legacies of both the Chinese dynasties and Communist rule have shaped religion in China (Yang 2012). Since the late 19th century, Chinese elites have attempted to modernize China, often involving efforts to suppress some or all religions. Soon after the overthrow of the Manchu Dynasty and the establishment of the Republic (1912), and partly in response to the attempt to reestablish a monarchy in 1915, the cultural elites – influenced first by the French Enlightenment and subsequently by the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 – campaigned to reject religion in favor of science and democracy. They accused traditional religions (i.e. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism) of holding back the modernization process, and saw Christianity as a tool of Western imperialism. Following the Communist revolution in 1949, the People's Republic of China (PRC) in mainland China attempted to eradicate all religions, especially in the course of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

Since 1979, China has permitted five religions to operate legally – Buddhism, Catholicism, Christianity (Protestantism), Daoism, and Islam – seeing these as conventional religions with relatively large numbers of believers in China. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has, however, retained atheism as its formal ideology, which is required for CCP and Chinese Communist Youth League members, is propagated through the mass media, and permeates the education system from elementary school to graduate level. Thus the current tolerance toward the five religions is maintained for pragmatic reasons only. The CCP still insists that religion will eventually die out and that religious organizations and activities must be politically controlled.

That said, the PRC seeks acceptance as a modern nation that follows the principles of the United Nations in its Charter and related covenants. For this reason, the PRC Constitution includes a clause that states that individual "freedom of religious belief" is protected. The Constitution, however, is subordinate to the CCP leadership, ideology and policies and cannot be cited directly in court adjudication. Thus, religious freedom has a lower priority than the political agenda and the need for social stability. Nevertheless, the UN norm, along with the presence of more open-minded cultural and political elites, makes possible a limited social space for religion in Chinese society.

I will expand these points in terms of the "red," "black," and "gray" markets of religion that co-exist in China (Yang 2012). Apart from the radical years of 1966 to 1979 (when all religious activities were prohibited), the PRC under the CCP has allowed the above-mentioned five major religions to function. The CCP, however, has also imposed strict restrictions on religious organizations and activities. For example to operate legally, religious groups have to join the "patriotic" associations designated for their respective religions. These associations mediate between the CCP and religious groups, allowing the CCP to maintain control over the selection of clergy and lay leaders, over permits for building and renovation, over religious gatherings and religious literature. Conversely, through the same mechanisms, religious groups may make their requests known to the party-state. Thus, in economic terms, there is a supply side (religious organizations under the "patriotic" associations), a demand side (religious believers and groups), and a regulator (the party-state). Together these components comprise what I have called the "red market" of religion in China.

There are, however, many individuals and groups within the five religions who

perceive the “patriotic” associations as detrimental to the authenticity of their belief, practice, and organization, and – consequently – have refused to join. Instead they have operated illegally in the “black market” of religion in China. Since the 1980s, the party-state has designated about 20 religious groups as counterrevolutionary groups or evil cults (xie jiao), inflicting severe penalties on them (confiscating properties, dispersing gatherings, imposing fines, imprisoning the most active leaders, and in some cases sentencing key leaders to death or life imprisonment). Nonetheless, most of these groups remain operative in China, some with large numbers of followers.

In addition to the “red market” and “black market,” there is a “gray market” of religion in China. In this “market” the individuals, groups, and activities concerned are neither legal nor illegal. Alternatively, they are both legal and illegal but for different reasons. The “gray market” includes many folk religious practices that follow community or clan traditions, together with individual spiritual beliefs and practices that lie outside the five religions. It also includes government-backed tourist or cultural sites that provide religious services to visitors, and a selection of beliefs and practices that are markedly ambiguous in terms of their religious nature, such as venerating ancestors, Confucius, or the CCP leader Mao Zedong. Finally, a number of clergy in the approved “patriotic” associations may engage in activities that would be considered illegal. For example, bishops and priests under the Catholic Patriotic Association are supposed to be independent of the Pope. However, most of the bishops have discreetly sought and received recognition from Rome. Similarly, some Protestant ministers in the officially approved Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee have preached in “house church” congregations that may be considered illegal by the party-state. Thus the “gray market” in China is highly varied; it is also widespread in both urban and rural areas.

In short, a range of religions are thriving in China. Hundreds of millions of people believe and practice Buddhism, Daoism, and folk religion. Tens of millions of ethnic minorities adhere to Islam. The rapid increase of Christian conversions in the 21st century is especially striking. The relative strength of religions, especially Christianity, is puzzling to political and cultural elites. So much so that in recent years, the Chinese authorities, unwilling to adopt Western models of religious freedom, have brought back earlier forms of control, which favor traditional Chinese religions while suppressing others, especially the so-called “foreign” religions of Christianity and Islam.

A recent example of political suppression can be found in the campaign to remove crosses from the roofs of Christian churches. Between 2014 and 2016, the province of Zhejiang in eastern China carried out a campaign of renovation of old factories and villages, which have been absorbed into newly developed urban areas. As part of this “landscape beautification” campaign, more than 1,500 crosses were forcefully removed from church buildings. Indeed a few churches, such as the Sanjiang Church in a suburb of Wenzhou City – whose members resisted the order to take down the rooftop cross – were demolished. Furthermore church leaders who openly challenged the campaign were removed from office, detained for extended periods, and in some cases formally prosecuted and sentenced to prison. Interestingly, the cross-removal campaign targeted Christian churches in the legal “red market.” As a response, some Christian pastors left the “patriotic” associations and went to the “gray market.” It is important to note, however, that most Christians in Zhejiang have been able to continue their routine services and religious gatherings, albeit under closer surveillance by the party-state.

In understanding these shifts, I have argued that social scientific theories developed in Western contexts cannot simply be transposed to China (or indeed anywhere else). Conceptual adjustments are necessary if we are to grasp what is happening. In this case the concepts of religious demand, supply, and regulation are manifest in a distinctive dynamic in the three types of responses to religious regulation – red, black and gray. As I concluded in my extended discussion of the Chinese case, “Under heavy regulation, the gray market is likely to be volatile and unsettled, making religious regulation an arduous

task and impossible to enforce by the government superstructure" (Yang 2012: 177).

In contrast to mainland China, the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan began in 1987 to implement the constitutional separation of religion and the state and the protection of religious freedom, a principle that had been inscribed in the Republic of China Constitution that took effect in all of China in 1947. However, in 1949 the ROC government under Guomindang (Nationalist Party) lost the civil war with the Communists, withdrew from the mainland to Taiwan, and suspended the Constitution under martial law. Only in 1987 was martial law finally lifted, permitting the ROC Constitution to be fully implemented in Taiwan. This included freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom to form political parties, and open elections for the presidency and for members of the parliament. Today, religious freedom and religious pluralism have become accepted cultural norms in Taiwan, where diverse religions coexist and compete peacefully in an open market (Clart and Jones 2003; Kuo 2013; Laliberté 2009). Starting from very similar religious cultures, the mainland and Taiwan have arrived at very different places. The contrast indicates that social, legal, and political arrangements are more important than culture, whether traditional or modern, in constructing a society with harmonious relations between a variety of religions and secularisms.

Sidebar 16.3

"Religious Education" in a Southeast Asian Context: Insights from Singapore

Vineeta Sinha

Like other multi-religious societies Singapore has had to learn how to "manage" its potential tensions (Lai 2008).[1] Eugene Tan's pertinent observation about ethnicity applies equally to religion: "Ethnicity is a Janus-faced creature in Singapore, simultaneously portrayed as a threat and a source of cultural ballast" (Tan 2004: 88). Religion is valued as a resource even as it is viewed as a hazard. The state has accepted that Singapore society must be religiously plural, but is wary of the possibility of potential religious conflict inherent in this diversity. The Singapore state's adoption of secularism is a partial answer, yet its pragmatic orientation sees it heavily involved in charting a religiously peaceful scene.

The question of formal religious instruction in Singapore schools was raised as early as 1955. The "1955 Ethics and Religious Committee" advised the teaching of ethics or religious knowledge for all students within school hours and premises, making provisions for students to study their own religion (Doraisamy 1969). However this exercise was abandoned as it raised questions about the involvement of a secular state in matters of religious instruction. In 1957 an Education ordinance was passed allowing religious schools to provide religious instruction, but this too was abandoned in government schools even as the teaching of ethics continued to be part of the curriculum.

Upon self-government in 1959, full independence in 1963, and ejection from Malaysia leading to nationhood in 1965, the political leadership of Singapore assumed responsibility for a multi-ethnic and multi-religious polity. From the outset, the centrality of religion in the lives of citizens was recognized, even though religion was perceived to be a sensitive matter. Members of a multi-religious and multi-ethnic society were assured of their right to profess a religion (or not) and the freedom to practice it. At this point Singapore defined itself as a secular state without excluding religion, which was seen as crucial moral and cultural ballast.

In 1974, the need for religious education in schools was given expression at the

national level. The undertaking of religious education by a secular government was deemed to be a "complex question," and was shelved until the late 1970s and 1980s when the Ministry of Education appointed appropriately skilled committees to explore the feasibility of introducing "moral education" in schools. These efforts resulted in the implementation of two such programs in all primary schools. In 1982 the two schemes introduced, "Good Citizen" and "Being and Becoming," were pronounced successful, while a report released in the same year argued for a follow up program for secondary schools.

In 1984 "Religious Knowledge" (RK), a compulsory subject, was introduced amidst awareness of the "danger areas" – flagged by parents and educators alike – of this initiative. Nonetheless RK was taught to all secondary school students, replacing the existing subject: "Civics and Current Affairs." When the idea was first mooted, four options were offered in RK: Bible Knowledge, Buddhist Studies (to be taught in English and Mandarin), Islamic Knowledge (to be taught only in Malay) and Hindu Studies (to be taught only in English). It was also decided that ethnic Malay students should only study Islamic Knowledge given the "sensitivity of the issue" (The Straits Times, 17 January 1982). The same rationale did not apply to students of other ethnic groups who in theory were free to opt for any of the four choices. A fifth and sixth option were added, "World Religions," and "Confucian Ethics". In 1983, "Sikh Studies" became the seventh option, following an appeal by members of the Sikh Advisory Board. RK thus offered a total of seven options, and the possibility of taking this as an examination subject was made available to all students. Because RK was considered an examinable subject with a prescribed syllabus, it raised a host of further issues surrounding training teachers, creating spaces for instruction, devising the syllabus, organizing course material and developing textbooks.

As expected there were concerns that the teaching of RK would turn into "conversion sessions" (The Straits Times, 4 March 1983). The Ministry of Education assured parents that it would closely monitor the teaching of RK to ensure that the system would not be abused. Interestingly, it was also suggested that parents who feared conversion of their children to other faiths could choose either "World Religions" or "Confucian Ethics" as these were viewed as "neutral options."

The entire enterprise, however, turned out to be short-lived and was abandoned in 1989, amidst – once again – objections to a secular state's involvement in religious instruction for its citizenry. The prevailing view deemed that the imparting of religious values was a parental responsibility. The educational gap was filled by a newly constituted subject called "Civic and Moral Education" (introduced on 23 February 1991) to cultivate citizens who would embrace Singapore's "Shared Values." Students would be taught to place society above the individual and to prioritize racial and religious harmony above all else. Consequently, the syllabus focused on strengthening inter-ethnic and inter-religious tolerance, civic and social responsibility, enshrining the family as foundational and strongly endorsing commitment to the nation.

Post 9/11, governments the world over have articulated caution vis-à-vis religious extremism. Government leaders in Singapore have expressed similar anxieties and called for greater tolerance, understanding and awareness amongst members of different religious communities. Various schemes, some governmental and others through private initiatives, have been formulated to achieve better inter-religious appreciation and understanding. These include visits to places of worship, talks on various religions and co-operative ventures between different religious communities. Notably Hindus and Buddhists have organized joint Vesak Day Celebrations, and Catholics and Muslims have come together to celebrate Christmas and Hari Raya (The Straits Times, 28 December 2001). These state and community led efforts aim to educate Singaporeans about "other" religions on the assumption that correct information will prevent stereotyping, misconceptions and discrimination and ensure religious harmony and thus political stability.

From its inception as a modern nation-state, Singapore's leaders have actively

engaged the management of a religiously and ethnically plural citizenry. For the most part, the preference has been for institutional and legislative measures. By and large, these safeguards have prevented the irresponsible expression of communal tensions, though the latter may be present. From this point of view, the measures – many of which are punitive (such as warnings, fines, and imprisonment) – have served their purpose. Recent events, however, have raised questions (even at government level) regarding the adequacy of such an approach. Critical in this respect is a shifting emphasis away from institutional mechanisms (which still remain) and towards everyday actions, which forge inter-personal ties and increase interaction amongst members of different religions. A more informed understanding of other religions is able to develop alongside an awareness that multi-religiosity is not merely the listing and counting of discrete religious communities. The process must include the mutual respect and non-judgmental understanding of one community for another. It is equally clear that after some 50 years of multicultural nation building, policies for managing the continuing racial and religious diversity on the island are likely to evolve further. This is a work in progress.

