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## Abstract

What is the role of religion in political mobilization? In this chapter, we examine developments in the literature as it considers the role of religion in political mobilization. Broadly speaking we outline two predominant lines of thinking about religion as a driver of political mobilization, the marketplace and theology. The former strand of thinking, we show, traces its roots as far back as the behavioral revolution and even further still. The second strand, popularized by global conflict events framed in religious terms, focuses on theology and differences between religions as motivating factors in mobilization. This line of thinking has largely been supplanted, while at the same time, it has forced the acknowledgment that while religion is an intervening instrument in mobilization

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across theology, religious experience likely plays a role in motivating elites and lay believers alike to mobilize. Finally, we outline some emerging areas for further research, including inquiry into the causes of religious preferences, mapping of the mechanisms of mobilization of the devout, clarification of the nexus of democracy and religion, and the increasing availability of data for continued exploration of the role of religion in mobilization.

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**Keywords**

Religion · Political mobilization · Ethnic conflict · Marketplace of religion · Secularization · Religious institutions · Theology

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## Introduction

What is the role of religion in political mobilization? Mobilization has received a great deal of attention in Comparative Politics (Gurr 2015; Habyarimana et al. 2009; Lipset 1960; Mecham 2017; Norris 2002). However, the role of religion in the mobilization process is not fully understood – in part – because in international politics, the topic of religion in politics remained understudied for decades (Gill 2001; Gryzmala-Busse 2016; Wald and Wilcox 2006). This lack of attention is in stark contrast to foundational works across the social sciences, many of which considered religion a cornerstone of preferences and political activity (see Smith 2007; Weber 1958).

One likely reason for the more recent dearth of interest in religion in politics is secularization theory or the long-standing prediction that modernizing societies would grow more secular over time. In the long run, secularization theory essentially renders religion irrelevant as either an explanatory variable or an outcome (Berger 1967; Bruce 2002; Dobbelaere 1981; Durkheim 2001; Marx and Engels 2012). However, contrary to this prediction, accumulation of empirical evidence shows that religiosity and/or practice are not only present within industrialized democracies (Dalton 2013) but are, in some societies, expanding (Broughton and ten Napel 2000; Finke and Iannaccone 1993; Finke and Stark 1992; Iannaccone 1991). The continued importance of religion worldwide (see Gill 2001; Inglehart et al. 1998), along with global events involving political actors using religious symbolism and framing, in the twenty-first century, has brought religion again to the forefront in the study of international politics.

In this chapter we trace developments in the thinking about the role of religion in literature discussing political mobilization. Broadly speaking, we outline two predominant arguments, developing somewhat sequentially, in journals and books published primarily in the United States and Britain. We conclude that the current line of thinking portrays religion as an instrument for mobilization of and by a population, while the root causes for the mobilization generally are not thought to be theological. This strand of thinking, we show, traces its roots as far back as the behavioral revolution in political science and even further still. The second strand, set in motion by global conflict events framed in religious terms, focused on

theology and differences between religions as motivating factors in mobilization. This line of thinking has largely been supplanted. Even so, it did force the acknowledgment that while religion is an intervening instrument in mobilization, belief may at the same time sincerely motivate the leader of mobilization and the individual followers mobilizing. However, this does not mean theology is considered a driving factor of religious movements in a static and differential sense. In contrast, the literature considers theologies as fluid doctrinal teachings, endogenous to historical and social contexts, all of which may at different times motivate individuals to mobilize.

We define political mobilization as a process of activating a social movement for political ends (Tilly 1978). In turn, a social movement can be defined as “a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity” (Diani 1992, p. 13). Notably this outcome-centered definition, focusing on activation, encompasses both peaceful and violent political conflict that may remain informal or become formally organized and for a wide range of political outcomes. In explaining activation, we touch upon a variety of theories that highlight, among other things, incentives, structure, grievance, opportunity, framing, and theology. We do not specifically separate works by the great variety of terms that are used to describe mobilization of religion and range in content from mobilization of religious parties for explicitly secular goals as opposed to more informal organization of actors, sometimes seeking more explicitly religious goals, as long as those goals have political ramifications.

