Theological Crucibles: Social Movments

in and of Religion

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By their nature, religious organizations are deeply involved with theological and ideological beliefs about the relation of individuals and groups to each other, to society, and to the good and just life. Changes in belief systems in the larger society are bound to enter the internal life of denominations, and, in turn, beliefs developed within religious organizations become the basis for action in the larger society.

This paper examines the social movement and political processes that are the carriers through which changes in beliefs are implemented. First, we examine the relation of the rise and fall of classes and groups in a world economy to social movements. Then, building upon a general framework for the analysis of social movements in organizations, we discuss the causes and forms of different kinds of social movements in denominations. The focus is upon mass movements and small scale insurrections in different church polities. Religious denominations evidence a variety of political structures and processes and are especially suitable sites for this kind of analysis.

It is with a great deal of humility that I deliver this lecture. As a young assistant professor at the University of Chicago, I began a study of the YMCA, the Young Men's Christian Association. Early in that study, as I tried to understand that quintessential interdenominational Protestant organization, its ties to mainline Protestantism, and its evolution over time, I came across and was impressed with the work of H. Paul Douglass. I am honored to be asked to deliver this lecture in his memory.

I am honored in yet another way. I have never thought of myself as a sociologist of religion or as a student of religious organizations. My major interests related to this topic have been in the sociology of organizations and of social movements. Yet, during my 13 year tenure at Vanderbilt University I was lucky to have a number of doctoral students, usually ex-ministers or ex-ministry students, who had deep commitments to the study of religious organizations. To O. Kendall White, Kenneth Westhues, Hart Nelsen, Robert Adams, Dean Bolden, and—especially—James R. Wood, I owe what little knowledge I have of religious organizations. I also owe them and others, such as Peter Takayama and Ross Scherer, a theoretical scholar's special debt. There is a great intergenerational chain in scholarship—the beginner steps off from the evidence and ideas of his progenitors and puts forth his own ideas and research. One owes a great deal to one's progenitors, but it is a marvelous feeling to know that one's work has been useful to the next generation and to peers as they attempt

to understand and grapple with their central intellectual concerns. So, to that group of students and peers, many of whom have done significant work in the area of this paper, thank you.

INTRODUCTION

Pick up the "religion page" of any metropolitan newspaper. Alongside reports of ministers departing and arriving, of church socials, of special services, of new buildings constructed or planned will be reports of stands of churches on controversial topics. There will be reports of resolutions voted upon in national assemblies to begin unilateral disarmament. There will be reports of contests among Southern Baptists over the election of a controversial president. There may be reports of church funding of guerrillas in Latin America or Africa, of fights over gay ministers or female ministers. There may be discussion of conservative schismatic movements in the Catholic Church. For several years, we cannot have avoided knowing that the Catholic Church in Poland has been at the same time a major institutional base of nationalistic dissent *and* a moderating force on that dissent, attempting to avoid the consequences of excess that would lead to a ferocious attack by the Russian Bear. For several years, we in the West were at first surprised, then awed, then chagrined by the ability of Islam in Iran to lead a revolution, seize control, and humiliate the United States. Over a longer period of time we would have had to notice a strange reversal. Anyone observing the Catholic church in Latin America in the early 1950s would have seen it as a bastion of support for the established order. By the 1980s it is so identified with support of the peasants that bishops are marked for assassination while they celebrate the daily mass.

During this time frame—the period 1950-1980—sociology in general would have had a strangely bemused relation to the study of things religious. On the one hand, many of the most interesting early concepts and works in sociology were preoccupied with religious topics, and the value of sociology could be shown in its ability to explicate exotic processes—from Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* to the studies of the church-sect process by Troeltsch, Weber, Wachs, and H. Richard Niebuhr. On the other hand, the sociology of religion seemed to be essentially anachronistic in an increasingly secularized society. If, as many sociologists and others believed, science, technology, and modernism led to both the death of God and a decline in church attendance, why study a declining institution and belief set? The events of world and of American politics surely indicate the strength of religious-related institutions. Moreover, national and international politics aside, into the vessels of religions and the religious have been poured competing and contrasting wines of cultural and moral aspiration. Just as sociologists have been led by events to recognize the endurance of ethnic and racial cleavages, so too have they been forced to rethink the endurance and viability of religious institutions. Understanding the dynamics of change in religious organizations and the interplay of religion and religious change with the

larger society is a prime topic—both for scholarly and policy-related purposes.

This paper will proceed at two distinct, though intertwined, levels. First, we will discuss the interplay of religion-based movements and social and political change. In particular, we are interested in the relation of religious organizations and personnel to changing class, intergroup, and international relations. We will attempt to link a schema that argues how religious movements are tied to the global capitalist economy to what is called the resource mobilization theory of social movements. Second, in the major part of the paper, we will turn inward, examining the forces that create social movements and political conflict *within* religious organizations.