Sidebar 16.4

Managing Religious Diversity in the United States

Nancy Ammerman

Foundational to the cultural identity of the United States is a "creation myth" that begins with the journey of seventeenth-century religious "pilgrims" who arrived in North America seeking freedom to practice religious beliefs for which they faced persecution in Europe. This story of the search for religious liberty is widely shared in American society, but its meaning continues to animate arguments about the relationship between religions and the law and about how diverse religious groups can live together.

It was not an auspicious beginning. Those pilgrims achieved their freedom by occupying new territory, sweeping indigenous populations to the side, and excluding religious others. In the ensuing two centuries, however, the continent was occupied by increasingly diverse sets of people, and by the time the American Constitution came into being, no single religious group could claim dominance. The First Amendment prohibited the "establishment" of any religion by the new federal state and enshrined individual "free exercise" as one of the country's foundational human rights.

There is a long and tangled legal history surrounding the interpretation of those two constitutional protections (Greenawalt 2009), but culturally, the impulse to allow free religious expression to the individual, and not to establish any single privileged religious group, has resulted in a nation whose range of religious traditions is vast. No definitive religious census of the population exists, but in 2010 the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies gathered data on the number of congregations (344,894) and their adherents (150,596,792) spanning almost 250 distinct religious groups.

Until the 1960s, that diversity largely existed within a Protestant Christian hegemony, although cultural power had begun to expand to include Jews and Catholics.[1] Changes in immigration law (enacted in 1965) brought not only more Christians from outside the North Atlantic but significant numbers of Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, and especially Muslims into the mix.[2] Cultural shifts in the early 21st century have also increased the number of people without religious affiliation (the "nones").[3] Protestants, meanwhile, have lost their majority position, even as their historical shaping of the culture remains visible. The reality of

religious diversity is both mourned and celebrated.

Conflicts among religious and nonreligious groups have been ubiquitous in U.S. history, but have not generally divided the society into warring camps. In everyday interactions, lines of religious difference are largely moderated by norms of privacy and respect, as they are in Europe. Putnam and Campbell (2010) have argued, in fact, that bridging ties are created because Americans are likely to have friends, co-workers, and even family members who are religiously different both from themselves and from each other.

Some conflicts are, however, more difficult and have propelled interpersonal, economic, and rights disputes into the public eye. The issues have ranged from whether religious groups can sacrifice animals to whether employers can forbid religious clothing and jewelry. Americans may not always agree on the answers, but they generally agree on the procedures for settling the matter. Only on rare occasions has the clash between religious groups and surrounding neighbors or authorities resulted in death and destruction.[4] Both law and custom have tended to keep interreligious violence in check. And as in other modern nation-states a de facto multiculturalism prevails (Joppke and Morawska 2014).

The other distinct consequence of the American legal pattern is the fact that religious organizations are voluntarily organized and supported with minimal state involvement. They are also presumptively legitimate, meaning that local religious communities allow minorities legal spaces for cultural expression. A significant body of research has documented the degree to which "congregations" (and their equivalents in new traditions) have facilitated immigrant incorporation.[5]

Even as norms of religious tolerance are deeply engrained in the society, people who have exclusivist religious beliefs sometimes doubt that religious diversity is good for the country. In a post-9/11 context of fear, religious restrictions, insults, and even violence have become more likely. And even as generational cohort replacement and political history would predict an increasingly open and tolerant country, the shape of immigrant trends and the global sense of threat are undermining those norms. The cultural, bureaucratic, and legal mechanisms that have largely kept religious diversity from erupting into major conflict are being tested – just as they are in Europe.

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[1] This tripartite religious "establishment" was famously described by Will Herberg in his Protestant-Catholic-Jew (Herberg 1960).
[2] An excellent introduction to this shift can be found in the collection of articles edited by Prothero (2006).
[3] A full overview of current religious demographics is contained in Pew's "America's Changing Religious Landscape" report (2015).
[4] There was, for example, both anti-Catholic and anti-Mormon violence in the 19th century, and more recently a government assault on a disliked religious group in Waco, Texas.
[5] See especially the argument by Warner (1999) and, as one example, the research by Kniss and Numrich (2007).

16.3.3 The governance of religious diversity

As set out in Chapter 2 of this Report, social progress depends on establishing civil societies where people of diverse heritage can not only work and live together, but also flourish in each other's company. Each society, moreover, must find a way forward within

the parameters set by its past. For this reason, "progress" will look different in different places. Here we look at two ways of achieving this goal: sets of ideas captured by the terms "multiculturalism" and "secularism".

16.3.3.1. Understanding multiculturalism

The idea of multiculturalism has been introduced in Chapter 15. It is a term with multiple meanings. At one level it is part of an expanding cultural market, allowing the discerning consumer to pick and choose from an increasing range of cultural goods (food, clothing, art, music, and so on). Very different in valance is the notion of multiculturalism as an inherently divisive process that damages—necessarily—the dominant or host culture.

Tariq Modood, a prominent British scholar captures these dilemmas in a summary article published in *The Guardian* (Modood 2011). In this, Modood notes that the growing assertion of strongly held religious identities struck many as "too multicultural," not at all the friendly differences in music or food previously celebrated. The timing is important. The article came in the context of a high profile statement by the then UK Prime Minister indicating that multiculturalism had failed. Similar misgivings were felt in France and Germany—a trend that continues. Indeed it is sentiments such as these that encourage the far-right movements that are currently gaining purchase in many parts of Europe, exacerbated by the unexpected influx of migrants arriving in Europe from the Middle East. The flow peaked in 2015; the political consequences began to unfold in 2016.[18]

The authors of Chapter 15 offer a solution—or more accurately a way of thinking—which, once again, is echoed by Modood: that is to see the building of a multicultural society as a process in which new ideas and new ways of doing things are constantly drawn into the mainstream, which is itself reconstituted—continually so. Many different actors have a part to play in this demanding task. Among them are religious organizations at every level of

[18] See Section 16.3.2 above, as well as Sidebar 16.1.

society and the myriad ordinary individuals that inhabit them. Public communication and mutual education, along with "street level ecumenism" (working side by side) are often more effective than dialogue between elites, both religious and secular, in securing positive outcomes.[19]

16.3.3.2. Secularism and the liberal state

Secularism is a similarly flexible concept, and it too is contentious. A complex terminology has evolved in this field to distinguish forms of secularism that seek to accommodate difference from their more radical counterparts which exclude the presence of religion on principle from the public square. Rowan Williams (2012) terms the former "procedural" secularism and the latter "programmatic" secularism. Modood (2013) prefers "moderate" and "radical", but the distinction is similar.

In her path-breaking work in this field, Cécile Laborde (2017) opens up the debate in new ways. She starts from the following question: should the liberal state necessarily be secular? In her response, she argues that there is indeed a minimal secularism—or separation between state and religion—that is required by the liberal state, but that secularism is more complex than is often thought. Specifically, it is incorrect to assume that liberal democracy requires the strict separation of state and religion that is found in the French or the U.S. model.

In reaching this conclusion, Laborde follows the argument of this chapter in that she underlines that religion is more—much more—than a statement of belief about what is true, or a code of moral and ethical conduct. Religion refers equally to ways of living, to political theories of justice, to modes of voluntary association, and to vulnerable collective identities. Thus, Laborde disaggregates religion into its various dimensions, and in so doing dispenses

[19] Singapore provides an instructive example of religious and state actors working together in a multicultural society. See Sidebar 16.3.

with the Western, Christian-inflected conception of religion that liberal political theory relies on, particularly with reference to the separation between religion and state. As a result, there is considerably more variation in permissible state-religion arrangements than either secular liberals or religiously minded liberals have often assumed—a flexibility that can be extended to non-Western societies.[20] It is with this flexibility in mind, that we turn to democracy itself.

Sidebar 16.5

India: The World's Largest Democracy

Vineeta Sinha

India – with a population exceeding 1.2 billion – defines itself unequivocally as a secular state. But it has a population that is far from secularized. According to the 2011 Census, Hindus constitute about 80 percent of the population followed by Muslims at 14 percent, and smaller numbers of Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains. Less than 1 percent of the population declares itself to have "no religion." The Constitution is the supreme authority and articulates both the fundamental right of the individual citizen to religious freedom (Articles 15 and 25) and the right of religious communities to manage their own affairs (Article 26) – with the caveat that the state has the right to intervene in the religious domain in the preservation of national interests or if communal harmony is disrupted. The Indian state's legitimacy rests on its declared equality of treatment of all its citizens. Above all an articulated secularism deems that the political authority of the state is located outside and beyond all other interests, such that it cannot be held hostage to the interests of any group, religious or otherwise. Against this background, two interrelated points demand attention: the notion of "secularism" as such and the threat to democracy constituted by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Given the historical and religious-cultural grounding of the concept, critics have argued that "secularism" is ethnocentric and that the various meanings attributed to it may not always be relevant, especially in non-western, non-Christian settings. The question has provoked an extensive literature on a variety of Asian contexts.[1] Yet the ideas carried within the concept of "secularism" have not been rejected entirely. Alternative non-western varieties of the concept have been proposed even as it continues to be debated and re-conceptualized in current scholarship. Nikki Keddie (2003: 242) goes further still, arguing that: "[N]o state yet seen has been purely secular, whether the word is used to mean state separation from religion or state control of religion." One point, however, is abundantly clear in this discussion: secularism has been heavily politicized in the Indian context.

Since the early years of India's independence, political and social scientists have vigorously debated the applicability of this concept to the subcontinent.[2] India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru shaped the contours of a secular India in enshrining religious freedoms to all its citizens and non-interference of the state in religious matters in its Constitution. That said, scholars have observed – quite correctly – that in practice Nehruvian secularism legitimized differential treatment of religious communities, granted "religious privileges" to some of these communities, and has been seen as a political ideology that practices "appeasement of religious minorities."

[20] The Indian case offers an important and much-discussed example of the application of secularism to a non-Western society. See Sidebar 16.5.

The critique of this version of “secularism” has been loudly expressed over many decades but even more so since the landslide electoral victory of the BJP in May 2014. A Hindu majoritarian government as well as clusters of Hindu citizenry have called for the removal of what are seen as “privileges” for religious minorities, for example state support for religious institutions and for the annual Haj pilgrimage for Muslims. There is a strong view that the Indian state is not secular enough in the sense of being rigorously “neutral” among contesting religious groups. The Indian legal system, for instance, accommodates different personal laws for different religious communities. Religion-specific laws apply in matters of marriage, divorce, adoption, and inheritance. Undoubtedly the co-presence of personal family law for Muslims, and the existence of religion-specific legislation and institutions, complicates the state’s claim to be secular.

The larger challenge in the Indian case comes from the link between national identity and a particular religion – Hinduism. Hindutva’ refers to Hindu principles or a Hindu way of life and has been interpreted as a form of Hindu nationalism which privileges a cultural notion of “Hindu.” As a political force, this is a banner under which the Hindu right in India fights for state power; it has been critical of the policies of the Indian state under Congress rule. It is, moreover, avowedly anti-Muslim and increasingly anti-Christian. It is organized around the Sangh Parivar (family of organizations) which is made up of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a paramilitary, non-party Hindu nationalist organization founded in 1925 that has proved an efficient and effective organizer; the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is the electoral wing of the RSS, founded in 1980 as a religious nationalist party (currently in power under the premiership of Narendra Modi); and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP – World Hindu Council) which mobilizes religious institutions and personages both in India and abroad for what it sees as Hindu causes.

The BJP represents a Hindu consciousness as much as a nation state consciousness and asserts a deep affinity between Hindus and the nation state of India. It aims to monopolize political space and limit the civic participation of religious minorities. In 2013, the General Secretary of the BJP declared that, if elected, the BJP would institute anti-conversion laws across the Indian nation. The BJP did indeed achieve a resounding victory in May 2014, but to date no such law has been enacted nation-wide. That said, numerous incidents across the nation suggest that Hindutva forces have been emboldened – sentiments expressed in a rising tide of intolerance, including the marginalization of non-Hindu minorities. Continuing Hindu-Muslim and Hindu-Christian tensions, accompanied by harassment, violence, and discriminatory practices, have been met with silence and ineffective law enforcement from the central government, challenging the secular foundations of the Indian state.

It remains true that the Indian Constitution grants nominal protection to religious minorities, and that there are mechanisms in place charged with enforcing that protection. The Ministry of Minority Affairs was established in 2006; the National Commission for Minorities and National Human Rights Commission of India were established earlier, in 1992 and 1993 respectively. These bodies function to investigate religious discrimination and persecution and to make recommendations for recourse to the local state-level authorities. However, incidents of persecution of Muslims and Christians as well as discrimination of Dalit communities have been on the rise since 2014. Thus the constitution commitment to the rights of religious minorities has in practice failed to protect such groups, undermining – once again- the Inidan state’s claim to be a secular democracy. In the contemporary context, religious minorities have expressed that they have neither the political nor cultural space to participate as full citizens in the world’s “largest democracy.”