The subsequent discussion is roughly organized temporally to illustrate some major developments of the two main themes, the instrumental use of religion and theological drivers of mobilization. Within these two themes, we recognize at least two parallel and often overlapping sets of inquiries – one pertaining to electoral politics and the other to the politics of violence. Next we discuss the current state of our understanding of the role of religion in mobilization. Finally, we suggest some considerations for future research on the role of religion in political mobilization.

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## Implications of Secularization Theory

Early writings about the role of religion in mobilization tended to focus principally on the peaceful albeit contentious variety that over time was channeled through formal political structures. Foundational theories of the role of religion in political mobilization include Adam Smith’s *An Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations* that devotes a chapter to a theory of the relationship between church, state, and members of congregations. Starting with the assumption that the clergy are rational, self-interested, political actors, Smith argues that the relationship between elite leaders of religious groups and their followers, and the state, depends on the marketplace of religion. To summarize, the driver in Smith’s argument is the source of the clergy’s income (Anderson 1988). Specifically, focusing on Catholic and Protestant churches in Europe, Smith suggests that if church income draws on state resources (taxes or

mandatory tithes), the clergy will seek to align with the government to protect the clergy's monopoly in the marketplace of religions, against competing churches. In contrast, if the clergy's income is supplied directly by congregations, leaders of religious groups will be more zealous in courting the congregation. Thus, the economic relationship between the state and leaders of religions alters the incentives of the clergy to mobilize congregations. In turn, governments and political groups may align themselves with religious organizations to win more support, especially in times of conflict. In this way, Smith suggests that elite representatives of religious groups can become key political operatives within a state.

Behavioralist perspectives, in the middle of the twentieth century, shifted the view of religion in mobilization to an expression of a cleavage conflict that emerged in the course of consolidating nation states. However, similarly to Smith, the driver of mobilization was also located in the relationship between the church and state, which conditioned the relationship between the church and the constituency. Arguing that the role of the church and religions in society was one of the three main political issues confronting Western Nations, Lipset observed a general pattern across Western nations. Catholic churches, which had a closer alignment with the aristocracy, tended to mobilize through the parties on the right that were associated with the establishment. In contrast, Protestants and Jewish constituencies tended to align with the left against the landed aristocracy (Lipset 1960). Lipset and Rokkan (1967) further elaborated the process by which they argued national revolutions in Europe pitted against each other members of various prominent cleavages, among these secular against religious cleavages, leading to the political mobilization and static (frozen) alignment of citizens into the West European party systems of the time.

In the 1970s, religion in mobilization featured in the debate about the role of grievance versus resources in mobilization. In Gurr's view, the key to mobilization was relative deprivation or the current or predicted future inequality in a desired but unattained good (either political, territorial, or economic). Specifically, with respect to religion and mobilization, he argued that new religious movements often mobilized as a result of such grievances, against the establishment associated with the religious status quo (Gurr 1994). Some of Gurr's examples included proletariat protests in nineteenth-century Britain that took on religious frames and nationalist movements in Africa that capitalized on religious membership in mobilization against colonial powers (Regan and Norton 2005).

Objecting that grievances exist for many groups that have not mobilized politically, Tilly, in contrast, thought of religion as an organizational resource solution to Olson's (1965) collective action problem. According to Tilly, common identity and strong social networks result in better group organization, which in turn gives the group higher mobilization potential. While attempting to explain workers' mobilization rather than mobilization of the religious, Tilly used the religion of the Catholic Church as one example of an identity that by way of organizational network structure contributes to greater mobilizing capacity of a group engaged in political contestation over state power (Tilly 1978).

In turn, Tarrow explained mobilization in contentious politics arising out of changes in political opportunities for groups. While individuals may desire political

change for a variety of reasons (from the material to the imaginative), mobilization requires individuals in a social network have opportunities to express discontent without excessive repression from the government (Tarrow 2011). However, sustained political mobilization requires more than opportunity and grievance, according to Tarrow. Sustained mobilization also requires “solidarity,” or the recognition by participants that common interests exist in their groups. Among several strategies, solidarity can be created when leaders of religious movements tap into individual devotion and convince believers that their group-level grievances are connected to their religious identity (Tarrow 2011, p. 6).