You will have noticed that the "newspaper list" with which I began included examples of religious bodies attempting to affect national and international politics, and I also included cases of conflict and social movements within churches. While the two kinds of phenomena are at different levels of analysis, they are interrelated. Stated differently, and with concrete examples, the movement within specific churches concerned with biblical inerrancy is related to the election of Ronald Reagan; the attempt to modernize Islam in Iran, which occurred for more than a decade prior to the Shah's overthrow, relates to his downfall (Alidoost, 1980); the spread of feminism in America is part of the explanation of the conflicts within churches over the ordination of women; reactions to modernism vary in Protestant and Catholic churches, but they are both connected to social change and reactions to change in the societies in which these churches are embedded. The analytical thrust of the two sections is somewhat different—the first discusses religion and churches as actors in the larger society, the second explains variation within religious organizations in the size and location of social movements and the response of denominations to these internal social movements. We will examine just how they are related in the conclusion.

GLOBAL (DIS)ORDER, RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

In the last decade, Wendell Wilkie's catch phrase of the 1940s, "one world," has become the cornerstone of historical-sociological analysis. The key question has become how classes and nations relate to the global growth and transformation of capitalism, industries, and political systems. In the works of Immanuel Wallerstein, Samir Amin, Andre Gunder Frank, and others, local social structures, class relations, and encompassing broader political forms are treated as intertwined with systemic properties of the spread of capitalism, competition among rising and falling centers, and the continuing transformation of capitalism itself. If one examines an even broader reach of history (precapitalism) it would be clear that the rise and fall of empires and the centralization and fragmentation of polities has continuing effects upon local groups, the strength and nature of their religions.

World systems theory argues that "core" nations, those that dominate and lead capitalist world production, have a different internal social structure than peripheral or semiperipheral societies, those that are caught up in trade or resource extraction with core nations, but which are weak and "backward" in relation to the core. Moreover, the politics and processes within the core nations spill over, have effects exported that impact on the periphery. Immigration policy, customs, licensing arrangements, industrial development—all relate to position in a world economy. Of course, at a later point in time, the periphery may become the center (the U.S.A.). Holland, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire were core nations at one point in time; Britain, France, and Germany at another; the United States and Japan joined the center at a later point.

Robert Wuthnow (1980) has recently attempted to show how a seemingly discrete group of religious phenomena can be understood or ordered in terms of their linkage to global processes. I cannot do justice to his provocative and rich analysis in this brief space, but let me touch upon the highlights of his approach. He discusses the following forms of religious expression (many of which are familiar to sociologists of religion)— revitalization movements, reformation, religious militancy, counterreform, religious accommodation, and sectarianism.

Wuthnow begins from a position that well summarizes what traditional sociology of religion has had to say about the relation of social change to religion. "Groups whose lives have been intruded upon by the expanding world-economy have sought refuge in the security of religion. Rising cadres have legitimated their new status with religious creeds. Basic changes in the structure of world order have characteristically produced, and in turn have been nurtured by, exceptional outpourings of religious activity (p. 57)" While the grand statements about society and religion recognize this interdependence, most sociologists of religion treat social change at the local or national level. And they have not been able to account for the timing of religious movements. Wuthnow believes that the timing is partly related to the changing structure of the world economy, the existence of center and peripheral relations, the polarization of centers, and the amount of conflict between center and periphery. "Three kinds of periods have in particular given rise to intense religious activity: (a) Periods in which the dominant world order has expanded rapidly to the point of producing strain in the basic institutions linking together core and periphery areas; (b) periods of overt polarization and conflict between core and periphery; and (c) periods in which newly stabilized patterns of world order are being reconstituted (p. 59)." Populations, classes, and their elites have different power and rising and falling status as they stand in relation to the world order. They define their problems and shape their religious orientations, at least in part, in terms of their relation to the underlying world economy.

How does this framework help explain the specific kinds of religious expression listed above? Revitalization movements are attempts to collectively restore or reconstruct patterns of life that have been rapidly disrupted or threatened. The main varieties include nativistic movements (purifying from alien customs or persons), revivalistic movements (recreating simpler styles of life), cargo cults, millenarian movements, and messianic movements. Wuthnow notes that social disruption does not automatically lead to these movements. Natural disasters and the devastation of war, for instance, are not accompanied by revitalistic movements. Instead, Wuthnow argues, they are most likely to occur when the changing world economy leads local elites to be less integrated and dependent upon the local population. For instance, he argues that the Anabaptists emerged as the local elites (territorial landlords and city magistrates of the German states), because of their greater power and opportunities, abrogated traditional relations of peasants to the land and of contractual relations. He further argues that the diversity of vitalistic forms is related to the disparate nature of local customs and social structure and the way the expanding world economy impacts upon the local structure. "For example, revitalistic movements that stress individual salvation and piety, such as early Methodism, have been more common where individuals have been displaced from traditional groups and incorporated separately into new economic contexts. In contrast, cargo cults and nativistic movements have been more likely where whole groups have been collectively displaced, as among North American Indians (p. 62)." Moreover, the evolution of revitalization relates to the kind of expansion experienced. Where commercial expansion has been accompanied by settlement colonies, revitalization movements have tended to be short-lived because of the reorganization or extinction of native populations. Where expansion has occurred through the incorporation of domestic lower classes into new occupational roles, these movements have generally evolved into established religious organizations.

