A Political Science Perspective on Religious Fundamentalism

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ABSTRACT  Religious fundamentalism is a phenomenon still understudied in political science: both analytical perspectives and definitions are indeed crafted mostly for sociological, theological and philosophical analyses. Moreover, comprehensive studies of the interactions between religious fundamentalism and democracy have rarely been worked out. This paper first examines the most prominent works in the comparative literature about fundamentalism, trying to identify the main theoretical perspectives, and their usefulness for a political science research. Later, it tries to integrate this literature with mainstream literature about collective identities and social movements, in order to build a definition of religious fundamentalism which could be appropriate for research in the field of political science. Throughout the essay, examples belonging to different religious fundamentalisms are proposed, in order to clarify the theoretical issues.

Introduction

The last decades of the twentieth century witnessed the rise of religious fundamentalism throughout the world and within all major religions. However, the centrality of this phenomenon in contemporary international politics is not mirrored by the literature (especially in the political science field). Indeed, religious fundamentalism has been taken seriously into account by social scientists only several years after its emergence (the first comparative analyses were written in the late 1980s, while the first thorough collective research was the Fundamentalismand Project, whose five volumes were published between 1991 and 1995). The state of the art is today unsatisfactory, especially for a scholar analysing the phenomenon from a political science point of view and within democratic systems. The existing studies are in fact biased toward theology, philosophy and sociology: they are usually focused on problems such as the relations between fundamentalist ideologies and religious dogmas, the relation between fundamentalism and modernity, or the social composition of fundamentalist movements. Meanwhile, the relationships between fundamentalist movements, political institutions and other political actors are still mainly unexplored and roughly theorised.

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The aim of this paper is to provide a contribution to fill this gap in literature, by building a working definition of religious fundamentalism which can be suitable for political science research.

First, it will clarify the use of the concept, by dealing with the controversy about the use of the term itself, and by reviewing the main strands in the international comparative literature about fundamentalism. Later, it will argue that the collective identities perspective is potentially the most useful tool available to a political scientist for analysing religious fundamentalism and propose a definition of the phenomenon based on this theoretical point of view.

A Controversial Concept

The term fundamentalism was coined in American Protestantism, and was reportedly used for the first time in July 1920 by Curtis Lee Laws. During the previous decades the religious movement connected to the Niagara Falls conferences of the late nineteenth century had already formed an organisation named World Christian Fundamentals Association, and published a series of books entitled Fundamentals. It must be noted that the term was not intended as a pejorative: the members of the movement themselves adopted it to indicate their desire to return to the fundamentals of Christianity. However, to the external observers, especially in the secular mainstream media, ‘fundamentalist’ gradually became a synonymous with ‘fanatic’.

In the following decades, the term was thus applied only to identify a conservative faction of the US evangelicalism, without any comparative connotation. Before the Iranian revolution, only a few scholars, such as Hamilton Gibb (talking about Wahhabism and the Islamic movements of religious reawakening of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries), used this concept outside the Protestant context. After the shock experienced by the world because of the events in Iran, the term started to be used both to refer to different cultures and religions (gradually extending from Protestantism to Islam and later to other religious traditions) and with a pejorative bias. As we will see in the following paragraphs, it was only at the end of the 1980s that the term started to be adopted in academic research. More recently, there have also been attempts at introducing in academic literature the concept of ‘secular fundamentalism’, in order to describe the fanaticism of some outspoken opponents of religion in the public sphere, in contexts such as the United States and Turkey.

Today, the use of ‘fundamentalism’ in academic research is still very controversial. These are the main objections to it:

1. It belongs to the American Protestant context and cannot be applied to other religions.
2. It is conceptually flawed.
3. It is not suitable for the analysis of political phenomena because it allegedly does not carry any political meaning.
4. Its pejorative bias is too strong for an objective analysis.

About the Christian origin of the term, it is not clear why it should be a problem, per se, preventing its application to other contexts, with a thorough and solid definition. First of all, the use of ‘fundamentalism’ in cross-cultural meaning has become consolidated in the past three decades both in academic literature and in
popular media. Moreover (if this is the concern), we can easily avoid confusion with the Protestant self-defined fundamentalism by naming this latter, as Wacker suggests, ‘historic fundamentalism’.