Simultaneously, culturalists worked to better understand the individual-level mechanisms driving the “high political mobilization potential of religious identities” (Young 1976, p. 52). Young suggested that religious rituals provide the individual with continuous reaffirmation of membership while at the same time demarcating the group. He also argued that religious symbols provide the bases for shared emotional reactions to real and imagined external threats and for calls for defense of the faith as sanctioned by the divine. Similarly, Geertz’ 1966 thick anthropological description pinpoints religious symbols as synthesizing an “ethos” and people’s “ideas of order” (p. 3), thus helping to justify a particular social order (Geertz 1973).

At the same time, in an attempt to explain the perceived decrease in religiosity, in part conceptualized as falling church memberships in higher-income countries, secularization theory gained steam. The theory proposed that the increasing complexity of society due to modernization (primarily the separation of public and private life as well as the increasing rise of income and introduction of national or global market economies) would cause secular activities to become more important over time, while at the same time people had less resources to devote to religion (Bellah 1986; Berger and Luckmann 1967; Bruce 2002; Dobbelaere 1981).

Pushing back against secularization theory, one of the more prominent contributions to the thinking about religion and mobilization was the fundamentalist project (Marty and Appleby 1994). In contrast to secularization, the authors argued modernization magnifies the role of religious mobilization rather than suppressing it. Following up on the fundamentalist project, Almond et al. (2003) defined “fundamentalism” as a “discernible pattern of religious militancy by which self-styled ‘true believers’ attempt to arrest the erosion of religious identity, fortify the borders of the religious community, and create viable alternatives to secular institutions and behaviors” (p. 17).

Others highlighted the fact that the evidence showed increasing religiosity in less developed nations and in largely secular nations a high number of people that professed a belief in some form of a higher power (Gill 2001). Consequent refinements of the theory included Norris and Inglehart (2004) who proposed that with modernization, individual existential insecurity diminished and thus decreased individual need in more developed countries for faith in religious salvation.

The substantial empirical variance in religious activities in the group of higher-income nations, for instance, highlighting large religious populations in United States ignited further inquiry. Building on Smith’s ideas about the marketplace of religion to explain this variance, scholars suggested state-funded church leaders – for example, in several countries in Europe – lacked an incentive to recruit and/or keep rank and file

involved and excited about the church, since that would increase the funded church leaders' work load. Consequently, they proposed that, where religion is funded by the state, religious state institutions survive without the necessity to maintain and/or recruit adherents and adherents turn away from organized religion. In contrast, under conditions of pluralist religious competition where church leaders rely on their constituency for income, as in the United States, religious leaders must work to keep adherents involved and mobilized. Larger or more robust religious organizations continually adapt their teachings or practices to meet demands and gain new members (see Anderson 1988; Iannaccone 1998; Stark and Finke 2000, 2002; Stark and Iannaccone 1994; Stark et al. 1996 for examples). Furthermore, if religious leaders think that addressing political topics helps mobilizing the devout, religious rhetoric takes on increasingly overt political overtones (Jelen and Wilcox 2002).

Others developed arguments to emphasize individual incentives for joining and participating in religious organizations. These suggest, for example, that in addition to spiritual payoffs, there are significant individual benefits to engagement with religion including networks and shared symbols that develop human capital, resources, and organization. Furthermore, religious mobilization is influenced by associated opportunity costs. If wages or employment decreases, opportunity costs associated with religious activities diminish, and religious involvement of the rank and file increases (Carr and Landa 1983; Durkin and Greeley 1991; Iannaccone 1991).

Auxiliary, theorized mechanisms of the role of religion in mobilization highlighted the importance of religious framing by leaders of social movements in pursuit of a political goal (McAdam et al. 1996). Scholars also showed elites using their public status to shape the political discourse relating to mobilization (Djupe and Gilbert 2002) and relying on common religious group language to frame what correct political behavior looks like for their followers (Wald et al. 2005). Others illustrated the role of historical legacies in influencing party formation in new democracies, including suppression of political mobilization of religion (Grzymala-Busse 2013). The research also illustrated how organizational capacity of the religious institution matters for political mobilization (Kalyvas 1996, 2000). For example, organizations that are hierarchical, like the Catholic Church, can more easily mobilize loose religious networks than can horizontally oriented institutions of various Islamic sects and schools (Pfaff and Gill 2006). Even so, Muslims have successfully mobilized at local and regional levels, although the evidence shows this is not uniform across Muslim communities (Fox 2006; Koopmans 2004; Koopmans and Statham 1999; Pfaff and Gill 2006), suggesting that hierarchical organizational structures facilitate mobilization but vertical structures likely do not prevent it.