Interestingly, however, clusters of Indians who see themselves as “secular Hindus” note that the current political climate ultimately threatens India’s pluralist and tolerant democracy. Challenges to dissent and disagreement with government policies in the current political and ideological climate are viewed as “anti-nationalist” and “anti-Hindu” given the BJP construction of India as a “Hindu” nation. Such challenges place under

tremendous strain not only India's long-standing and deeply embedded religious diversity and its secular democracy, but the pluralism within Hinduism itself.

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[1] See for example, Heng and Liew's (2010) edited volume which covers a range of Asian examples.
[2] Notable contributions to the debate include Irfan Engineer (1995), T. N. Madan (1987), Nandy (1990) and Tejani (2008). Edited volumes by Srinivasan (2007), Needham and Sunder Rajan (2007) and Bhargava (1998) highlight the difficulties that have arisen in this field.

16.3.4 Religion and democratic governance

Inequalities across religious groups, like other inequalities, can pose challenges to democracy. Chapter 14 develops this theme in detail and concludes by advocating a "principled distance" between the state and religion. As Section 16.3.3 makes clear, there are various models for that relationship. In what follows the argument is turned in a slightly different direction in order to ask what the social scientific literature tells us about the role of different forms of religion in the development and maintenance of participatory democracy (see Chapter 9). It begins with a historical perspective.

Different religious traditions have at different times been identified as either providing the foundations for democratic governance or constituting impediments to it. For instance, Alexis de Tocqueville wrote that Catholics "constitute the most republican and the most democratic class of citizens which exists in the United States." The reason for this, he argued, was Catholicism's emphasis on equality: "[T]he Catholic faith places all human capacities upon the same level; it subjects the wise and ignorant, the man of genius and the vulgar crowd, to the details of the same creed; it imposes the same observances upon the rich and needy, it inflicts the same austerities upon the strong and the weak, it listens to no compromise with mortal man, but, reducing all the human race to the same standard, it confounds all the distinctions of society at the foot of the same altar." (de Tocqueville 1898: 384).

More than 100 years later, sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset came to a diametrically opposed conclusion regarding the compatibility of Catholicism and democracy (Lipset 1959: 93). Lipset argued that democracy requires a political belief system that accommodates competition among ideas, while the Catholic Church claims that it alone has the truth. Catholic countries, he contended, were particularly prone to instability and were inhospitable to the kind of compromise and pluralism that lie at the heart of democracy.

Temporal and spatial variation in the democratic fortunes of Catholic-majority countries in Latin America, Southeast Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and southern Europe demonstrate that both de Tocqueville and Lipset were wrong in assigning either democratic or anti-democratic essences to the Catholic faith. However, similar arguments continue to be invoked with respect to other religions—most notably, Islam. Here the record is primarily a negative one, with thinkers over several generations arguing that Islam is inherently inhospitable to democratic government. For instance, Montesquieu declared that "The moderate government is better suited to the Christian religion, and despotic government to Mohammedanism," on account of the "gentleness so recommended in the gospel," which he contrasted to the "despotic fury" that allegedly characterized the behavior of "Mohammedan princes" (Montesquieu 1748[2001]: 468).

More recently, political historian Elie Kedourie wrote that, "[T]he ideas of the secularity of the state, of society being composed of a multitude of self-activating, autonomous groups and associations—all these are profoundly alien to the Muslim political tradition" (Kedourie 1992: 6). Similarly, Samuel P. Huntington invoked Islam itself to explain why few Muslim-majority countries transitioned to democracy during the so-called "Third Wave" of democratization that began in the 1970s. "To the extent that governmental legitimacy and policy flow from religious doctrine and religious expertise," he wrote,

"Islamic concepts of politics differ from and contradict the premises of democratic politics" (Huntington 1991: 28).

Although several Muslim countries have been able to construct and sustain democracy—including Indonesia, Senegal, Turkey, and most recently, Tunisia—arguments about the incompatibility of Islam and democracy continue to carry influence. Here the evidence requires careful scrutiny. Cross-national, country-level statistical analyses continue to reveal a positive correlation between the proportion of a country's population that is Muslim and its propensity toward authoritarianism (see for example, Fish 2002; Donno and Russet 2004); however more fine-grained studies carried out at the individual level have failed to validate the skepticism toward Islam's democratic prospects.

For instance, in a study of mass attitudes toward religion and democracy in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and the Palestinian territories in the 1980s and 1990s, Marc Tessler (2002: 350) found that "Islam is not the obstacle to democratization that some western and other scholars allege it to be." And in a thorough analysis of cross-national data from the World Values Survey, Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart (2011: 134) find that "surprisingly similar attitudes toward democracy are found in the West and the Islamic world." Similarly, Amaney Jamal (2006: 59), analyzing a subset of these survey data from Egypt and Jordan, argues that "the dichotomization of Islam and democracy is a false construct," as evidenced by the fact that "the vast majority of respondents in both Egypt and Jordan demonstrate simultaneous support for both Islam and democracy." More recently, a study of attitudes toward democracy in ten Muslim-majority countries conducted by Sabri Ciftci (2010: 1460) found that greater adherence to Islamic precepts is unrelated to support for democracy, which "is remarkably high, and … independent of 'sectarian' or theological traditions across the Muslim world." Similar findings have been recorded by Hoffman (2004) and Stepan and Robertson (2003). In short, individual-level support for democracy is widespread among the world's Muslims.

Moving beyond specific religious traditions, scholars have attempted to explore whether religion itself is conducive or unconducive to democracy. On the one side are scholars who believe that religions inculcate intolerance toward alternative *Weltanschauungs* and instill in their followers norms of obedience and deference to authority, rendering them inhospitable to democracy and individual liberty. We have seen variants of this view above in arguments about Islam and Catholicism. On the other side are scholars who identify religious social institutions as schools for the "the development of civic skills and norms that can have a positive effect on support for democracy" (Bloom and Arikan 2013). Political scholarship in the American context has revealed how religious organizations can channel individuals into democratic politics (R. L. Wood 2002; Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2012).

In a study of more than 60,000 survey respondents in 54 countries, Bloom and Arikan (2013) try to adjudicate between these two views and instead find support for both of them. Certain religious values appear to instill unfavorable attitudes toward democracy, while participation in religious social networks appears to be *positively* associated with some forms of support for democracy. As we argue throughout this chapter, "religion" has multiple dimensions, and attention to ground-level practices may reveal a different picture from the view at the level of ideas and theologies.

This suggests that it is important to move beyond the level of individual values and examine the role that religious *groups* play in enabling or inhibiting the emergence of democratic political orders. For example, Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011) have argued that democracy is more likely to emerge and survive when religious actors are included in transition processes, instead of being viewed as hostile forces to be contained. In the Arab context, recent scholarship has shown that so-called Islamist parties—previously thought to be opposed to democracy and individual liberty—have emerged as some of the region's

foremost exponents of democratic political arrangements (Wickham 2013), even as the space for such arrangements has constricted in recent years.

In the Latin American case, the Catholic Church's development of "liberation theology" was accompanied by the practice of organizing "base Christian communities" in which local citizens articulated their daily life concerns and organized to advocate for change (Roelofs 1988; Gill 1998; Smilde 2003). A further point should however be noted. In the democratic conflicts of Latin America, the involvement of religion is many-sided. In Venezuela, for example, the Catholic hierarchy has been a key actor opposing the socialist project of Chavismo. Yet clerics influenced by liberation theology have provided significant support to that project. Similarly Neo-Pentecostal Protestants have supported Chavismo, while traditional Protestant groups have not (see Sidebar 16.6).

Thus the overwhelming impression conveyed by these and other cases is that religions (or religion in general) are neither inherently pro- nor anti-democratic, left nor right, or even for religious freedom nor against it. Each situation must be examined on its own terms.

Sidebar 16.6

Religious Diversity and Democratic Changes in Venzuela

David Smilde and Isabella Chojnacki[1]

"Democracy" is not simply a term that analysts use to describe the political fields that they study; it is equally a normative – and at times highly charged – term used by political and religious actors, complicating simplistic assumptions that religion or religions line up either with or against democratic or anti-democratic protagonists.

With increasing electoral enfranchisement across the globe in the past thirty years, long-marginalized majorities have been able to express their wills at the ballot box and frequently challenge existing regimes long controlled by minorities. While to suggest we are in a "world on fire" (Chua 2002) seems overstated, democratization has ironically contributed to processes of political polarization in contexts that range from Turkey to Nepal to Venezuela.

In traditionally-Catholic Venezuela, the "democratic revolution" started by the election of Hugo Chávez Frias in 1998 has generated a process of polarization and debate that has involved – and spilled into – a variety of Christian groups. Both the Catholic Church and

the Evangelical movement suffered internal polarization with respect to the Chavez revolution. From the beginning of his campaign in 1998 Hugo Chávez reached out to Evangelicals. And once in office he attempted to grant them favors, such as allowing them to impart religious education in public schools and diverting to them some of the funds that the Catholic Church received for its work in education and other social services.

The main Evangelical associations proceeded with caution, concerned about being coopted. In particular they objected when the government tried to bring them into the "Bolivarian Religious Parliament" along with groups that they reject, such as spiritists and practitioners of the faith Maria Lionza. However, Evangelicals are diverse, and Neo-Pentecostal groups embraced these opportunities, receiving funds from the Chávez government to carry out social services. One pastor gained a spot for religious programs on state television. Another coalition organized Evangelical rallies in favor of Chávez before the August 2004 recall referendum, which Chávez eventually defeated. Neo-Pentecostal "dominion theology," which suggests Christians need to prepare the world for Christian rule, grafted easily onto Chávez's anti-imperial nationalism (Smilde and Pagan 2011).

However, all Evangelical collaboration with the Chávez government diminished when the government banished the New Tribes Missions, which for decades had caused controversy with their programs of evangelization in Venezuela's Amazon region. On the "Day of Indigenous Resistance" in October 2006, the government prohibited this US based group from working in Venezuela (Smilde 2007b). Even Neo-Pentecostal groups had a hard time assimilating this banishment and thereafter cooled their relations with the government.

From the first year of the Chávez government, the Catholic Church emerged as its most important critic, bristling at the revolutionary, third- worldist rhetoric that portrayed existing institutions, including the Church, as the bulwarks of an unequal society. Distrust peaked after 2002 when the Catholic hierarchy appeared to take an important role in the coup that pushed Chávez from power for 36 hours. Cardinal Ignacio Velasco was the first person to sign the decree forming a short-lived transition government.

In those same events, however, alternative Catholic movements were central in frustrating the coup. For example, the Jesuit network of "Fe y Alegría" community radio stations were key in breaking the media silence surrounding the coup and in showing the growing discontent in the streets. That was important in accelerating the movement that brought Chávez back to power (Smilde and Pagan 2011). Indeed, throughout the Chávez period, many foreign priests working directly with Catholic communities rather than under the authority of the Venezuelan Church actively supported the Chávez government and its various participatory projects (Smilde 2013). And in the second term of the Chavez presidency, the Church as a whole took on a more conciliatory stance.

In response to the cycle of protests that broke out in February 2014 and lasted several months, the Vatican, along with the Union of Southern Nations (UNASUR), sponsored dialogues between the government and its opposition. These dialogues failed to achieve any tangible agreements. But they did get the government and opposition to sit down together for the first time in ten years. After the Maduro government cancelled the recall referendum in October 2016, the Vatican again facilitated talks between the government and the opposition. When the agreements reached were not honored by the government, the Vatican sent a private letter to both sides in the conflict laying out four conditions for their continued involvement: measures taken to address Venezuela's shortages of food and medicines, an electoral calendar, recognition of the National Assembly, and relief for political prisoners. When these conditions were not met, the Vatican withdrew its special envoy, Monsignor Claudio Maria Celli, in January 2017 (Smilde 2017).

From that point on the Vatican took a backseat role in the Venezuelan conflict which only worsened. The cycle of protest from April to July 2017, which claimed 130 lives, generated a significant flow of statements from the Venezuelan Catholic hierarchy. These

statements openly opposed the government's push for a Constituent Assembly, encouraged the population to protest peacefully, and criticized the government's repressive crackdowns. During all of this there were frequent manifestations of unity between the Venezuelan hierarchy and the Vatican, including a meeting between the Pope and a contingent of Venezuelan bishops when he visited Colombia that Fall.

There has been considerable anticipation that the Vatican could play an important role in response to the current political crisis. Indeed the Vatican's participation in the 2016 dialogue came at the request of both parties to the conflict (Smilde and Pérez Hernáiz 2016a). Francis is the first Latin American Pope and has taken an interest in long standing conflicts in the region. The Vatican played a key role in the diplomatic breakthrough between the United States and Cuba, and the Vatican's foreign minister Pietro Parolin was the Nuncio in Venezuela before he was tapped by Francis. The Jesuits (from which Francis comes) are politically the most important religious order in Venezuela. However, the tensions between Pope Francis and conservative bishops worldwide over his reforms to Catholic moral teachings -- accepting communion for those who are divorced, acceptance into the faith of the children of unmarried parents, and recognition of homosexuals (Brown 2017) – have an impact on the Vatican's ability to work in Venezuela (Armando.info December 20, 2015, Smilde and Pérez Hernáiz 2016b). Venezuela's Cardinal Jorge Urosa Sabino was one of eleven Cardinals to publish essays on marriage and the family, which were critical of Pope Francis's thinking on these issues, just a month before the Vatican synod on the family in October 2015 (Aymans 2015).