The second point refers instead to a real methodological problem, known as the risk of ‘concepts overstretching’. a concept too specifically defined has a narrow denotation and cannot be applied to many different cases; on the other hand, to widen its denotation, we must make its connotation vaguer, which often makes the concept itself heuristically useless. In our case, some scholars choose the first option, defining for example fundamentalism in scriptural terms, and making the concept thus not applicable to religions without revealed scriptures. In contrast, the attempts (such as the Fundamentalism Project) to include in the category of fundamentalism different phenomena have often been criticised because they are reportedly more descriptive than analytic. This problem is, however, shared by most concepts used in social sciences (even basic concepts, such as ‘democracy’) and cannot be considered as a peculiar problem of the term ‘fundamentalism’.

The third of these objections can easily be dismissed, since (as we will see in detail later) the distinctive mark of fundamentalists is precisely their concern for the public sphere and the role played in it by religion, while religious communities mostly concerned about the preservation of their religious purity (such as most Jewish haredim) can be qualified as ‘traditionalists’.

The last objection, although grounded, cannot be taken into account, because doing so would mean the end of the research not only on fundamentalism, but also on every phenomenon popularly perceived as negative. Indeed, all words indicating such phenomena, as soon as they become popular, get a negative connotation: it is also the case for synonyms of ‘fundamentalism’, such as ‘integralism’, ‘zealotism’, and so on. So far, the academic community has not been able to provide researchers with a more scientific and less negatively connotated concept. Thus, researchers must use the tools that are available to them.

A further factor, which is not precisely an objection to the use of ‘fundamentalism’, but which has prevented, up to a point, the development of the studies about this phenomenon is its alleged regressive character. Fundamentalisms are in fact usually included among ‘social defence movements’, which try to oppose and resist modernity. According to renowned scholars, ‘fundamentalism’ is thus considered negatively because it is against the values of a mainly progressive academic community, which, rather than studying the phenomenon, would like to see its threat ‘evaporate, becoming a bad dream limited to the eighties, just as the civil rights movement was to the sixties’. In particular, the worldwide growth of religious fundamentalism did not fit into the hegemonic secularisation paradigm, which prescribed that religion would remain confined to the private sphere and, possibly, see its role further shrink in the future. This partly explains why the literature about fundamentalism, especially in comparative perspective, has developed much later than its object of research, and relatively slowly.

The State of the Art

Maybe the critics of the concept of fundamentalism are wrong, but surely, in the past three decades, scholars dealing with the subject in comparative perspective have done nothing to prove it: indeed, the existing literature is rather heterogeneous. The authors working in the field appear to work and write mainly alone, using their own definitions of the phenomenon of fundamentalism (and in
several cases, apparently, no definition at all) and often without reference to the available literature. In particular, empirical research has been almost exclusively devoted to single case studies, mostly without taking into account the phenomenon in comparative perspective. This part of the paper will try to systematise the past three decades of comparative literature about religious fundamentalism by identifying some clusters of works which, although usually not internally homogeneous, show the same general orientation.

THE FORERUNNERS

The first accurate comparative research about religious fundamentalism is undoubtedly *Defenders of God* by Bruce Lawrence, whose work can be considered as a milestone, first of all because he was the first scholar to openly propose and defend the comparative approach to the study of the phenomenon. He criticises James Barr’s Christianity-centred approach and ‘the eurocentric notion that fundamentalism is, by nature as well as by origin, the special preserve of Protestant Christianity’, which makes ‘most academics either avoid mention of non-Christian varieties of fundamentalism or else minimizing their importance’, and openly declares that ‘to study fundamentalism one must engage in comparative analysis’. Although Lawrence adopted a philosophical point of view, his book set the framework for research about fundamentalism in the following decades, also in the social sciences fields. Although he agrees with the traditional idea that ‘scripture [is] a crucial, defining element’, without which ‘you no longer have fundamentalism, but some other, nonreligious social movement’, he recognises the importance of factors such as charismatic leadership. Moreover, he sets the frame for the interpretation of fundamentalists’ behaviour toward modernity, pointing out that ‘fundamentalists are moderns but not modernists’. That is, on the one hand, we cannot consider fundamentalism as a traditional phenomenon; however, although fundamentalists accept the instrumental benefits of modernity, they refuse its values reorientation (in terms of relativism, pluralism, secularism, etc.). Finally, Lawrence clearly perceives the political side of the phenomenon, stating that:

fundamentalists do relate to the public sphere. They do care about political power, economic justice, and social status [...] they are reacting against a notion of intellectual hegemony as well as sociopolitical privilege. [...] They are not granted access to the circles of the dominant ruling group; they are challenging their exclusion from such echelons of power.