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## **Surging Interest in Violent Religious Mobilization**

Huntington's (1996) clash of civilizations thesis was another prominent contribution at this time. His argument contended that the end of the Cold War marked a new era in which liberal democracy would have to contend with Islamic and Asian civilizations defined by differing cultural systems and world views. The theory itself is noted for

being somewhat vague, contradictory, and anecdotal, especially with respect to the mechanisms by which members of these clashing cultures supposedly mobilize for conflict (Gurr 1994; Hassner and Huntington 1997; Hassner 2011). Still, the general cultural distinctions discussed in Huntington's thesis correspond with prominent religious differences, and Huntington himself argued religion was a central motivator of mobilization (Fox 2001; Huntington 1996, p. 66). Subsequent empirical research examining the role of religion in conflict mobilization as intimated by Huntingtonian ideas, for the most part, did not find a direct empirical relationship (Chiozza 2002; Fox 2004; Henderson and Tucker 2001), especially not for conflict between Islam and other religions (Gartzke and Gleditsch 2006; Gleditsch and Rudolfsen 2016).

Nonetheless, global events – especially 9/11 and the war on terror – coupled with Huntington's theory eclipsed other types of inquiries into the role of religion in violent mobilization for the next decade. To date the google scholar citation count for Huntington's 1993 Foreign Affairs article is well over 13 thousand, and the citation count for his book (Huntington 1996) with a similar title exceeds 22 thousand, revealing the enormous influence of this work for both scholars seeking to support and/or refute it. This line of research produced a large body of literature that delved into theology – especially Islamic doctrine – in search of mechanisms to explain the contribution of religion to violent mobilization.

## Theology as a Mechanism for Mobilization

Borum summarizes the fruits of the first decade of the literature on radical mobilization – especially radical Islamic mobilization – as conceptual, rather than empirical, and mostly offering a “descriptive narrative of a typical transformative process” (Borum 2011, p. 38). Even so taken together, this body of work makes clear that while Islam is often used as a tool for radical mobilization, there is little evidence that there is anything inherent to Islam that distinguishes this theology in that it necessarily drives adherents to violence. Rather similarly to mobilization in other religious traditions, Islamic theological concepts are often developed and used to appeal to susceptible individuals.

The cross-national literature supports this view showing that while Muslims are overrepresented in conflict, this is for reasons that a Huntingtonian theory of civilizations cannot fully explain. For example, the predominant type of conflict Muslims are involved in is intra-religious (Fox 2004; Gartzke and Gleditsch 2006; Gleditsch and Rudolfsen 2016; Toft 2007). Fox (2001) suggests that waves of Islamist violence after the 1970s and again in the 1990s likely reflect an important change in geopolitics. De Soysa and Nordås (2007) find that regional effects unique to the Middle East have a great impact on receptiveness to democracy, repression of civil and human rights, and the probability of acts of violence. Some of these regional effects include having largely oil-based export economies, low income per capita, and historical repression of civil liberties or civil wars. As Gunning and Jackson (2011) point out, even if it were true that Islamist groups committed more deadly acts of terrorism, that alone does not imply causality between theology and violence.

Individual-level evidence similarly suggests that Islamic doctrine is not the cause of terrorist mobilization. Toft (2013) suggests terrorist organizations adopt religious ideology for material and strategic benefits. Toft and Zhukov (2015) provide evidence that with the exception of how they respond to counter-terrorism measures, Islamists mostly behave similarly to secular nationalists. Furthermore, they posit that Islamist's unusual resilience in the face of indiscriminate violence against their population by a national government is related to the transnational funding and support that Islamist organizations receive from coreligionists abroad rather than any sort of theological uniqueness.

Indeed, radical Islamist militants do not necessarily appear to have a particularly good understanding of theology. For example, although Hegghammer (2017) and Juergensmeyer (2018) argue that Daesh's mobilization draws on a global diaspora of supporters that share the organization's values, their research shows that many members of the group demonstrated little knowledge of their group's theology.

In addition to explaining why the origin of conflict mobilization is not to be found in Islamic theology, the increasing attention to religion in conflict mobilization delivered several important insights. One example is the evidence that religious conflicts are more difficult to end than are other types of conflicts (Fox 2004; Svensson 2007). A possible explanation is that religious claims made during conflict are more intractable because religious belief systems do not easily allow compromise or bargaining over the state (Fox 2004; Toft 2007; Wentz 1987).