Thus the complexity of Christian engagement in Chavismo in Venezuela demonstrates that there can be no simple, deductive understandings of religion's engagement with democracy. As we have argued in this chapter, religious meaning systems, practices, institutions and leaders exist in concrete historical contexts and have their own logic that sometimes supports, and sometimes opposes, various forms of "democratization." More often, following its own purposes, it cross-cuts democratic processes, rendering religious actors only partially relevant. Evangelicals largely withdrew from engaging the Chávez and now Maduro governments once the New Tribes Missions were asked to leave in 2006. The Vatican's potential role in the Venezuelan conflict is complicated by disagreements with the Venezuelan hierarchy over moral issues. Religious movements and institutions are relevant to democratization, but they run on different tracks from political organizations, and only sometimes have a central political role.

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16.3.5 Conclusion

The careful management of religious diversity and the need to build just and effective systems of government in which different forms of religion can not only find a place, but flourish, are central to social progress. In both respects, the challenges are considerable and the rewards great, but the cost of failure is high. The following section continues this story paying close attention to the circumstances in which religious conflict and violence are likely

to ensue. Such situations include insensitive approaches to diversity and the discriminatory policies of repressive (often secular) states.

16.4 Religion, conflict and peace

Social progress is all too often halted by violence and aggression that deprive individuals and communities of the necessary conditions for seeking just, equitable, and peaceful ways of life. Conflicts over resources and power are often intertwined with conflicts over values and identity, and religions are often visibly implicated, exacerbating the difficulties. The rise of brutal violence both in the Middle East and on the streets of Western capitals is but the most recent evidence. At the same time, religious groups are themselves victims of violence and persecution.

The relationship between religion and violence runs in multiple directions. Religious leaders and institutions are not just combatants, but are often key players in negotiating terms of post-conflict reconciliation, transitional justice, and even gang intervention. All world religions encompass representations and rituals of both peace-making and violence. As Christian Smith (1996a: 1) argues, religion has a "disruptive, defiant [and] unruly face." It can break with existing social configurations and alter existing equilibriums. We should expect therefore that just as religion can often be a key factor in turning social and political tensions into violent struggle, it can also facilitate negotiation and coexistence in seemingly hopeless situations. Critical assessment of the potential for both good and ill can lay the foundation for fruitful collaborations.

In what follows we look first at religion as a source of conflict and violence, scrutinizing complex evidence and paying particular attention to sites and conditions in which a negative outcome is likely. We then consider the very real ways in which religions and religious organizations contribute to reconciliation and peace-making both formally and less

formally. The section concludes with an overview of international institutions advancing religion, peace, and human rights.

16.4.1 Religion as a source of conflict and violence

Following the Cold War, an intrinsic link between religion and violence was hypothesized as one of the main factors affecting the international world order. Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996) argued that the "fault lines" between civilizations indicated future lines of conflict. The ideological conflict of the communist period would be replaced, he predicted, by religious and ethnic differences which drew on long standing animosities accumulated during previous centuries. Religion, in this view, was prone to inducing violent conflicts due to both historical tensions and the emergence of new international identities. Mark Juergensmeyer made a prediction similar to Huntington's, but in a somewhat different direction. He argued that the post-1989 period would see "A New Cold War" pitting religious nationalism against the secular state. Furthermore, "Even though virtually all religions preach the virtues of non-violence, it is their ability to sanction violence that gives them political power" (1993: 164).

These relatively recent speculations about religion and violence have emerged in the midst of vast global and political change, but have their roots much earlier. Scott Montgomery and Daniel Chirot (2015: 6) claim that the circulation of ideas after the Enlightenment forms a constitutive part of the ways in which societies engage with violence. Specifically, "If earlier upheavals of the social order sought their legitimacy in theology, law, and tradition, from the eighteenth century onward such changes were powered by ideas that were secular and that looked to found society and its institutions on concepts presumably anchored in an evidence-based, reason-led 'scientific' understanding of man and the universe." Michael Barnett et al. (2015: 19) take a similar view: namely that the Western social science literature has systematically built on the assumption that "religion is a principal

source of violence and instability." The post-Westphalian world system is assumed to be secular at the expense of religion, which has been regarded as the root of state violence (Juergensmeyer 2011). Barnett et al. (2015: 26) go on to note the Enlightenment belief that liberalism would tame "the religious beast."

Religious violence—it seems—stands out because it does not have the same claim to legitimacy that secular violence appears to have. Indeed, the dominant social-scientific narratives regarding religion and violence are Eurocentric insofar as they give states the benefit of the doubt while regarding religious groups guilty until proven innocent. The international system which emerged after the 1648 Peace of Westphalia endorsed the state as the main actor. As a result, the use of violence has been interpreted differently for religions than for secular states as they interact in the international arena.

The reality, however, is that secular states and ideologies have carried out as much violence as the "religious beast" in recent centuries, if not more. Analyses of state conflicts since 1900 demonstrate that political (secular) ideologies and modern nationalisms have been more widely implicated in violent conflicts than have religions. The situation, however, is nuanced. Jonathan Fox used the State Failure Dataset to examine 161 countries and their involvement in religious conflicts between 1950 and 1996. He demonstrated that although they "[occurred] less often than other types of conflicts, religious conflicts have increased [during this period], and are more intense than nonreligious conflicts" (Fox 2004). A similar conclusion was reached by Susanna Pearce (2005) who examined 278 "territorial conflict phases" between 1946 and 2001 documented in the Armed Conflict Dataset available at the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo. Pearce pointed out that "religious conflicts are more intense than other types of conflicts," but only, "under specific conditions," suggesting that education, eschatological perceptions of the world (expecting an imminent cataclysmic end), and identity crises could all affect levels of violence. Taken together, this evidence

indicates that religious passions are often mobilized in situations of violent conflict, but careful assessment is necessary in order to discern exactly how religions are involved.

Analysis should not begin with assumptions that any one religion has more capacity for violence than others. The employment of violence either symbolically or physically has been present in all world religions and across many historical periods (Girard 1979; Cavanaugh 2009; Ross 2011; Ghassem-Fachandi 2012; Juergensmeyer, Kitts, and Jerryson 2013; Leustean 2014). In some cases—such as anti-Muslim violence by Hindus in India or Buddhists in Myanmar—religious majorities foment violence against rival religious groups. In many other cases—for example the Lord's Resistance Army (a quasi-Christian cult in northern Uganda and surrounding states) or Boko Haram (an Islamist group in northern Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin)—radical offshoots take up arms in ways deemed heretical by more mainstream religious adherents. But in using their own powerful mix of ritual and ideology, they wreak havoc in the name of their god. The range of religious combatants and victims is broad indeed.

A more systematic assessment of this range of religious conflict has led Jonathan Fox (2000: 15) to declare that "there is little evidence here to support the argument that Islam, or any religion for that matter, makes ethnoreligious minorities more conflict prone." Using T.R. Gurr's Minorities at Risk Phase 3 Dataset, Fox identifies 105 "ethnoreligious minorities," namely ethnic communities which embrace a particular religion. The data indicate that the widespread perception that some religions (especially Islam) always endorse violence is incorrect.

The stand-out form of violence in recent decades is perhaps religious terrorism—that is, religiously-motivated efforts to undermine legitimate authorities and advance political goals through fear and intimidation. Based on their analysis of the Global Terrorism Database, Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011) note that since the 1980s, terrorism itself has been

on the rise, with religious motivations at the fore and Islam involved in the large majority of the attacks around the world. Still, civil wars are no less prevalent or destructive, and they are less dominated by religious motives. For the period 1940-2000, Toft (2006) counted 133 such struggles (where at least 1000 people died, with casualties on both sides). Only 42 of these involved religion, and in 17 of those, religion was a peripheral, rather than a central element. Religions can be implicated in different forms of violence in distinct and varied ways.

16.4.1.1 Sites of potential religious tension

If violence is not an inherent consequence of religion, it becomes important to ask about the particular sites in which destructive violence may arise. Contestation over the built environment and sacred spaces is one of these. It can involve multiple layers of religious and secular conflict, often with deep historical roots. Long histories of physical segregation can divide communities along lines of faith, class, or ethnicity, increasing the likelihood of mutual distrust. Consider, for example, attacks on Christian churches in Indonesia, most recently in the region of Aceh. In 2015 Muslim opponents threatened to burn down a church because, they argue, these churches were built without legal permits. The threat of violence (and it is worth noting that the threat itself is violent, even if the purported cause seems drily legalistic) has been consequential in many places in Indonesia causing numerous churches to be shut down. Such strategies have also been used to marginalize Christians in the Middle East.

In the Indonesian case, there are clear connections to recent religious politics, but there is a deeper context to keep in mind, reflecting a colonial history of religious segregation. Dutch authorities, acting as secular powers, designated areas according to religion, and most importantly forbade Christian proselytization in Muslim areas (Birchok 2016). Thus the appearance of Christian churches outside their “permitted” areas fuels a sense of righteous indignation among Muslims that for some justifies threats of violence.

Similarly, the desecration and re-appropriation of religious spaces in the Middle East indicates that the symbolism of centuries-old churches and monasteries remains a potent flashpoint. Saint Elijah's Monastery in Iraq, founded in the sixth century by the Church of the East, was looted during the 2003 war, occupied by American forces, and then destroyed in 2014 by ISIS.

Likewise, nationalist politics were deeply intertwined in the reconstruction of religious spaces in Herzegovina. Incompatible nationalist views clashed: one promoting the equality of all traditional faiths in the region, and the other asserting a form of Catholic nationalism through aggressive claims on sacred spaces (Sells 2003). In other cases, relatively recent processes of religious or ethnoreligious segregation (often pursued by secular national authorities) disrupt access by some to previously shared resources like water, physical space, healthcare, or political representation (Appadurai 2000; Baird 2009; Parks 2012). In these cases, sacred spaces become material representations not only of religious difference, but also of wider social inequities predicated on that difference, and thus develop into flashpoints for violent action.

The regulation of religious diversity is yet another political sector where conflict can become violent. Grim and Finke (2011: 222) suggest that, as a general pattern, countries which suppress religious freedom have witnessed an increase in conflict, persecution and organized violence, whereas states which encourage freedom of religious expression are most successful in addressing organized violence. These authors analyzed patterns of religious persecution across the world, using data provided by the International Religious Freedom Reports issued by the U.S. State Department. Their review shows that religious persecution is on the increase. Contrary to the widespread perception that only a minority of countries engage in suppressing religious freedom, they found religious persecution in 86 percent of the cases. Between 2000 and 2007, 123 out of 143 countries had at least one documented case of

a person "physically abused or displaced from their homes because of a lack of religious freedom" (Grim and Finke 2011: 18).

All of this suggests that high levels of violence in a society are likely to involve an interaction of political and religious forces. Fox (2000) argues that it is not militant "Islam," but autocratic governments (which are disproportionately present in Islamic countries) that complicate the picture of Islam's relationship to violent conflict. Saba Mahmood points to similar political and religious processes in postcolonial Egypt: here "secular governance has contributed to the exacerbation of religious tensions … hardening interfaith boundaries and polarizing religious differences" (2016: 1).

Situations of autocratic governance and religious repression are seedbeds for religious tension, but so are secular states that fail to provide practical and cultural foundations for viable everyday life. Scholars have long argued that faith-based organizations are likely players in filling the gap left by states that do not provide for their citizens. In many cases that provision is beneficent, but it can also be brutally violent, as the examples of ISIS and Boko Haram make clear. When secular projects fail, some of the alternatives that appear will inevitably be religious (G. Wood 2015). With a monopoly on the use of force and no competition for means of governing, a violent religious movement can establish itself in territory otherwise neglected.

16.4.1.2 Evaluating the evidence

The general perception within the academic and policy-making world is that politics is rational while religion draws on the irrational and, thus, is "prone to violence" (Martin 2011; 2014). This is not helpful; nor is the tendency to place all forms of religious violence under the same umbrella. As we have seen, there are ample symbolic resources within all religions to justify violence, and there is ample historic and contemporary evidence that violence can have a religious dimension. The question is not "Does religion cause violence?"

but under what circumstances, and in what ways. Religion is not an outside force that impinges upon secular social dynamics. Rather it is integrally and historically implicated in existing social configurations and their changes over time.

A careful assessment of the particular religious ideas, symbols, rituals, and collectivities in play will help to identify particular points of danger. As we have seen, contestation over physical spaces is one such point, as is the repressive management of diverse religious populations. An excess of regulation can easily spill over into the kind of social and cultural conflict that erupts into violence either by or against religious minorities. At the same time state-centered efforts at protecting religious rights can turn religious differences into legal categories (Shakman Hurd 2015). Finally, situations of weak or failed secular states leave the door open for violent, religious, and authoritarian efforts to establish order. Thus assessing both vulnerable sites and the particular religious ideas and leaders arising from them is a critical preventive practice with respect to social progress.