Wuthnow argues that there have been three major ideological reformations since the inception of the modern world order: the Protestant Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the growth of Marxism. Each institutionalized a fundamental redefinition of ultimate reality. He argues that each of these reformations has been carried by rising elites in peripheral areas during periods of rapid expansion in the world system. The distinctive ideological coherence of each global reformation inhered in its opposition to the sacred assumptions underlying the prevailing world order—Church as harlot, mercantilist protection as inimical to national wealth, bourgeois culture as false consciousness.

I could continue with Wuthnow's argument: for instance, he argues that counterreformations occur among institutional representatives in core areas undergoing polarization; religious militancy occurs in peripheral areas when the core powers are weakened and unable to crush these revolutionary organizational forms; religious accommodation occurs where a new order is being institutionalized; and sectarianism where a group's powers are declining in relation to a newly institutionalized world order. His analysis is provocative and in the main quite convincing. But I want to turn to a level of analysis that is compatible with his and, indeed, is treated in passing in his analysis but is not treated very systematically— the organization and mobilization of groups.

Let me state the issue starkly: Two societies or groups equally impacted by expanding cores will differ in their response depending upon the structure of local associations and institutions. Thus the mobilization and spread of cargo cults, for instance, depends not only on the amount of disruption (the grievance base) but also upon the associational forms in those societies and their interlinkage and capacity for mobilization. To give another example, the fundamentalist reaction to modernism has been around for some time. For most of the last century it would have been treated as a sectarian response of marginal and impoverished groups. It takes on a militancy and an attack on the larger society only as technological changes occur (e.g., the growth of the electronic church, the rise of mass mailing campaigns), and as resource bases expand (e.g., the increasing affluence of Sun Belt communities). A resource mobilization approach should be helpful in understanding both the growth of religious movements *and* the use of religious organization and resources in the political process.

What do I mean by a resource mobilization (RM) approach to these issues? The RM perspective has emerged in recent years as a major alternative to traditional collective behavior and deprivation or grievance-oriented approaches to the study of collective action. Major contributors are Tilly, McCarthy and Zald, Salisbury, Olson, and Oberschall. It does not deny that grievances exist, that actors with grievances can be mobilized into social movements. RM does argue that a focus upon grievances has often led scholars to miss the central social processes that help create and sustain social movements. Its central tenets can be stated as a series of assumptions and propositions.

1. Participants in social movement activity do not blindly react to deprivations. They weigh the costs and benefits of participation, at least to some degree. Some of the costs include the time and money that must be spent in this activity, as contrasted with other potential uses of time and money. Other costs come from negative social control—governmental and nongovernmental repression, social sanctions for being seen as a "deviant" or "troublemaker." Benefits include social support and the possibilities of attaining status and careers through participation.

2. Social movements are plagued with what economists call "the collective goods" problems (Olson, 1968). In a nutshell, since the social movement often works for changes in laws that will affect or apply to everyone in a group or category, individuals will benefit whether or not they bear the costs of participating. (This is called the free-rider problem.) Small groups overcome the free-rider problem by using social control mechanisms. Groups may also use selective incentives to motivate participation. They may draw members into participation by offering social rewards (e.g., friendship with like-minded people and avocational benefits, as in the Sierra Club) or economic benefits aimed at individuals, such as inexpensive insurance or wholesale goods. (For instance, in the nineteenth century, the Mormons recruited members in Denmark by offering cheap passage and help in getting established in the United States.)

3. Several kinds of resources must be mobilized: time, money, facilities (meeting places, mimeograph machines), and access to media. Groups differ in their control of these resources. Resources may be obtained from "conscience constituents" or other parties who believe or support the cause. White college students with discretionary time (they do not have to support a family or show up in class) can help save the whales or support the black cause.

4. The mobilization of resources requires knowledge. Social movement activities are social—they are based upon learned techniques and tactics of acting together. Thus, groups with prior experience of collective action, with an infrastructure of social relations that are mobilized for other purposes, can be more easily mobilized for social movement activities than groups or populations without such networks. Infrastructures reduce the cost of mobilization. (It should be noted that the infrastructures may not be available for just any purpose. There may be gatekeepers who must be convinced of the legitimacy of use.)

Moreover, prior experience increases the repertoire of social movement tactics. Nonviolence as a philosophy has to be translated into behaviors to cope with police who are beating you on the head and taking you to jail. Repertoires can be innovated, but prior experience eases their use. (As an aside, do Soviet dissidents teach each other how to smuggle manuscripts out of the Soviet Union?)

5. Finally, a differentiated social structure, with organizations offering rewards and career paths to cadre and leaders, raises the possibility of social movement careers and career options. People with equal ideological commitment vary in the costs and benefits of acting upon those commitments. Ministers have much discretionary time and have easy access to media and potential followers. Once a religious chooses an evangelistic or political definition of his religious commitment, as contrasted with a pietistic or pastoral commitment, his professional career is congruent with social movement entrepreneurship. The black schoolteacher or funeral undertaker may feel the injustice of the larger society equally to the black minister. The schoolteacher may be punished by the white community and the undertaker lacks access to a large audience, but the minister may be relatively insulated from immediate white pressure (short of violence) and still have access to an audience.