Other scholars elucidate why and how entrepreneurs use religious symbols and doctrines for purposes of religious mobilization across religious traditions (Haynes 2006; Jelen and Wilcox 2002). For example, even though their goals are ostensibly secular, religion is the front and center in religious nationalist movements of the twentieth century, according to Juergensmeyer, because these are often driven by a fundamentalist reactions to modernization and earlier secular nationalist movements (Juergensmeyer 2010).

With respect to the international dimension of religious mobilization, Toft (2007) explains that the transnational nature of religion allows for increased elite outreach and augmentation of network ties. Indeed, as globalization progresses, the importance of transnational religious movements is intensified (Haynes 2016b). In a globalizing environment, religious leaders with large mobilized constituencies have the ability to challenge international norms via global networks that can attract compliance. At two ends of the spectrum, these networks include terrorist groups with fundamentalist ideology, such as Al Qaeda, and humanitarian and democratic organizations connected to institutions like the Vatican (Haynes 2016b, p. 5).

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## **An Endogenous View of Religious Mobilization**

Current research shows that while not the root cause of political conflict, religion is one identity type that individuals may choose to activate in their "identity repertoire" (Chandra 2012, p. 22) and one dimension of identity that political entrepreneurs seek to mobilize among their constituency (Birnir and Satana



forthcoming; McCauley 2014; Posner 2017). Religion provides the structures and tools, including organization but also the symbolic rituals and language, for salient group coordination, fund-raising, and resource allocation (Haynes 2016a; Jelen and Wilcox 2002; Juergensmeyer 2000, 2013; Toft 2007). Thus, religion can be used as an instrument for mobilization, sometimes with objectives that possibly differ from other types of political mobilization.

For instance, Brubaker (2015) suggests that mobilization of religiously based, substantive regulation of public life is distinct. Similarly, McCauley suggests that political entrepreneurs evoke religion for support of policy issues that differ from issues for which they seek ethnic support (McCauley 2012, 2014). Furthermore, it is understood that religious experience can have a strong psychological influence on the individual beyond political identification (Mitchell 2007).

However, religious experience may serve as the foundation for individual mobilization in ways that are simultaneously devout and instrumental. For example, religion and religious experience provide a framework that helps people understand the world around them (Seul 1999). When challenged, the devout may then mobilize to defend this framework (Fox 2002) for reasons that are simultaneously sincere and instrumental.

Conceptualizing religion as an instrument in mobilization underscores that the structural tools for mobilization are common, albeit varied, across religions. Furthermore, it highlights that the root causes for mobilization are exogenous to doctrine. At the same time, this understanding of the role of religion in mobilization accommodates religious experience and sincere belief as a driver of individual preferences and behavior. Therefore, the current framework for researching the role of religion in mobilizations is consistent with theories of the marketplace of religion while at the same time encouraging inquiry into the features of religious experience that across doctrine distinguish, from other types, mobilization centering on religion.

This endogenous point of view makes room for inquiries into a plethora of processes, peaceful and violent, where religion plays a role in mobilization. In the domain of electoral politics, for instance, studies explore the instrumental mobilizing role of Islamic parties across seemingly devout constituencies in the Middle East and South Asia (Contreras-Vejar 2015; Euchner and Preidel 2018) and religious parties more generally across a global sample (Fox 2006). The evidence suggests, for example, that countering secularist politics is in some cases articulated by religious leaders as the mobilizing *raison d'être* of religious parties (Euchner and Preidel 2018; Gill 2017), sometimes for instrumental reasons.

Others focus on transition where religion features prominently including the democratic transitions during the Arab Spring (Ferrero 2018), suggesting that democracy is harder to achieve when a hegemonic religion is tied to the state (Cesari and Fox 2016). In this vein, Mecham (2017) examines Islamist political mobilization across peaceful and violent settings. Briefly, Mecham argues that internal state crisis or rapid political liberalization serves as a catalyst for Islamist mobilization. This mobilization is led by political entrepreneurs that are poorly incorporated into the state and/or not under the hierarchical or social control of the religious leadership, for example, by way of state patronage. At the individual level, religion plays a role in the mobilization process in that common religious institutions shape preferences

for religious policies, create common knowledge about these preferences among worshippers, and lower the cost of collective action by taking advantage of extant religious structures.