16.4.2 Religion as a resource for peace and reconciliation

Religion has an important role in processes of conflict and violence, but it also plays a role in peace and reconciliation. Marc Gopin (1997) suggests that religion can often bring together conflictual parties by drawing on widely-shared religious values that provide the starting point toward peace negotiation. Religion is a prime marker not only in group identity but also in legitimating the pursuit of peace (Appleby 2000). Concepts of "justice," "righteousness," and "tolerance" are shared by many religions either at institutional or individual levels (Torrance 2006; Llewellyn and Philpott 2014).

A wide range of religious and secular organizations are involved in organized peace and reconciliation programs (Little 2007), with deep expertise residing in the World Council of Churches; the Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding Program at the United States Institute of Peace; the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations at the U.S. State Department;

the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy in Washington, DC; and the Iraq Inter-Religious Congress, a faith-based initiative for national reconciliation. The engagement of religious actors ranges from participating in group discussion to a more visible public presence in conflict zones. In the 1980s, faith-based communities built transnational networks to work for peace in Central America (C. Smith 1996b). During the 1989 violent demonstrations against the communist regime in Romania, religious symbols displayed in both private and public spaces supported the demonstrators; and during the 2013 Euromaidan demonstrations in Kiev, both priests and hierarchs placed themselves between the police and protesters. .

Religious contributions to peace-building are often quite local and concrete. And just as sacred spaces can be sites of conflict, they can also become powerful sites for peaceful interaction. Shrines and pilgrimage sites can be shared by multiple faith communities (Emmett 1997; Albera and Couroucli 2012), even if that peaceful sharing may not always reflect perfectly harmonious relationships. Negotiating cultural differences about the appropriate use of sacred space requires considerable effort, but it can produce what DeBernardi (2009) calls "syncretic amity," including the co-celebration of religious events. The visibility of sacred spaces in multi-religious environments over the long term can do much to counter social division and fears by making religion and its practices comprehensible to those outside the spiritual community itself. Similarly, sacred spaces can become sites of interfaith solidarity in response to terrorism. In 2011, for example, Muslims made a human chain around a Coptic Christian church to protect worshippers during Christmas Mass, and Egyptian Christians took similar action to protect Muslims at prayer. Flourishing societies in the future must take lessons from these public and visible opportunities to honor sacred spaces and communities across lines of difference.

In post-conflict situations, religious actors have played a similar role in transitional justice efforts. As civil society and political actors come together to deal with past violations of human rights, faith-based organizations have played significant roles in Chile (the Christian Churches' Foundation for Social Assistance) (Ferrara 2015: 171) and in South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Sitze 2013). Likewise, a wide range of local religious actors participated in Northern Ireland (Wells 2010), and a third party religious community, Sant'Egidio, brokered the 1992 peace accord in Mozambique (Anouilh 2005). Peacebuilding processes can draw on religious discourses and practices and the authority of local religious organizations, as evident in the reconstruction of war-torn societies in Sierra Leone (Martin 2016) and Libya (Lamont 2016) and the long-term struggle against authoritarianism and violence in Latin America (Wilde 2016).

The role of religion in reconciliation can be seen in much more micro contexts as well. In Latin America, where an unabated crime wave has resulted in levels of violence as high as those of countries in civil war, religion has become one of the principal means by which people confront the associated challenges. Much of Latin America's violence now takes the form of street crime, with young men involved in small-scale drug dealing and gang activity. Escaping the complex of substance abuse, crime, and violence is one of the most important factors generating the growth of Evangelical Protestantism in the region. Evangelicalism provides young men with a cultural logic of transformation that allows them to side-step the alternative logic of vendetta and navigate contexts of extreme violence (Burdick 1993; Smilde 2007a). More recent research has demonstrated the direct involvement of Evangelical groups in gang-exit in Central America. In Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, gangs are almost impossible to exit alive. Those who try are hunted down and killed by gang members. But a convincing religious conversion is one of the few mechanisms that allow young men to find a way out. Some Evangelical ministries also provide tangible

services such as tattoo removal and relocation for former gang members in order to facilitate exit (Brenneman 2012).

The effectiveness of Evangelical groups in gang prevention has, of course, been noticed by states and other actors charged with ensuring citizen security—and has therefore spurred multiple forms of "faith-based" initiatives. These have been criticized by some scholars who suggest that Pentecostal rehabilitation practices "ultimately silence structural forces while laying blame on individual action," thereby justifying neoliberal reforms (O'Neill and Fogarty-Valenzuela 2015: 75; see also Pine 2009). These tensions between micro-level changes and the need for macro-level transformation are echoed in the range of religious organizations and practices themselves. In Central America, Catholic organizations focus more on gang prevention than exit, and see conversion and personal regeneration as relatively superficial compared to structural changes, such as access to education and jobs (Brenneman 2012). Nor is religious practice always benign. "Our Lady of the Holy Death" or *La Santa Muerte* in Mexico is venerated to give strength and faith to those who seek it to carry out crimes and violence, just as much as by those who seek to confront the chaos (Roush 2014). The same has been shown of Evangelicalism in contexts such as Jamaica and Brazil. In all of these cases, religious practices can provide strength to confront danger, whichever side of it you are on (Arias 2014).

Religious practices, ideas, and organizations can, then, be valuable resources in seeking more peaceful societies, but careful and critical assessment remains key. While religious values can be brought into strategies of conflict resolution, understanding either peace-making or the conflicts themselves through the lens of religion is a culture-driven process that demands extensive local knowledge. Each group will see gestures of goodwill through its own system of symbols, which may be at odds with each other (Gopin 2003). Nor can religious symbols and practices overcome the absence of adequate economic structures

and a trustworthy state. A generalized reliance on external peace-building formulas, whether or not they involve religious actors, will falter in local contexts such as Congo, Kosovo, Sudan, and Rwanda (Autesserre 2014). Just as "religion" is not a generalized cause of violence, neither is it a universal panacea.

16.4.3 Religion and human rights

Running through our discussions of religion's role in political and social life have been questions of human rights and how they are to be understood and implemented. "Human rights" is a defining discourse in the management of diversity, in the self-understanding of democracy, in the resolution of conflict, and in the fair distribution of resources. Across these domains, the relationship between human rights activists and religious groups runs the spectrum from active advocacy to open hostility.

Foremost among international statements on the ways in which human beings should be treated at individual and community levels is the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, which includes Article 18: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance." Thus freedom of religion and belief, in its current historical form, is seen as a fundamental and universally applicable right. Individuals (i.e. all human beings everywhere in the world) are the primary holders and beneficiaries of this right; states, conversely, are the primary holders of the correlative obligations (Lindholm, Durham Jr., Tahzib-Le, and Ghanea 2004: xxxvii).

The establishment of a UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief implies recognition of both the importance and the difficulty of finding ways forward in places where diverse religious and secular norms are valued, and in situations where they may come into conflict—gender-specific abuses being among the most common. As an

independent expert appointed by the UN Human Rights Council, the Rapporteur's role is to identify existing (and emerging) obstacles to the right to freedom of religion or belief and to present recommendations on the ways in which such obstacles might be overcome. Similarly, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has addressed issues related to the freedom of religion and belief in its Warsaw-based Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights; and in May 2016, the European Commission appointed Former European Commissioner Ján Figeľ as the first Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the European Union. Such institutional arrangements allow a forum for adjudicating the complex relationships between religious freedom and other human rights (Leustean and Madeley 2009; Haynes 2012).

Here as elsewhere, social progress is facilitated by the kind of critical assessment an expert can provide. It is also facilitated by the imagination of human rights advocates who are willing to seek creative partnerships with faith-based organizations and religious leaders who share—and can translate—their goals.

16.4.4 Conclusion

At Rice University in April 2016, John Kerry, the US Secretary of State, summarized the contemporary tension between religion, conflict, and peace:

> Religion today remains deeply consequential, affecting the values, the actions, the choices, the worldview of people in every walk of life on every continent … It is a part of what drives some to initiate war, others to pursue peace; some to organize for change, others to cling desperately to old ways, resist modernity; some to reach eagerly across the borders of nation and creed, and others to build higher and higher walls separating one group from the next (Kerry 2016).

His words resonate with the research reported in this chapter. Religion is an aspect of human society that is not going to disappear anytime soon. It is neither inherently violent nor inherently peaceful, but includes practices, beliefs, values, and institutions that can lead in either direction. Assessment of the particular context and the particular religions in play is the first step toward social progress. Our evidence-based review of the relationship between religion and violence reveals the inherent complexity of any attempt to move past religious violence and engage religious strengths toward building a more peaceful world. An increasing number of international institutions have incorporated the interplay between religion and conflict resolution by emphasizing the universality of human rights as a common element spanning the world religions and other faith expressions.

16.5. Everyday wellbeing: Economy, education, health, and development

Structures of just and effective governance, along with the absence of violent conflict, are essential to social progress. Among the intended fruits of such structural change is the everyday wellbeing of populations—food and shelter, health and education, and the capacity to produce and share in economic goods in order to live in ways that are individually and communally valued (Sen 1999). These broader questions are explored in depth in other chapters in these volumes, but here we turn our attention to religion's multifaceted role in this sphere. The wellbeing of persons and communities lies at the heart of much religious practice and teaching. Along with governments, philanthropic actors, and NGOs, religious institutions have a widespread grassroots presence in healthcare, education, and welfare provision. They are well-placed to be critical partners in the pursuit of social progress.

This is an area of rapidly evolving research that has emerged as assumptions linking secularization with economic development have receded (Rakodi 2015). Some researchers have added standardized indicators of religion to statistical models that analyze economic capacity and wellbeing (Barro and McCleary 2003). Because religious belief and practice is

especially difficult to standardize, however, a more local and institutional approach holds greater promise. Much of our current knowledge comes, in fact, from relatively small case studies, findings from which are now being published in a clutch of excellent edited collections.[21] While case studies pose challenges for generalization, they reflect the reality of the range of particularities relevant to the relationship between religion and material wellbeing.

16.5.1 Religion and economic progress in less developed countries

A century ago, Max Weber introduced the possibility that specific religious beliefs lead to ways of life with often unintended, but nevertheless important, economic consequences. He famously associated Protestant Christianity with the establishment of capitalist economies (Weber 1905[1958]). He expected, however, that as science and technology took hold in the capitalist West, the sense of divine imperative would disappear. However, in the West, as well as in many societies around the world, economic and technological pragmatism continues to exist in more or less comfortable coexistence with holistic spiritual concerns. Social development seems not—or not necessarily—to require secularization.

When secular social change agents encounter a society seemingly dominated by belief in supernatural powers, it can appear an insurmountable obstacle, but as part of the social landscape, spiritual beliefs must be taken into account. From creation myths to harvest prayers and fertility rituals, human spirituality has long linked human flourishing to the supernatural. Throughout the world, spirits are understood to inhabit people's everyday lives at least as powerfully as the forces of the market. While such beliefs can diminish the sense

[21] See especially ter Haar (2011a), Tomalin (2015) and Clarke and Jennings (2008).

of personal and social agency, they can just as easily contain cultural resources that shape the everyday wellbeing of populations.

Outside of advanced industrialized contexts, religious practice is especially likely to be oriented toward this-worldly concerns of social life. Among the most rapidly growing religious groups, for example, are those that espouse a "prosperity gospel" that links spiritual and material blessings (Miller, Sargeant, and Flory 2013). Part of the larger family of groups dubbed Pentecostal, their emphasis on spiritual gifts and otherworldly rewards would seem to predict the opposite of economic or social activism in this world. Rather than channeling followers toward progress, they may merely assuage the pains of the neoliberal market with otherworldly promises. Like Barro and McCleary (2003), Woodberry (2006) suggests that the emphasis on attending multiple religious services and giving significant sums to the work of the church are opportunity costs that may weigh against more productive forms of time and money investment and diminish wealth accumulation.

Other observers have pointed to a more Weberian interpretation, looking for the indirect effects of participation in such groups. They claim that the "born again" experience introduces a sense of rupture with the past that often allows a range of new behaviors and relationships to emerge (Droogers 2001). Individuals who choose a new religious loyalty are exercising the kind of agency and independence from traditional communities required in modern economies. In the multiple African case studies Freeman (2012) has collected, it is apparent that NGOs may provide needed technical training, but it is Pentecostal religion that can move a smallholder farmer from a life entangled in close-knit family and community and traditional politico-ritual structures to values and practices conducive to becoming an individualist, strategic, profit-maximizing agent. Economic success may also be facilitated by the lifestyle practices often encouraged in Pentecostal communities—abstaining from alcohol, devotion to a monogamous family, hard work, financial planning, and the like (D.

Martin 1990; Brusco 1995). Similar patterns of individual ethical transformation can also be seen in Islamic spiritual reform programs in Indonesia (Rudnyckyj 2015). These reported effects have drawn widespread skepticism, and Woodberry (2006) suggests that they may be most demonstrable among those initially escaping poverty and in places with the lowest education rates and highest levels of corruption.