Now, how does all this help expand Wuthnow's analysis? Remember, Wuthnow essentially argues that it is the position of groups and classes and communities in the world political economy that shapes the rise and fall of religious movements. I am arguing that not only position in the world economy, but also the internal structure of these groups conditions the social movement potentiality. Without going into great detail, let me suggest a number of guidelines (actually hypotheses) that may aid us.

1. Disruptions of peripheral groups will not automatically lead to revitalistic movements. Instead, the response of these groups will depend upon their internal social structure, the forms of their religious-political integration, their vertical linkages to the larger social structure, and the social control strategies of the expanding dominant powers. Oberschall

(1973) has proposed a typology of vertical and horizontal linkages among groups that helps interpret these relations. Carroll's (1975) provocative quantitative study of the Buffalo dances, a nineteenth-century American Indian revivalistic movement, stresses the role of deprivation and community integration in understanding this movement. Landesman (1979) adds to his analysis the role of government land allotment policies, which served to break up community solidarity, as another relevant variable.

2. Religious organizations provide an infrastructure for later social movement activity. They do this in several ways. First, they provide a repertoire of skills and a protected social structure, so that when a larger political ideology and movement impinge upon the group, the religious organizations and personnel can easily be mobilized. E. J. Hobsbawm (1959) has described how the Primitive Methodists became major training grounds and facilitators of labor radicalism in proletarian villages in England, Scotland, and Wales. The Primitive Methodists downplayed the role of formal training for the ministry. Their chapels encouraged members to become preachers and to take leadership in encouraging others to convert. (A third of the members might preach in their own chapel and work to convert others and preach elsewhere.) Second, religious participation creates networks of relations and similarities of perception that help unify later behavior.

A third way that religious organizations may affect the readiness to participate in political social movements is more indirect. Participation and religious fervor at one point in time leaves traditions and memories of revolt. Hobsbawm shows that southern Italian villages differed in their readiness to accept communist organizers after the Second World War. One factor that separated villages was whether they had had prior experience with millenarian movements. Where, for instance, the Lazarreti had been strong, the communists were seen as their successors. Paige (1975) notes that the areas of high revolt potential in the early stages of the Vietnam insurgency were areas where sectarian activity had been high in the 1930s. (Paige largely treats this as suggesting something in the nature of capitalist-colonial penetration, but the possibility that the earlier sect created traditions of revolt is not excluded.)

3. Religious organizations provide key discretionary resources to social movements. Discretionary resources are those resources that may be easily shifted from one use to another: e.g., the time and effort of students or adults who do not have to account for their use of time, money that is not committed to specific usages, and so on. In Chicago, Alinsky-type communal defense organizations have the most staying power where the Catholic church has provided a base. The commitment of a local pastor to community defense is vital. The civil rights movement was heavily dependent upon black ministers and black students. What is less well-known is that some black churches, what are called university churches, were crucial to their mobilization. Aldon Morris (1980) has shown how these churches near black campuses provided key ministerial and student leadership. Moreover, the ministers were linked to each other across cities.

4. Transformation of theology and ideology provide a base for *justifying* social movement activity. The movement for abolition of slavery was related to the revivalistic movement of the early part of the nineteenth century. Revivalism changed the *meaning* of souls and salvation. Not only did the burnt-over districts have more pro-abolitionist support, but evangelists and theologians were led to change their conception of right action. Religion may be the opiate of the masses under some conditions, but under other conditions it serves as a sword for assassination. The transformation of the role of the Catholic church in Latin America and the role of Islam in Iran can only be understood by attention to these changes in theological justifications. And, on the other hand, it is only by seeing these transformations of ideology and theology in historical context that we can understand the deeply intertwined roots of this theological and social change.

My more general point, however, is that a marriage of resource mobilization theory with world systems analysis of the type proposed by Wuthnow will allow us to fine-tune our understanding of the rise of major religious movements. World and national events impinge upon local social structures and institutions, but these local social structures themselves vary in their potential for facilitating religious movements.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION

To this point I have glossed over the conflict within religions that occurs when they mobilize to change the society or to change religion. I have, for instance, treated the transformation of theology in the Catholic church and in Islam as a bodiless and bloodless phenomenon, the emergence of the civil rights movement in the black church as a kind of painless new consensus. Even the most cursory examination of church history leads us to be aware that these changes have been accompanied by bitter struggles. Church authorities may lead the battle for new definitions but may be resisted by traditionalists; heresy trials may occur, though the heretics become the progenitors of ideas accepted a generation later; schisms occur; authorities may repress and banish dissidents. How are we to understand and analyze these internal conflicts?

There is in fact a substantial body of literature that deals with these issues, especially in Protestant denominations. Sociologists of religion, such as Jeffrey Hadden, James R. Wood, and Peter Takayama, have examined conflict in Protestant denominations, especially as it has related to policies related to racial integration and to civil rights issues. Numerous histories can be found that deal with conflict within churches. Robert Adams (1970) has written an impressive, though largely unknown, dissertation on heresy trials in American Protestant seminaries. Here I will summarize an organizational model for understanding conflict in religious organizations. I will then review an approach I have developed for social movements in organizations in general and draw out its implications for the study of social movements in religious organizations. Finally, I will indicate what are to me some of the most pressing issues in the study of these social movements.