Others investigate the role of religion in violent mobilization. Here, the explanations for the high mobilization and conflict potential between divergent ethnoreligious groups are especially well developed. Chiefly, threatened political elites attempt to enhance their religious credentials with their key domestic audiences to take over and/or cement their hold on power. To this end, majority/plurality elite factions instrumentally outbid each other, targeting ethnoreligious minorities (Toft 2013), making ethnoreligious segmentation especially conflict prone (Basedau et al. 2011b, 2016; Stewart 2012). Elaborating the mechanisms of mobilization, overlaying segmented ethnicity and religion increases group loyalties and strengthens social networks, which decreases the cost of recruiting rebels (Ellingsen 2005; Selway 2011; Seul 1999). This allows for the use of religion as a mobilizing vehicle for conflict (Basedau et al. 2011a, 2016; Juan and Hasenclever 2015). Other recent complimentary explanations of how religion becomes mobilized in conflict between religious groups point to minority religious grievances (Akbaba and Taydas 2011), including grievances that are exogenous to religion (Satana et al. 2013), governments' regulatory involvement in religion (Fox 2008, 2015, 2016b), religious repression (Nordås 2015), and salience of religion (Isaacs 2017).

Taken together this literature acknowledges that individuals have religious preferences that create opportunities for mobilization by religious leaders. At the same time, it is understood that mobilization by of the religious further shapes individual preferences with respect to religion.

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## Future Directions

The wealth of scholarship on religious mobilization has clarified scholarly thinking about identity formation and collective action. Recently revised conceptions of religion, secularism, and modernization have opened new paths for social inquiry. Moving forward we highlight four areas of the literature where we think substantial contributions can be made with respect to the topic of religious mobilization. These are religion and peacemaking, the role of formal and informal religious institutions (within and across religions), the direction and content of the causal arrow between religious identity and mobilization, and the intersectionality of religion and gender. Each of these areas relate not only to questions of mobilization in general but to pertinent global issues such as growing transnational nature of religious organizations, the increasingly prominent role of religion in civil conflicts across diverse states, as well as issues of human rights and political polarization along religious lines.

## Peacemaking

Some scholars of conflict have suggested that clergy and other types of religious leaders have a unique position for promoting peace. For example, Sandal (2017)

argues that religious leaders can interpret religious texts in a way that bears on conflict. Illustrating this idea, Sandal suggests that religious leaders in Ireland between 1960 and 2000 used their standing in communities to formulate a theology of reconciliation between conflict parties in the Irish conflict. Others suggest that religious institutions may be particularly helpful for peacemaking. For instance, religious institutions can be designed to facilitate reconciliation between enemies, forgiveness, cross-class solidarity, and social justice (Abu-Nimer 2001; Appleby 1999; Gopin 2000, 2002; Sandal and Fox 2013). This literature suggests that the micro-foundations for national peace could be related to how local leaders diffuse theological framing throughout the community, as well as offering social benefits and welfare. Questions building on the literature include whether religious actors are more helpful in certain types of conflicts or at certain times in a conflict.

### **Formal and Informal Institutions**

On a similar, comparative note, we suggest that more research could be done to understand the role that formal and informal religious institutions play in shaping outcomes. Extant research suggests study of institutional organization within and across religions might yield interesting observations. For instance, Mecham (2017) argues that a chief cause of variation in Islamic political mobilization results from differences in informal religious institutions across Islamic contexts. Specifically, he suggests mobilization by Islamic entrepreneurs is easier when they cannot be easily controlled by religious leadership. Thus, Islamic sects that maintain tighter control over social structures and doctrine will, on average, see less Islamic politicization. Livney (forthcoming) adds that informally shared Islamic identity enhances interpersonal trust that helps overcome coordination failures.

In turn, examining political mobilization among Christian Church constituencies, Kalyvas (2000) suggests religious mobilization may partially be a product of the formal organizational structures of the institution. Comparing across religions, hierarchical religions such as Catholicism seemingly are more centralized than is Islam. However, given the variation identified by Mecham (2017) looking across the cases within doctrine, it would be interesting to better understand, for example, the variation in hierarchical control within and across each religion. Furthermore, it would be fascinating to examine whether Livney's argument about religiously based interpersonal trust generalizes across doctrine.