Whatever the indirect connections to economic progress, religious communities and religious practices are very often directly involved in providing material assistance—from food aid to job referrals—both to their participants and to the surrounding community. Such practices are misunderstood by social scientists as an "instrumentalization" of religion, but in contexts in which people cannot count on their basic necessities being satisfied, "salvation" often refers to being saved from struggles in this world. Rubin, Smilde, and Junge (2014), for example, describe the many roles of religion in Latin America's "zones of crisis," which they define as, "spaces of material deprivation, exclusion, violence, and environmental destruction" (9). The empirical studies they examine show how religious beliefs, practices, leaders, and institutions have become part of the life strategies that people construct. From dealing with violence, oppression, and sickness, to strategies for forming social movements or reforming patriarchal gender relations, religion is implicated in the tactics individuals and collectivities deploy to confront the difficulties of their everyday lives.

Still, we need to avoid reifying the "global South" as something essentially different from the industrialized North. Global markets and global communication link both material challenges and religious strategies across all regions of the world. New and energetic religious expressions developed in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are now part of the religious landscapes of Europe and North America, carried there by migrants, missionaries, and media (Corten and Marshall-Fratani 2001; D. Martin 2002; Olupona and Gemignani 2007). Advanced industrialized countries have their own extensive zones of crisis, not only in

global cities like New York and London, but in forgotten rural areas such as Appalachia and the Canadian Maritime Provinces. Ethnographic research in the United States, moreover, reveals many of the same strategies linking spiritual life to material wellbeing and health, not only among impoverished communities (Sullivan 2011), but also among well-educated and privileged populations (McGuire 1988; Ammerman 2013).

Religious phenomena, then, may be linked to Weberian-style disciplined economic behavior and to the strategies of comfort and coping that Marx would have predicted, but also to concrete and direct material support. Each local context may include all of the above. For example, in her study of Pentecostal groups in Tanzania, Hasu (2012) describes two very different, but equally relevant relations between economic and religious life. At Glory of Christ Tanzania Church, the poorest of the rural migrants to the city bear testimony to the Spirit's ability to resurrect them from the bewitching spells cast by powerful older kin in the communities they left behind. They find in this church both meaningful explanations of their lives and means of coping in a bruising economic world. At Efatha Church, also in Dar es Salaam, a "prosperity" version of Pentecostalism appeals to, and helps to create more middle class followers. They hear about positive thinking, African pride, empowerment, education, hard work and planning; and they see the vast business and institutional enterprises supported by church leaders as evidence and inspiration. Even within similar religious belief systems, then, the spiritual world is intertwined in economic lives in different ways, patterns that must be understood if the wellbeing of those communities is to be addressed.

The same careful analysis must accompany attempts to understand the role of religion in women's educational and economic activities. As we have argued in Section 16.2 of this chapter, conservative beliefs in virtually all religious traditions can be mobilized to keep women in subservient positions, and tragedies such as the shooting of Malala Yousafzai reinforce the reality of the threats that women face in many parts of the world. Economic and

social progress is unlikely when women are kept from education, healthcare, and productive contributions to their communities. Thus, movements to advance the rights of women have often existed in adversarial relationships with conservative religious movements and leaders (e.g., Bradley and Kirmani 2015). Those same women, however, frequently see the efforts of largely-secular development organizations as irrelevant at best or colonial impositions at worst (Chowdhury 2009). Misunderstandings abound.

What rights movements often hear and reject is the patriarchal rhetoric of conservative religions, but there is sometimes a different reality beyond the words. For example, Gooren's research in Guatemala demonstrates that Evangelical churches often provide women with opportunities for leadership, new networks of support for entrepreneurship, and more economically-productive and attentive husbands (Gooren 2011). Other research shows that in practice women can use seemingly patriarchal religious beliefs as a way to gain authority over men and consolidate their commitment to the household (Griffith 1997, Smilde 1997). This suggests that progress requires attention both to the specific religious beliefs in question and to the religious networks in which they are embedded. Theological arguments and religious officials may be important, but it is often religion-in-practice that provides significant points of convergence with human rights and economic assistance agendas (ter Haar 2011b). Building bridges across that cultural and religious divide is a necessary task if outside support is to be effective in enabling women (and men) to participate in building the economic strength of their communities. Local religious leaders can, in fact, be development allies—even interpreting and translating new technologies—if they are included in the conversation (Bompani and Smith 2013).

Access to finance requires equally careful assessment and an eye toward pragmatic compromise. Finance is critical to participation in the global economy, and religious beliefs are sometimes at the root of self-exclusion from this form of economic activity. Mohseni-

Cheraghlou (2015) shows, for example, that Muslim-dominant countries in the Middle East and North Africa have the highest rates (10 percent) of citing religious reasons for avoiding formal banking institutions. What his research also shows, however, is that higher concentrations of sharia-compliant financial services increase overall participation in banking. A religious obstacle may also have a religious solution.

16.5.2 Religion and NGOs: Pathways to partnerships

Critical reflection on the relationship between less-developed and economically-dominant parts of the world inevitably raises the on-going realities of colonialism. It has often been noted that the colonial sword was accompanied by the cross, with today's postcolonial world still bearing the religious imprint of that earlier era. As "development" and "aid" programs emerged in the second half of the twentieth century, the religious missionary impulse was explicitly rejected by most agents of progress. Religion was relegated to the realm of private individual preferences and seen as irrelevant to economic and political agendas (Tomalin 2013). As a result, Marshall claims, in spite of "much overlap and many synergies, the two worlds (development and faith) have largely operated in separate universes" (Marshall 2012: 193). The result is a de facto secularizing agenda that accompanies the work of most of the world's agencies of economic development, an agenda that is often experienced as alien to the lives of the people whose wellbeing is at stake. Without genuine embeddedness in local cultures, including the religious ways of those cultures, efforts at changes in economic, health, and educational patterns have often proved short-lived (Jones 2012; Watkins and Swidler 2013).

Still, the role of faith-based organizations (FBOs) in health and development is difficult to ignore. Organizations from every faith tradition have entered relief and development work and are among the largest donor entities (G. Clarke 2008; Deacon and Tomalin 2015). Such work is hardly new, as religious traditions have long enshrined

practices such as zakat (one of Islam's five "pillars") that institutionalize support by religious practitioners for the material wellbeing of their communities. In some cases that humanitarian support is limited to fellow believers, but Gooren (2011) found otherwise: among development groups in Guatemala aid freely crossed sectarian (and non-religious) lines.

Inevitably, this humanitarian impulse has come with political strings attached. State aid agencies are frequently assumed to be acting with foreign policy goals in mind. FBOs, as well, often mix humanitarian assistance and political change, both repressive and progressive. Janine Clark (2008) has examined the role of the Islamic Center Charity Society, the semi-autonomous charitable arm of the Muslim Brotherhood and one of the largest NGOs in Jordan. Its work includes establishing schools, colleges, clinics, and training centers (that serve a mostly-middle class clientele), along with providing direct aid to people in poverty. Its ability to engage issues of women's rights is more limited, a restriction that results from both its conservative religious milieu and the authoritarian state context in which it works. Assessing or working alongside such faith-based development organizations requires careful questions about the populations to which they have access and the practical assistance they can provide, along with a clear-sighted assessment of the political and religious constraints that may limit the work. The effects of religion on economic wellbeing involve both the spiritual beliefs and practices of the groups in question and the religious and political infrastructure.

16.5.3 Religion and education

Nowhere is this clearer than in education. As the authors of Chapter 19 argue, education is central to pursuing individual wellbeing and social progress, and religions throughout the world—not just in developing countries—are significant providers of

education at all levels.[22] Protestants everywhere, with their emphasis on individual reading of scripture, have been especially vigorous in establishing schools that extend education beyond the elites (Woodberry 2012). Until the mid-twentieth century, education in British colonies was largely in the hands of missionaries (Smyth 2004), and postcolonial regimes in Africa and the Middle East often simply nationalized the existing religious schools (Sharkey 2012). The effects of this infrastructure remain significant.

Different religious traditions are involved in establishing schools. In Indonesia in 2007, 13 percent of all students were enrolled in Islamic schools. These include both pesantren (traditionalist boarding schools) and madrasas (modernist day schools). Since the 1970s, state initiatives to modernize and standardize the general curriculum at madrasas and pesantren have produced a thriving, mostly privately financed infrastructure of religious schools which feeds students to higher education as well as training them for a variety of vocations (Lukens-Bull 2001; Azyumardi, Afrianty, and Hefner 2007). They have long integrated religious education and general education, and are generally more affordable for rural and poor students than national schools. Interestingly they weathered the Asian financial crisis between 1997 and 2001 without the drop in enrollment experienced by other schools (Azyumardi et al. 2007).

Some religious schools can be sites of resistance to progressive change, and careful assessments are always in order. On balance, however, religious schools are likely partners in increasing the economic and civic skills of a population and reaching its most disadvantaged citizens. For example, rigorous case comparisons across Latin America, Africa, and Asia demonstrate both higher accessibility and equal or higher test performance for students in faith-based schools (Barrera-Osorio, Patrinos, and Wodon 2009).

[22] The World Bank, among others, attempts to provide comprehensive data on the educational capacities of the world's nations. While it is usually possible to track "private" providers, religious providers are not tracked as a separate category.

15.5.4 Religion and health

Religious capacity is also present in the realm of health promotion and care, but is often surrounded by controversy, raising difficult issues ranging from family planning, to immunization, to female genital mutilation, and end of life issues. Public health providers are frequently horrified by the harm that they see -- harm that must not be ignored. As Duff and Buckingham point out, “Though public sector and faith-linked entities bring distinctive assets that help achieve health goals, ideological challenges present barriers to collaboration and need careful negotiation on both sides” (2015: 1787). Confronting the seeming impasse between secular health professionals and faith-based providers, a series of essays in *The Lancet* (July 2015) has offered an evidence-based way forward, based on identifying common goals and values. Tomkins and her co-authors (2015: 1782) argue that clarifying areas of real disagreement can allow cooperation elsewhere. Not all partnerships will be advisable, but if advancing health goals is critical to poverty reduction, the full range of available health care providers is needed to meet the challenge.

An accurate assessment of overall religious capacity and impact is difficult, however, since religious organizations are generally not distinguished as a separate category in NGO reporting. The “Religious Health Assets” project represents a pioneering effort to integrate religion into the study of health systems, identifying all the organizations and resources that are seeking to improve the health of a population (Olivier et al. 2015). Olivier and her colleagues concluded that the extent of health care provision provided by faith-based groups in Africa is often overstated, with estimates ranging from 5 to 45 percent. However, they did find some evidence that faith-based health care providers take care of a slightly higher percentage of the poor compared to their public and private equivalents (Olivier et al. 2015: 1770-1771). Religious providers seem to excel in mobilizing and supporting volunteers, in

prioritizing poor, marginalized, and hard to reach populations, and in developing innovative progressive fee structures that require the poor to pay little.

Responses to HIV offer a case study of the complexity of the relationship between religion and health. In the early days of the epidemic, religious leaders in Africa painted HIV/AIDS as God's anger and not a matter for either compassion or education. However, as serious campaigns began on the continent, churches joined others, particularly the state, to lend support to AIDS victims. Many churches established programs of home support and took on the care of orphans. They also developed both local health care delivery systems and informal modes of mutual education aimed at prevention (Trinitapoli and Weinreb 2012).

That experience helped to inform responses to the Ebola crisis. A team of medical anthropologists contributed their findings on the cultural significance of burial practices, and religious leaders in affected countries were asked to define what is meant by "dignified burial." The result was a new World Health Organization burial protocol[23] that Marshall and Smith (2015: e25) describe as "vital in halting spread of the disease and laying foundations for community trust. In many respects, the protocol was a game changer in the overall trajectory of crisis response." Careful local assessment and consultation led to a life-saving partnership between public health providers and communities at risk.

Similar patterns have been evident in Latin America. Seffner et al. (2011) looked closely at a health service engagement between the Brazilian Catholic Church and the Brazilian National STD/AIDS Program—at first glance not a likely collaboration. The National STD/AIDS Program established condom use as its principal measure of prevention, while the official stance of Brazil's Catholic Church is to oppose condom use which it sees as promoting sexual promiscuity. However, the Catholic Church is hardly monolithic—indeed

[23] For more information see https://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/ebola/safe-burial-protocol/en/. Consultation with religious and community leaders provided the basis for changes in practice that would increase safety while honoring tradition.

one Brazilian Catholic theologian has written a "theology of prevention" which has been widely used to support care for people with HIV or AIDS. In practice, the Casa Fonte Colombo, a Catholic organization, provides medical and psychological attention, spiritual guidance, massage therapy, donated clothing, bathrooms, and spaces for rest. Their services aid predominantly poor, HIV positive patients, and are an important source of education on how to live with the disease, including a prominently displayed and artfully decorated bowl of condoms for the taking. Here a local Catholic institution is able to work with secular governmental institutions by developing a grassroots working arrangement enacted without explicit public statements.