Organizational Theory and Conflict in Churches

There are many competing theories or approaches to the study of organizations. Organizations can be thought of as closed, optimizing systems (what is sometimes called the machine model of organizations); they can be thought of in cybernetic terms, as coordinating devices for the attainment of human potential or as barriers to self-actualization, as bureaucracies or as approximating the Weberian bureaucratic ideal-type. Each of these approaches will help us understand something about organizations. What my colleague, Gayl Ness, calls the central process of the last century, the long march of the bureaucrats—as governmental and private organizations developed offices, administration of routine function, record keeping, and limited discretion—obviously has affected churches as forms of organization. The growth of central records, of church pension programs, of publishing houses, of staff professionals dealing with everything from church architecture and fund raising, to Sunday school administration, curriculum planning, and on and on, obviously presents a source of strain between amateur and professional, between local autonomy and central authority.

Yet none of these models or approaches, it seems to me, is as powerful in explaining and understanding church conflict as the open or natural-system model of organizations, which sees the organization as a bounded group of individuals, harnessed together by incentives and commitments to a relatively small set of goals (some of which may be conflicting), yet open to new pressures from the environment as it both obtains resources and inputs to that environment and attempts to affect its constituent parts and its environment. *Now,* one could write a textbook expanding that sentence, explaining each term and drawing out its implications. My own approach to organizations, the political economy approach which is a variant of open-systems models, focuses upon what I consider the jugular veins of organizational structure and process.

Very schematically, the political-economy approach examines the governance-control structures and problems and the task-production system of organizations. Organizations may be analyzed in terms of their external political connections and problems, the gaining of legitimation and support of authorities and external power centers, and their external economic structures and processes—labor markets, financial resource flows, competitive markets, and so on. Internally, organizations vary in their constitutions, power structures, processes of succession, and mechanisms of control (budgets, decision centers, and so on). They also vary in their internal economies, technologies, division of labor, and problems of transforming raw materials. (Zald, 1970 a, b; Wamsley and Zald, 1973, 1976).

Peter Takayama and James R. Wood have used open-system theory and their own versions of political economy to analyze conflict, rebellion, and authority response in the face of conflict in Protestant denominations. (See Wood and Zald, 1967; Wood, 1970; Takayama, 1980, 1978, 1979.) What variables have emerged as central in this account?

1. *Congregational versus Episcopal or Presbyterian polity structure.*

Essentially a measure of the centralization or dispersion of control and power in religious organizations, it is not a very subtle measure; for many detailed purposes of understanding church polity, it misses the relations of specific church bodies and processes. Yet, for many comparative analyses, it is extremely robust. It includes a number of more specific dimensions of church polity—the authoritative control of church buildings, the appointment of ministers, the readiness to follow central authority policy decisions, the self-perceived power of church authorities to act on their own, and so on. The whole issue of policy choice differs between Congregational and Episcopal churches. When the central bodies of Episcopal churches make a choice, it commits the constituents. Not so in Congregational.

2. *Autonomy-Vulnerability.* Denominations and churches develop many differentiated agencies. Unlike a division of a business corporation, which is fully disposable by the corporate board, these differentiated agencies have complex constitutional linkages to the larger church or denomination. The Society of Jesus is part of the Roman Catholic Church but has had great autonomy over long periods of time. The Lutheran seminary run by the Missouri Lutheran Synod, on the other hand, was vulnerable to the intervention of the Synod's president, Mr. Preus. Autonomy-vulnerability is affected by funding sources, by buffering mechanisms in the selection of personnel and in the review of organizational performance, and by the visibility-invisibility of agency production.

3. *Incentive Balances.* Every organization varies in its mix of incentives. Church organizations may offer material incentives (wages, business contacts), but fundamentally they use purposive and solidary (communal) incentives. Purposive includes moral incentives and social redemption and change; the incentive is to achieve right living. Solidary incentives include the social and communal sense of associating with similar-minded people. These incentives cluster at different social locations. Professionals and deeply committed cadres are most likely to be motivated by purposive incentives (and material necessities): solidary incentives are more likely to dominate laymen in local congregations. The matter is obviously more complicated than this, but an understanding of incentive balances is important for understanding why conflict takes place, who initiates it, the process of dealing with it, and the direction of outcomes.

Since solidary incentives are so important in maintaining member commitment, especially in Protestant denominations, there is a temptation for ministers in local congregations to avoid conflict if they believe there is dissensus or heterogeneity in relation to the issue. The issue of homogeneity and heterogeneity is important *within* congregations in understanding church conflict at the local level and *between* congregations at the denominational or pan-congregation level. In particular, and most dramatically, those denominations that spanned regions, North and South, have faced tremendous conflict, whenever abolitionist or civil rights-related issues have emerged and penetrated the churches. The history of conflict over race-related matters in the period from the late 1950s to the early

1970s is awesomely foreshadowed in the history of some of these same denominations or their predecessors in the period 1840-1860.