### **Direction of the Causal Arrow?**

Another fascinating line of research explores empirically the endogeneity of religious mobilization. Recent work suggests that under certain circumstances, religious preferences are not just activated but created by political operatives defining a constituency. For instance, Margolis (2018a) argues that in the United States, individual choice in religion is driven by a marketplace of religious

entrepreneurs who signal their political identity in religious practice and to which the politically like-minded respond. In other words, individual religious preferences follow political preferences (Campbell et al. 2018; Margolis 2017, 2018a, b). Others suggest more of an endogenous sorting mechanism at work in US politics. Political parties pick up religious platforms, which, in turn, induce constituency sorting into blocks that are increasingly polarized on multiple identity dimensions including religion (Mason 2018). Further exploration of the origin of politically mobilized religious preferences across contexts is sure to elucidate and uncover additional nuances in the direction and content of the causal arrow between religion and mobilization.

### **Gender, Religion, and Issues of Private Versus Public Life**

Another area where additional rigorous work can be done by political scientists is on the intersection of gender studies and religious mobilization. As scholars of the sociology of religion note, faith provides gendered languages and customs that define roles for women in society (Stark and Finke 2000). Furthermore, some argue that there are gender differences in religiosity, with women on average being more religious with possible consequences for political preferences (Miller and Stark 2002; Pew Research Center 2016; Stark 2002). Teele (2018), for example, notes that women's enfranchisement in France was hindered, partially, by the perception of leftist politicians that women's votes were conservative and religious. The role of women in conflict has also been understudied, particularly in religious or ethnically divided conflict (Sales 1997, p. 4).

A growing policy concern about women's rights and public forms of religious expression (Reilly and Scrivner 2014) highlights the importance of research on the intersection of religion and gender. Recent examples include public display of religious symbols such as the hijab (Rosenberger and Sauer 2012) but extend to a broader debate about issues such as individual autonomy, abortion, use of contraceptives, education, and political participation.

### **The Empirical Analysis of Religion and Mobilization**

A final trend, more than direction, that we see as particularly fruitful is the increase in available data for analysis of the various aspects of religion and mobilization. For example, nearly a decade ago, Fox (2012, 2016a) began to compile information on religious freedoms and restrictions across the world. Basedau et al. (2016, 2011b) code ethnic groups for religion in Africa to analyze the effect of ethnoreligious segmentation on conflict outcomes. Other scholars have constructed and examined national-level indicators of shared cultural characteristics including religion (Selway 2011) code, the religion of conflict participants (Lindberg 2008), and their motivation (Svensson 2007; Svensson and Nilsson 2018). A forthcoming dataset A-Religion codes the religion of all socially relevant ethnic groups in the AMAR data

(Birmir et al. forthcoming). Furthermore, a brief survey of datasets held by the Association of the Religion Data Archives, at (<http://www.thearda.com/>), shows that multiple datasets depict religious populations and their attributes such as population size (Brown and James 2018; Hackett and Stonawski 2017) and religious practices within countries across the globe. In sum, in recent years, we have experienced an explosion in the availability of public data touching on the various aspects of religion, and we hope this trend continues.

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## Conclusion

In this chapter we sought to synthesize theories of religion as they pertain to mobilization. We traced two divergent paths of literature: the first suggesting that religious identity is used strategically as an instrument for mobilization and, the second, arguing that theology is a mobilizing mechanism. We suggest that the literature currently converges on the idea that while religious belief can be sincere and theology can drive individual preferences, true belief does not exclude the use of religion as a tool for mobilization.

Work on religious belief in politics has pertinent implications for current issues in politics across the globe, including renewed nationalism in countries with higher than average incomes, augmented democratization in countries with lower than average incomes, and the rise of conflicts fought in the name of defending one's faith. In addition to the wealth of knowledge that has been accumulated already, we highlighted four areas where researchers can dive deeper into questions of faith and mobilization with a final note about the promising accumulation of data for the analysis of religion in politics. Further inquiry into this topic will continue to be of great importance.

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## Cross-References

- ▶ [Ethnic Conflicts and Peace-Building](#)
- ▶ [Evolution of Palestinian Civil Society and the Role of Nationalism, Occupation, and Religion](#)
- ▶ [Identity and Conflict in Northern Ireland](#)

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