As in many other instances, religion as lived in everyday practice may not follow the lines apparent in official pronouncements. It is also the case that health goes far beyond what happens in medical institutions. Throughout the world, definitions of health and of health promotion are often not only physical but spiritual. This parallels an increasing recognition that "alternative" forms of healing can and do exist alongside highly-developed forms of scientific medicine. Both states and insurers have recognized the advantages of broad-based pragmatic partnerships.

16.5.5 Religion, welfare, and healthcare in Europe and the United States

Economic, physical, and social wellbeing are not simply matters of concern in the "global South." Across the developed world, markets do not always treat vulnerable people well. It is true that states have attempted to fill the gaps, even the playing field, and regulate markets, but neither states nor markets have yet succeeded in providing an equitable and comprehensive set of provisions that allow all their citizens to flourish. Among the providers filling the gaps are religiously affiliated voluntary organizations.

This is as true in Europe as it is in the United States, but the division of labor is different. In (then) Western Europe, the post-war settlement led to the development of the

welfare state—or more accurately welfare states—a shift in which the state assumed the primary role for the education, social protection, welfare and healthcare of its citizens. Post-war aspirations were high and lasted until the 1970s, when the effects of the oil crisis and shifting demographics (notably a rise in the number of older people) led to retrenchment.

Multiple voluntary agencies emerged to fill the gaps, among them a series of religious providers—modestly in those parts of Europe where the welfare state was relatively well funded, and more comprehensively further south (in the Mediterranean countries) where it was rudimentary right from the start. Bäckström and associates (Bäckström and Davie 2010; Bäckström, Davie, Edgardh, and Pettersson 2011) map these changes and the questions that emerge in consequence. The latter include the appropriateness and effectiveness of religious providers in this field (see also Beaumont and Cloke 2012). The response of the populations themselves was clearly articulated. Europeans would prefer a comprehensive and publicly funded welfare state. They know, however, that this is not realizable in the present economic climate, and it is better that the churches and related organizations fill the gaps than to have nothing at all. The situation, moreover, is becoming more rather than less acute as growing migrant populations provoke difficult questions of entitlement alongside problems of scarcity.

In the United States, the welfare state is much less comprehensive than in Europe and there is no state church. The resulting system of voluntary religious organizing means that each religious group is responsible both for its own maintenance and for whatever beneficent activities it may choose to undertake; and a remarkable consensus exists that religious congregations should voluntarily contribute to the common good (Ammerman 2005: ch. 7). In the evangelical Protestant culture of the United States, providing assistance to a "deserving" needy person is a personal virtue, and the state has no special place in the

enactment of this sacred duty (Chaves 1999; Ebaugh, Chafetz, and Pipes 2006; Quadagno and Rohlinger 2009). The result is a weak welfare state and a strong charitable sector.

The resulting contributions by faith-based organizations are impressive. In 2006 it was estimated that $50 billion was spent on basic welfare provision by faith-based organizations, with government expenditures on similar services amounting to only $138 billion (Stritt 2008). In other sectors of the welfare state—housing, education, health—the state is a much more dominant player. Social welfare in the United States, then, has long been delivered through a complicated mix of explicitly religious resources (money, volunteers, and space), secular voluntary contributions, and state-funded programmatic effort (Bane, Coffin, and Thiemann 2000).

16.5.6 Strategic partnerships for wellbeing

Economic wellbeing, health, and education are goals of social progress that are shared by most religious groups, even as there are many places where religious ideas and practices are at odds with secular norms. States, NGOs, and faith communities all have a role to play. Establishing effective partnerships requires a holistic approach. In practical terms strategic disagreements are best approached at the local level, to encourage both mutual understanding and pragmatic solutions, as in the case of the Ebola crisis. Faith-linked organizations are pervasive throughout the world and are especially effective in reaching the most vulnerable populations. The health, education, and economic wellbeing of societies depend on every sector of society being positively engaged. Faith-linked organizations are neither the sole solution nor irrelevant to progress.

16.6. Care for the earth

Most spiritual belief systems address the relationship between humans and the world around them, including non-humans of all kinds. Religious beliefs and practices are therefore

expressed both within and through the physical spaces in which they are embedded—whether these be local places of worship or the earth itself. For this reason, diverse religious thinkers and religious communities have addressed the spiritual significance of human (material) action—whether routine or globally consequential.

Environmental concerns, including pollution, public health, and decreasing biodiversity, have inspired religious commentary since the late 1960s. More recently, religious leaders have begun to address climate change. Despite the disparity of religious beliefs and traditions, a common theme is clear: concern for the environment involves fundamental principles that implicate not merely human relationships with non-humans, but human relationships with each other. It follows that concrete activities (such as recycling, or replanting forests) can be defined as necessary spiritual acts.

Prominent figures in the major world faiths are well placed to articulate environmental ethics for global audiences. Indigenous leaders, as well, speak with authority granted by long-standing connections to particular locations. All share a conviction that secular laws, science, and markets are insufficient to bring about lasting change. Instead, they advocate a personal and collective reconsideration of human obligations to each other and to the earth itself. Religious communities can therefore become key organizing centers and potent locations for reimagining how people can live differently on the earth—or, as Chapter 22 puts it, how society could be otherwise.

16.6.1 The intrinsic spiritual significance of the environment

Religious engagement with the environment—sometimes called eco-theology—involves a re-evaluation of sacred literature and/or oral traditions that speak to the spiritual significance of the natural world. To understand the difference between religious environmental activism and more secular approaches, it is vital to understand the ways that

different religious organizations frame environmental activism within their own faith traditions and sacred texts.

In 1967, Lynn White Jr. hypothesized that: "[B]y destroying pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects" (White 1967: 1205). By suggesting a direct relationship between Christian belief and harmful environmental practices, White argued that Christianity itself was implicated in environmental crises. The link between Christian beliefs and anti-environmentalism has been most visible in the skepticism of American evangelicals to climate science. Many such critics are motivated by "end-times theology," arguing that no environmental action is necessary because the world is witnessing the "end times" prophesied in the Bible (Barker and Bearce 2013). Other groups link climate science with scientific work that they find unacceptable, such as evolution, or unethical, such as stem cell research.

These conservative Christian voices should not, however, be taken for the whole. Even within Evangelicalism there are significant differences. At the grassroots, Evangelicals' ideas differ only slightly from other white middle class religious groups in the United States, and younger generations are increasingly likely to voice pro-environmental views (Funk and Alper 2016; Smith and Johnson 2010). Furthermore, Evangelicals outside the U.S. may differ sharply on this point; the *Cape Town Commitment*, a document created by the international Evangelical Christian community, recognizes environmental activists as having a "missional calling" (Lausanne Movement 2011: 14).

Engaging and interpreting sacred texts in light of contemporary concerns is for many faith leaders a necessary foundation for action. For Christians and Muslims, an important focus has been a re-evaluation of scriptural claims that humans are given "dominion over the earth" by a creator. The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, in one of the earliest Christian writings on this subject, offered the following assessment:

> Human beings and the environment form a seamless garment of existence, a complex fabric that we believe is fashioned by God. It follows that to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin…How we treat the earth and all of creation defines the relationship that each of us has with God" (Bartholomew1998: 4).

Similarly, in the papal encyclical *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis stresses that the gift of creation requires a strong sense of responsibility toward both humans and non-humans. "Dominion over nature", he argues, is not free rein to indulge in exploitation but instead a responsibility to protect divine creation which Christians understand as a gift to all humans, including future generations (Francis 2015: 160-161). For other commentators, metaphors such as "Christian stewardship" offer effective models of virtuous behavior (Bartholomew 1998; Moody and Achenbaum 2014,).

Islamic thinkers compare the special obligations of the wealthy toward the rest of human society with human obligations toward the natural world to argue for better care of the environment. Just as people with superior gifts (which are assumed to derive from God) are obliged within Islam to support the less prosperous, so are spiritually superior humans obligated to protect non-humans. Protecting creation is thus understood as a spiritually important act (Haq 2001; Amery 2001; Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences 2015). It is worth noting, however, that both Christians and Muslims endorse a special role for humans, in contrast to biocentrism which does not (Haq 2001: 154; Francis 2015: 88).

Islamic, Christian and Jewish traditions also find environmental problems of spiritual importance because such problems are understood to be symptomatic of breakdowns in healthy human relationships and ways of life. Environmental justice makes care for the environment a necessary dimension of caring for the poor, since environmental problems disproportionately harm the poorest and most vulnerable members of society (Haq 2001: 152-

153; Francis 2015: 116-120). Intergenerational equity, or the requirement that present generations have a duty to make sure that future generations thrive, is a dimension of environmental justice that resonates widely. Pope Francis, for example, urges Catholics to "extend the boundaries of solidarity through time and across species" (Francis 2015: 103-120). Numerous Christian Evangelical groups evoke intergenerational justice as the basis for re-evaluating dismissive attitudes toward the environment.[24] Both faith-based and secular groups can find a foundation for action in orientations toward intergenerational justice.

Other traditions (including Buddhism and many indigenous spiritualities) base environmental behavior on their belief that humans and non-humans exist in meaningful relationships with one another (Dalai Lama 1995; Kawagley 2006; Swearer 2006; Mavhunga 2014; Caroll 2015). Many indigenous cosmologies define expansive kinship networks between humans and non-humans, which are grounded in reciprocal responsibilities and feelings of gratitude toward non-human agents (Kawharu 2000; Mavhunga 2014; Carroll 2015). Such kinship networks strongly shape interactions with the wider environment. For example, among Maori, responsibilities for what non-Maori might call environmental resources are deeply embedded in kinship relations between human groups. No decisions bearing on one can be taken without reference to the other (Kawharu 2000: 352). In this holistic worldview extended relationships and shared understandings of accountability and reciprocal responsibilities motivate Maori to balance the needs of humans and non-humans, and thus provide for the spiritual and physical wellbeing of all.

Despite significant differences in spiritual belief systems, many religious groups share important fundamental beliefs that make collaboration on environmental issues both with each other and with secular groups entirely feasible. They each see environmental problems

[24] The Evangelical Environmental Network is one such, in an initiative known as "creation care." For more information see www.creationcare.org.

as directly connected to problematic social relationships, and they call for environmental action as part of an ethical obligation to maintain balanced interdependence. The common frame of reference is holism which offers a foundation for shared perspectives that bridge secular and spiritual orientations, allowing for common, mutually beneficial, and mutually respectful action. As Chapter 4 has demonstrated, pursuit of a sustainable planet will require not only the best thinking of ethicists and philosophers about the common good, but also ideas grounded in the world's religious traditions.

16.6.2 Virtuous behavior and the challenge of climate change

For most religious and spiritual leaders solving environmental problems requires collective and individual transformation. Calls for changed attitudes and ways of thinking are significant elements in this discourse, and are aimed at activating changed behavior. Taking a verse from the Qur'an, the "Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change" enjoins Muslims not to "strut arrogantly on the earth" (Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences 2015: 8). The *Cape Town Commitment* calls for a spirit of repentance for the "destruction, waste and pollution of the earth's resources and our collusion in the toxic idolatry of consumerism" (Lausanne Movement 2011: 14). Pope Francis encourages hopefulness and commitment as an antidote to despair or fatalism (Francis 2015: 44). These religious communities have made the fight against climate change integral to their views of a more satisfying spiritual life. They contrast such changes with conventional tools of environmental action such as law and regulation. Pope Francis argues that, lacking deeper convictions, regulation becomes something individuals seek to obstruct, remove, or avoid (Francis 2015: 91).

There is some evidence to support the idea that spiritual foundations for environmental activism can be particularly effective. For example, in a forest rehabilitation and watershed protection project in West Sumatra, local religious leaders were educated by

visiting Islamic teachers on the place of environment in Islam, and Islamic scholars, or *ulama,* were invited to deliver sermons about water conservation. The project team found that religious education noticeably increased interest in water issues, especially among women, who particularly embraced Islamic principles of environmental care. Secular organizers argued that the combination of religious and environmental education provided a stronger social foundation for sustainable change than environmental education alone (McKay 2013: 85). Such cooperative efforts have become widespread.

One group, Interfaith Power and Light has been notably successful in reaching North American communities who might otherwise have been indifferent to environmental issues.[25] The collective efforts of their 18,000 American congregations help to generate broad religious support for environmental, especially climate, activism. Simple projects like providing energy-efficient appliances to churches, temples and mosques are rendered simultaneously religious and pragmatic (Bingham 2016). In Latin America, the implications of climate change for social justice have increased collaborations between secular and faith-based organizations.[26] Cooperation on climate between indigenous organizations and Catholic and Protestant groups (an example of "street-level ecumenism") has even eased long-standing tensions between religious groups, a welcome by-product.

Indigenous peoples, many of whom live on the front lines of climate change, have gone further. They demanded representation at the Framework Convention on Climate Change and participated in the development of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. The First Nations organization Idle No More protested the Keystone XL pipeline in Canada and the United States in order to gain sovereignty over their lands, and protect the

[25] For more information, see www.interfaithpowerandlight.org.