4. *Environmental Relations.* Church conflict relates to environmental factors in at least two different ways. First, conflict in the larger society and concern about various aspects of social change is imported into the organization through the interests or value preferences of lay members and professional staff. To the extent that the religious organization is not sealed off from the larger society through insulating ethnic and communal structures, it is difficult for the church to avoid becoming embroiled. Feminists, for instance, have imported the concerns of their movement into a number of churches. (See White [1981] on the feminist movement in the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints.) As parts of moral and ideological organizations par excellence, members and staff can easily justify organizational involvement in the issues of the day (unlike members of a bowling club or the staff of a dry cleaner, for instance). Environmental relations also affect internal church politics through interorganizational relations. Denominations sometimes join interdenominational organizations. The grounds for joining may be theological, ecumenical, or more purely practical (e.g., the need for economies of scale and the benefits of coordination in everything from pension management to missionary activities). But once joined, the actions of the coalition partner, the interdenominational organization, filter back and commit the denomination to activities it might not have desired, which in turn creates internal conflict. When the World Council of Churches established a program to "relate" to guerrillas in Namibia, Protestant denominations in the South and elsewhere found themselves funding what they considered an abomination.

Much of the above discussion is based on the work of Wood and Takayama, ties back to an open systems-political economy model of organizations, and is based upon systematic evidence from both case studies and comparative research. We now know a great deal about conflict in Protestant denominations, about the conditions for schism, and so on. But I have not explored the variables systematically. Stated another way, I have introduced important independent variables, but I have not explicated the forms of conflict, the social movement process, in a systematic manner. There are many forms of social movement phenomena in organizations. They range from coup d'etat and small insurgencies to mass insurrection and organizational civil war. In recent years I have been devoting time to a specific aspect of the more general political economy model—that of social movements in organizations. Let me describe it briefly and then apply it to movements in religious organizations.

Social Movements in Organizations: The Analogy to the Larger Society

Students of social movements in society have used a variety of labels and dimensions to differentiate them. It is obvious that a general strike, closing down all services and industries, is different from a wildcat strike in one plant. It differs in the number of participants, the amount of coordination and organization required, its likely duration, and so on. A major part of social movement analysis concerns its *scope.* Three common

dimensions are (1) breadth, or number of participants; (2) duration, or length of time participants are engaged in the action; and (3) intensity, the severity-cost of the collective actions. It is obvious that each of these can vary somewhat independently and is itself more complex. The number of participants can go up and down; duration can consist of one long collective action or more sporadic events (contrast a plant that has many short, wildcat strikes with one that has one long authorized strike); intensity can include acts of violence and property and personal destruction, or it can be restricted to symbolic acts—carrying signs.

Social movements differ in their *location* in the social structure. People lower in the stratification system have different resources and are mobilizable by different tactics. A middle-class pressure group differs from a working-class group in its access to authorities, in the financial resources it controls, in the stock of tactics that it commands. And a lumpenproletariat group will differ from a working class group in its forms of social organizations, tactics, and resources.

Finally, collective actions differ in their goals—are the members or cadre out to revolutionize the system, to effect a massive transfer of power and transformation of the total system? Or are the goals merely to change one specific policy of the society, say, the import duties on silk stockings? Or, the goals may be less specific, yet fall short of calling for a total transformation. The goals may call for the transformation of one sector of policy (reform of Income tax law) or a changing relation for one group (the transformation of how blacks or Native Americans are treated).

It should be apparent that this same range of social movement activity in the larger society is found also in organizations. Some conflicts in organizations consist of small-scale insurrections, as when a small number of members of a denomination press for a change in the prayers that are used; others lead to mass insurrections, when early attempts to change major policy become organizational civil wars and end in schisms. Likewise, there may be attempted coup d'etats against the head of a seminary or some other chief executive.

Michael Berger and I (1978) have attempted to develop this analogy systematically. In that paper we were thinking about organizations in general; that is, we thought it applied as well to social movement-like phenomena in universities, business corporations, unions, churches, public bureaucracies, voluntary associations, and so on. Not that we believe that every organization has exactly similar processes. Quite the contrary; broad differences in authority structure, in incentives, and in size will lead to different rates and forms of social movements in different kinds of organizations. For instance, business corporations are more likely to have a coup d'etat than organizations with democratic polities. Corporations are hierarchical and chief executives can eliminate dissidents if the dissidents make themselves too openly known. You do not have coup attempts in universities because the subordinates, the professors, have tenure and feel less threatened by reprisals. There are cases where professors have signed petitions to ask for the removal of a president. On the other hand, in the one case I know of where senior executives tried to petition for the removal of a corporation president, he fought back and forced several of

them to resign. (Among other things, he threatened to cut off their pension benefits.)

Our overall analysis was summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN ORGANIZATIONS

Dimensions	Movement Type		
	Organization Coups	Bureaucratic Insurgency	Mass Movements
Breadth	Small conspiratorial group	Medium size enclave or one whistleblower	Large Group
Goal	Succession which may or may not lead to future change	Challenging the efficacy of existing norms to effect moderate organizational change	Expressing discontent and promoting or resisting narrow or broad goals
Main tactics	Infiltration and persuasion (i.e., using CEO's own record against him)	Violating rules and procedures without violence	Direct confrontation and possible violence
Activists' location in the organization's social structure	Organization elite	Middle managers and professionals	Lower-level Participants
Linkage with external elements	A few key supporters, usually banking interests or key board members	Several important supporters beyond finincial interests alone	Elaborate linkages of ideological and material support from society
Duration of overt conflict	Conspiracy may brew over long period; actual coup very brief	Varies, can last several years, depending on how long the organization can stand the non-conformity	Varies, from a day to several months, depending on how long the organization can stand the disruption and the extent to which movement's members can mobilize for the conflict

A couple of comments are in order before I attempt to draw more explicit implications for social movements in religious organizations. First, a major dimension of analysis has to be the power-sanctions balance of authorities vis-a-vis the dissidents. If the authorities can easily expel or fire members, then the subordinates will be wary of participating in collective actions. Moreover, less dramatic sanctions may be available. Second, organizations exist within society, and there may be many resources

controlled by external groups that will be appealed to by both authorities and subordinates. The courts and justice system may allocate police power to one side or the other, stockholders may be appealed to, the media may bring community pressures to bear. Finally, we must remember that social movements in a single organization may be part of broader social movements, generated as much by conditions and change in the larger society as by events in the organization under study. Workers may be protesting what this one company is doing, but they may also be part of a large attempt to transform industrial society; students may be protesting the food in the dormitory, or they may be part of the antiwar movement. Women may be protesting the sexist policies of a given church, but they may be part of a broader feminist movement. The extent to which the movement is part of a larger movement affects the nature of the battle, the resources available, tactics, options, and so on.

What are some of the most pervasive forms of social movement-like conflicts in religious organizations? I want to discuss three: coup d'etat and succession conflicts, heresy and insurrections, and schisms.

Coups and Succession Processes. Organizations, like states, develop institutionalized succession systems. These systems reflect constitutional norms or realities about the institutionalization of power and rights to participate in the choosing of key officers. There are three aspects of succession and removal that may develop social movement-like phenomena around them—(1) the system for selection and removal, (2) criteria for officeholding, and (3) specific incumbents.

(1) Succession systems institutionalize powerful actors and groups' conceptions of right choice. The institutionalized system may be modified by later generations on an incremental basis, reflecting new perceptions of rights; or, the old system may be radically changed in the midst of large scale mobilization (note what a radical event was the holding of secret ballots in Poland in the summer of 1981). Sects closely tied to charismatic founders will often assume the right of the founder to name his own successor. If he or she does not, the succession period becomes open to factionalized fighting among senior officers of the sect. Even if the charismatic leader does name a successor, later events may undo that selection. Episcopal and Presbyterian forms are likely to institutionalize some system of elite selection, through a council of bishops or a council of elders. Congregational forms are more likely to institutionalize some wider voting system.

During depoliticized periods, the normal politics of succession lead to little debate over rules of succession and, even in congregational forms, a routine succession process with little conflict. I suspect that congregational churches, like professional associations, often turn the selection process over to nominating committees that scan a small list of eligibles and present one or two names for the delegates to choose from. Most voluntary associations assume consensus and do not institutionalize interest groups and party systems. However, if one group begins to believe that its interests are not represented, caucuses may be formed to coordinate action.

Movements to change the rules of selection usually follow long periods of growth or change, in which some parties believe that the current system leaves no room in the system for the expression of their interests. I would expect movements to expand the Council of Bishops, or to change the degree of openness of their deliberations, to have been preceded by long periods of discontent.

Movements to change succession systems are likely to be elite or cadre movements. The mass of members, even if highly committed, are unlikely to be aware of the consequences of the succession system. In an organization I studied, the YMCA of Chicago, the change of succession systems was instigated by the General Secretary and the President of the Board when they felt that the old system would have led a small group of influential board members to dominate the selection process and, I should add, choose a candidate they did not favor.

(2) The criteria for office may be formal or informal. Remember that it is only 20 years since the informal criteria in America said that no Catholic could be elected President. Officeholding criteria include age, sex, race, prior organizational experience, recent relation to the organization, and doctrinal affirmation. The formal criteria act to exclude large numbers of people who are not "first class" citizens of the organization: the informal criteria reflect the realities of power, prejudice, and performance experience. Usually, changing the formal criteria of succession requires a fairly extensive political mobilization. Although I have not seen a systematic study of the matter, I would suspect wide variation among Protestant groups in their willingness to include women as ministers or high officers. The more traditional role proscriptions for women have been theologically justified, and the less liberal the constituency of the organization, the slower the change. (Incidentally, one measure of the radical nature of the Primitive Methodists discussed by Hobsbawm was their readiness in the mid-nineteenth century to have women preachers.)

(3) In depoliticized periods the choice of a successor involves a review of a small pool of eligibles and a search for "the right candidate," the one who can accomplish the immediate organizational task to be done, or the task created by changing conditions perceived by the elite. But if the normal process throws up candidates unacceptable to important groups, then the choice period may call forth efforts to change the selection system, at least for that one period. That politicization of selection then serves as a signal to both the selected officeholder and to others, of the strength of sentiment related to the dimension of contest.