[26] See www.wola.org/es/node/5557.

environment from both the immediate threat of oil spills, and the longer-term threat of climate damage.[27]

16.6.3 Epistemic challenges and new ways of living

For many indigenous peoples, the very framing of environment and resources as something separate from humans constitutes the core problem. Such questioning of the philosophical basis on which the material world has been built is a central plank of spiritual environmental action. In many faith traditions, individuals are encouraged to turn their backs on the materialism that grounds the global economic system. Such radical calls for change are tempered by the recognition that consumption practices are conditioned by entrenched economic systems, scientific aims, and technological infrastructures, which may be difficult to dispense with or change (Francis 2015: 75-85). Human embeddedness in complex technical systems, for example electrical grids, constrains individual action (Pritchard 2011). More deeply, environmental planning is clearly rooted in complex political relationships (Jasanoff 2005). Thus spiritual leaders are left with a thorny question: how can human societies go about making significant change?

Pope Francis encourages critical understanding of technology and materialism, explicitly rejecting a "technological fix" mentality for environmental problems (e.g. geoengineering). Applying more technology, he argues, is insufficient for grappling with integrated social, environmental, and spiritual problems. Indeed such fixes may exacerbate the impulse to dominate and fail to tackle the social problems at the core of climate change (Francis 2015: 75-85).[28] Islamic thinkers, such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr have called for comprehensive rethinking of the science and technology enterprise by rebuilding the epistemological foundation of science in a way guided by Islamic belief (Nasr 1991, 2010).

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[27] For more information see http://idlenomore.ca.

[28] There is an interesting resonance here with Ulrich Beck's *Risk Society* (1992).

Although Nasr's thinking is controversial, many Muslim scientists and engineers have argued that belief has the power to change the character of technoscience (Razak and Majeed 1997; Amery 2001; Lotfalian 2004). Religious thinkers therefore may embrace more "revolutionary" change (Jasanoff and Kim 2015) than some might expect. As advocates seek progress in sustainability and environmental justice, revolutionary questioning such as this can constitute common ground for secular and faith-based communities.

The efforts of indigenous activists to remove damaging technologies such as dams or mines from their traditional lands has also raised awareness of the power relations embedded in these technologies (Simpson 2008; Voyles 2015). Such projects harm extended kinship relationships, and alienate indigenous peoples from sacred spaces. Furthermore, the tendency of megaprojects to benefit distant rather than local populations, belies justifications based on "the common good" (Groenveldt 2003; Swainson and McGregor 2008; Hall and Branford 2012). Activists have pointed out that economic and health problems in indigenous communities are significantly exacerbated when the institutions and philosophical frameworks of dominant political authorities are the only ways such problems are addressed (Smith 2012). Implementing alternatives to prevailing models, however, can be politically difficult to achieve (Kawharu 2000; Carroll 2015).

Legal scholar Rebecca Tsosie, drawing on the work of Miranda Fricker, has highlighted the importance of epistemic injustice, the failure of legal systems to give weight to indigenous knowledge and cosmological belief systems (Tsosie 2012: 12). She highlights the injustices that result when U.S. courts fail to recognize tribal members as valid culture experts, as for example when they found no cultural harm to Native Alaskan tribes from the Exxon Valdez oil spill, which made indigenous ways of life effectively impossible, or when the Hopi and Navajo were not permitted to stop the pumping of treated sewage onto a sacred mountain (Tsosie 2012: 12). Tribal understandings of meaningful human/non-human

relationships were legally rejected on the basis that "true belief" was a purely mental construct, and thus no change in the material world could threaten it. Fighting for epistemological justice is therefore central to maintaining holistic ways of life.

By challenging the character and not just the consequences of human materialism, religious actors again may find common ground with secular groups who also push for reassessments of the way that humans live.

16.6.4 Conclusion

Commentators such as George Rupp (2001) insist that religious beliefs are too diverse and internally inconsistent, to offer sufficient intellectual resources on which to ground environmental action. Evidence suggests otherwise. Religious interpretations of the earth and faith-based environmental activism share much with secular groups, including techniques for raising consciousness, concerns with environmental justice, and challenges to foundational ways of thinking that contribute to environmental and human harm. Religious leaders are mining their traditions to inspire changes in behavior and thinking that are harmonious with, if philosophically distinct from, purely secular work. Successful challenges to entrenched systems of power, knowledge, and technology can gain direction and legitimacy in cooperation with faith communities.

16.7. Themes and implications: An action toolkit

Progress toward the flourishing of persons, households, societies, and the planet requires progress in religion and in its capacities to contribute social and cultural goods. It also requires better understanding of the place of religion in the late modern world. Encouraging such advances has been the primary goal of this chapter. Five interconnected themes have run through the previous sections: the persistence of religion in the twenty-first century; the importance of context in discerning outcomes; the need for improved cultural

competence and religious literacy; the significance of religion in initiating change; and the benefits of well-judged partnerships. Each of these themes carries implications for action, which are spelled out in this section

16.7.1 The persistence of religion

At the outset of this chapter we laid out evidence of the continuing significance of religion in the modern world. Specifically, a very high percentage of the global population claims some sort of identification with a religion, a percentage that is growing rather than declining overall. From this evidence we argue that religion is persistent—a term chosen with care to signify that it is neither vanishing nor resurgent. And as a pervasive aspect of human cultures religion is to be understood and respected. Social scientists, newly sensitized to a phenomenon that had been ignored for much of the twentieth century, are prone to "discover" religion where it has always been, but careful attention to religious demography in different parts of the world reveals a constantly changing array of presence and absence. Religion also takes new forms in late modernity—as indeed does everything else. Keeping this in mind and starting from observations of religion in everyday lives and local contexts, we have attempted here to analyze the impact of religion and its relevance to social progress in a wide variety of fields.

16.7.1.1 Implications for action:

Researchers, policy-makers, and activists should

- Start from the assumption that the presence of religious belief and practice is to be expected and that it is often a significant factor in whatever changes take place in a society.
- Support freedom for religious (and non-religious) identification, belief, and practice as a fundamental human right.

- Reject a simplistic distinction between progressive secularism and reactive religion, which has the effect of reinforcing precisely the reactionary reflex it sets out to condemn (Juergensmeyer 2015).

16.7.2 The importance of context

Throughout this chapter, a consistent conclusion emerges: the dangers of generalization. There is no single phenomenon—"religion"—that can be said to act in uniform ways across contexts. Whether it be in terms of households, of diversity, of democracy, of conflict, of peace-making, of welfare, of healthcare, or of the earth itself, the role of religion must be examined on its own terms and in local cultural context. In each and every case, religious beliefs, practices, and communities must be understood in particular historical, economic, political, and cultural trajectories. Careful attention to *religion as practiced*, not just to religion as doctrine or proclamation, is essential to achieving this level of local understanding. It is also critical to identifying potential partners for action on the one hand, and signs of potentially destructive conflict on the other. In short, the detail matters. The social sciences lend themselves to this task. It is the rigorous, but nonetheless sensitive, inquiry into the myriad aspects of religion and religiousness which lead first to critical appraisals and then to effective recommendations for policy.

16.7.2.1 Implications for action:

Researchers, policy-makers, and activists should

- Engage in careful and thorough investigations to determine religion's diverse forms in any given situation. Trusted local informants, along with scholarly experts, can be critical partners in interpretation, as can broad surveys that tap the full range of belief and practice, not just the loudest voices.
- Assess the degree to which religious factors may or may not be significant in a given context.

- Recognize the internal diversity of all religious traditions, thereby avoiding generalizations that may alienate potential allies and inhibit the search for pragmatic solutions.
- Be aware that "official" authorities and teachings may protect existing powers and hide important sites of innovation. This implies looking past formal pronouncements to everyday practices, especially in indigenous and other marginalized groups.

16.7.3 The need for cultural competence and religious literacy

Both secular experts and religious leaders lack sufficient knowledge of each other's goals and resources. Community workers, politicians, policy-makers, and analysts need new kinds of knowledge to make the necessary judgments in this field. Knowledge of religion that comes only from media accounts is not sufficient. Within the social sciences, research on religion must not be restricted to a specialized subfield. We (all of us) need broad and deep pools of expertise to help identify the situations in which religious ideas and practices have become dangerous, as well as the places where creative synergies are possible. *Basic religious literacy* is a minimum standard for civic discourse and collective decision-making. Responsibility for that literacy will be allocated variously in different societies to educational systems, public programs, professional schools, and religious groups themselves. It is, however, an essential starting point. That said, the mutual knowledge that will make the most difference is likely to be gained in specific local contexts as diverse parties work together on concrete issues.

16.7.3.1 Implications for action:

Researchers, policy-makers, and activists should

- Insist that professional education in all fields establish basic religious literacy as a standard for cultural competence.

- Cultivate on-going ties with religion scholars who can bring the necessary expertise to bear in any given situation. No single expert—secular or religious—should be expected to have all of knowledge required.
- Encourage funders and reviewers of social science research to be alert to opportunities to expand existing research programs, in order to include attention to the role of religions in political, economic, and household life.
- Take advantage of common projects to expand mutual knowledge and understanding and report on those findings to larger professional audiences.

16.7.4 The significance of religion in initiating change

Religions have—and always have had—powerful potential as initiators of progressive social change. Think for example of the initiatives to condemn slavery both in Europe and the United States. That impulse remains. It is true that religion's inherent potential for disrupting the status quo can lead to destructive movements; this should not be minimized. But by the same token, we need to recognize creative interventions by religious activists—initiatives that span democratization, peace-building, and ecology, among others. Religions encourage their participants to imagine the world as it could be and to act in ways that can make it so. When this happens, it arises from the power of religious ideas to motivate, of religious practices to offer transformative ways of life, of religious communities to mobilize, and of religious leaders and symbols to embody transcendent calls to action. All of that can be put to either good or ill. Attention to the *specific social mechanisms of religious life* has revealed, for instance, both the everyday structures of patriarchy that restrict women's freedom and the religious ideas and practices women can employ to resist. And attention to religious organizations and networks has pointed not only toward different points of departure but to tremendously expanded capacity and reach for healthcare and development in Africa.

16.7.4.1 Implications for action:

Researchers, policy-makers, and activists should

- Make room for the specific contributions that religious traditions may bring to pursuing social progress, ranging from religious stories and symbols, to everyday ritual practices, to recognized local leaders and organizational capacity. Each aspect has its own dynamic and potential.
- Be able to discern the likely value—or at times potential danger—of existing religious initiatives in any given area.
- Assess the degree to which practices may be separable from beliefs. Where beliefs seem promising for furthering progress, practices may imply the opposite—and vice versa. Cooperation may be possible without full agreement, and resistance to detrimental practices may be possible without attacking beliefs.

16.7.5 The benefits of well-judged partnerships

A stand-out finding running through this chapter is the strategic benefit in well-judged partnerships between religious and secular actors. Agencies of many different kinds benefit when religion is taken into account, and—where appropriate—when the considerable *resources of religions* are harnessed. Social progress depends on every sector of society—state, market, civil society, and more. Religion is particularly important in those parts of the world where secular agencies, both state and non-state, are for whatever reason eroded, at times seriously. In Brazil, for example, a Catholic community center became an ironic ally in government efforts to confront HIV/AIDS. In Indonesia, environmental restoration is gaining greater reach and effectiveness through collaboration with Muslim groups. In the United States and Europe religious charities remain important to the social safety net. And throughout the world, efforts toward conflict transformation frequently depend on faith-based

leadership. Whether pursuing human rights or democracy, economic development or women's empowerment, religious partners can bring value to the table.

It is important, however, to sound a note of caution: Well-judged partnerships benefit all the parties involved; ill-judged partnerships are potentially dangerous. Political and social science research is essential to discern the precise conditions under which toxic forms of religion can join with toxic forms of political life leading to harmful consequences for all concerned. Religion can encourage—indeed legitimate—destructive violence at every level of society, from the intimate to the global. But that is not the whole story. As the preceding sections of this chapter make clear, at times religion is the only force that can break through a stalemate, or offer a more hopeful vision of the future. And more immediately it is very often religious agencies—along with their secular counterparts—that bring aid to the excluded, support to the victims, and encouragement to the peacemakers.

16.7.5.1 Implications for action:

Researchers, policy-makers, and activists should

- Support the efforts of religious leaders, groups, and movements which are working to end discrimination and engender greater wellbeing, equality, and opportunity for more people.
- Support initiatives aimed at exposing and countering abuses both within religious communities and beyond.
- Look for overlapping goals, without expecting full agreement.
- Look for complementary organizational capacities that can be brought to bear on the issues in question.
- Engage with religious partners in debating and evaluating policy initiatives.
- Bring the expertise of social science to bear on the critical analyses necessary to discern both the dangers and the potential of partnerships with religious agencies.

In short, we underline the continuing need for research and action that give attention to religion. The social progress toward which these volumes point must encompass individual and social life as a whole, recognizing religious sensibilities as part of that whole. Critical but appreciative assessment is the first step in establishing creative partnerships that include religious individuals, organizations and communities as key players in mobilizing for action and in debates about the future. They have much to offer—rich resources, significant skills, and sites for discussion. Imagining that society might indeed be "other" is a calling shared by religious and secular visionaries alike.

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