Heresy and Insurrections. In any organization, single individuals or small groups may attack policies or practices. They may intend to disobey or disagree, they may intend to change the organization. The disobedience or disagreement may be a conspiratorial act and remain at the level of the conspiracy if authorities do not know of it. If conspirators succeed in achieving their ends before authorities become aware, we may have a conspiratorial fait-accompli. On the other hand, if authorities become aware of the disagreement or disobedience, then they may take steps to eliminate the behavior. In still other cases, authorities may welcome or

at least accept the disagreement, yet oppose the insurgency. There is not a hard and fast line between insurgencies and mass movements. It depends upon the number of people involved and the breadth of change demanded. An insurgency might be an attempt to change the prayer book used, and a mass movement might grow out of such an insurgency if participants also decided to attack the basis of creedal affirmation.

On the other side, an act of disobedience or heresy becomes an insurrection or mass movement as others, inside or outside of the organization, join the battle and support the heretic. What starts as an attempt to sanction one deviant ends as a schism.

One of the most interesting features of insurgencies and heresies in religious organizations is that they may involve creeds related to organizational structure and church authority as well as substantive theological issues. Since the church structure is not a dispensable tool, as in many organizations, but itself takes part of the sacred, its theologically justified conflicts over office performance and structure take on an intensity that is rarely seen in other organizations.

I do not know of many sociologically informed studies of the structure of heresy trials and insurrections. Robert Adams's fascinating dissertation examines 10 heresy trials in American Protestant seminaries. The trials were set in three kinds of seminaries—what Adams calls movement seminaries, denominational seminaries, and university seminaries. The heresy trials occurred in the context of theological change—from traditional or conservative theology to liberal and more pluralistic understandings. They also occurred in the context of a changing professionalism and scholarly orientation of the seminary. The three types of seminaries differ in their control structure and the extent to which constituents of the seminary—benefactors, board members, ministers—are buffered from the seminary and have ideologies that support pluralism and modernism. Adams's account of these conflicts largely focuses upon the changes wrought in the seminaries. A common pattern was for the accusers to win the battle and lose the war. That is, a given professor of religion might be forced out, but, five or ten years later, his ideological position was well represented at the school.

It should be apparent that there is a large historical record that can be used for more detailed analysis of heresy trials from this framework. Why do some heretics remain nameless, other heretics die at the stake but become the rallying point for later movements, and still others lead secessions in their own time?

Mass Movements and Schisms. Where an insurrectionary group feels authorities are unresponsive, it may desist and withdraw. Or it may attempt to mobilize others to support the cause. Moreover, it may broaden the cause. Schisms are dramatic, wrenching events for the participants who must cast off deep loyalties. The history of Christendom is replete with schisms. They revolve around what appear to be purely theological issues (what is the Word and its correct interpretation), they involve church organization, and they involve both of these as they apply to contemporary living and social issues. Creationism, inerrancy, the good news movement, racial integration of the church, church involvement in political

action—all of these become bases for large scale conflict, first within a church or denomination, later as movements to secession.

Note that the intensity or form of conflict has changed. Religious wars as such have declined in Christendom at least. Is that because most of Christendom exists in strong states with a monopoly of violence, or because of the changing forms of civil conduct? I suspect both.

Although each of us can cite cases of schisms and mass movements, we lack well-documented cases of the social process, sociologically informed histories, if you will. Moreover, we lack the well-designed comparative studies. Two or more denominations may both confront mass movements; why is it contained in one and schismatic in another? Polity structure, authority response, and membership distribution are explanatory variables that may be of some use.

By now, I hope to have convinced you that this sociological framework can order and help explain many conflicts and phenomena found in religious organizations. I want to close this section by commenting on some neglected topics or issues.

1. Why is American Protestantism so schism prone? Is it that the legal underpinnings of society promote the formation of new churches? Or is it that Protestantism, unlike Catholicism, does not sacralize the church as much? Catholicism certainly generates factions, but in the modern day it does not lead to group defection. Are the costs of exit too high in Catholicism (see Hirschman, 1970)?

2. How does schism and social change occur in communal religions, such as Islam or Judaism? Church structure is less bureaucratic and formal, if that is the word, in both Islam and Judaism; the nature of attachment differs, and so on. It is clear that sects and new branches develop, yet the process is different than in Protestantism. Possibly, resource mobilization and block mobilization processes are at stake. It may be that sects in Islam occur as leaders bring their followers. On the other hand, new factions in Judaism appear to involve individual conversion.

3. Finally, and related to comments made above, we just do not have the detailed historical sociologies of conflict process that are needed—the interaction of partisans and authorities over issues, the escalation and de-escalation of conflict. In other areas, say the study of community conflict and politics or the study of revolutions, a massive sociological literature has developed. Here is a field aborning.

CONCLUSIONS

Our scope has been broad. I have tried to sketch two major areas of investigation—the relation of religious change to the rise and fall of classes and the path of social movements within religious organizations. The two are interconnected in that, on the one hand, the progenitor of social movements in religious organizations may be social change in the larger society, and, on the other hand, the outcome of change within religious organizations may be ideological and institutional changes in religious organizations and religion that impinge upon the larger society. Although the two levels

of analysis are interconnected, they require independent investigation. Stated another way, the one is not reducible to the other.

There is another moral to be drawn. The study of religious transformation has much more than specialist or antiquarian interest; it is part and parcel of the major social change processes of society, deeply nested in Political process. What an opportunity awaits us!

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