While Lawrence’s *Defenders of God* was the first thorough comparative essay about fundamentalism, *Studies in Religious Fundamentalism* (edited by Robert Caplan) was the first important collective work. This time the point of view is mainly anthropological, and the theoretical elaboration is rather superficial (although the editor points out that ‘the collective intent is to interrogate the possibilities for comparative insight into the notion of fundamentalism’). Caplan, more explicitly than Lawrence, defines fundamentalism as a modern phenomenon, and observes that the evidence from the different contributions is that ‘fundamentalists interact dynamically with their contemporary and social surroundings’ and are ready ‘to appreciate the advantages of [new] technologies and to adopt or adapt them to their advantage’. He also insists on the importance of scriptures (thought
by fundamentalists as ‘timeless, out-of-time, and so valid for all time’, thus implying ‘an ahistorical world-view’), and on the fundamentalist concern about reversing ‘the trend of contemporary gender relations which are seen as symptomatic of a declining moral order’.22

The view of fundamentalism as a modern phenomenon is not shared by other pioneers of the studies on the subject, mainly working in Germany. This is the case for Thomas Meyer, who interprets fundamentalism as a reaction against modernity, and also for Martin Riesebrodt, whose work Fundamentalismus als patriarchalische Protestbewegung gained a certain degree of international popularity, being translated in English.23 Riesebrodt was one of the first sociologists to address the issue in comparative perspective with an attempt at a thorough theoretical formulation. Riesebrodt defines the phenomenon in terms of ‘radical patriarchalism’, and more precisely as ‘an urban movement directed primarily against the dissolution of personalistic, patriarchal notions of order and social relations and their replacement by depersonalized principles’, caused primarily by ‘the dramatic reduction in chances of the traditionalist milieu to reproduce itself culturally under conditions of rapid urbanization, industrialization, and secularization’.24 In defining the phenomenon, the German author also addresses for the first time some methodological problems, pointing out that ‘if we define the fundamentalism concept too narrowly, to make it operable sociologically, there is danger that everyone will formulate their own definitions that no one else will follow. Conceived broadly, in correspondence with colloquial usage, it remains sociologically amorphous’.25 Riesebrodt’s proposal is a broad definition of fundamentalism with typological distinctions between ‘world-fleeing’ and ‘world-mastering’ fundamentalisms (this latter further divided into reformists and revolutionaries) and between book-centred (‘rational’) and experience-centred (‘charismatic’) ones. About the organisation of the movements, Riesebrodt also discerns between fundamentalism as a public protest movement and fundamentalism as a secret society, as in the case of small terrorist groups.26

In Italy, an early work about religious fundamentalism was Enzo Pace’s Il regime della verità (the regime of truth), published in 1990. Although this work was mainly descriptive, the author – with the colleague Renzo Guolo – further elaborated it, proposing some years later a definition of fundamentalism as following the four principles of:

- inerrancy (of the contents of sacred texts);
- ahistoricity (of the Truth and the books in which it is preserved);
- superiority (of divine Law over human law);
- myth of foundation (an original myth which mirrors both the absoluteness of the belief system to which the followers must stick, and the cohesion of the religious community).28

Among the seminal works about religious fundamentalism it is also necessary to include – although the author does not mention the concept explicitly – Gilles Kepel’s La revanche de Dieu (The revenge of God). This was, indeed, the first – and perhaps the most popular – book analysing the resurgence of radical religion throughout the world since the late 1970s. According to its thesis, the new religious movements were the product of the displacement – ‘a deep social disquiet’ – caused by the fast social and political changes of the contemporary era.29
Another more general work worth mentioning is moreover Jose Casanova’s *Public Religions in the Modern World*, which frames the global resurgence of religions in a process named ‘deprivatization’ of religion, exposed through the analysis of different cases in comparative perspective.

**THE FUNDAMENTALISM PROJECT**

In 1989, the University of Chicago, with the support of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, started a series of meetings between scholars belonging to different disciplines, with the purpose of undertaking a thorough study of the phenomenon of fundamentalism. This event probably marked the end of the pioneering phase in the research on fundamentalism, and eventually gave birth to a series of five volumes (published between 1991 and 1995): a corpus of case studies and theoretical conclusions which could not be disregarded by the following researches. Although already in the first volume, *Fundamentalism Observed*, some ‘family resemblances’ were pointed out, it was only in the last one, *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*, that real theoretical conclusions were carried out, first of all providing a definition of fundamentalism through nine recurring features (five related to ideology, and four to organisation):

1. **Reactivity to the marginalisation of religion** – according to the authors, ‘to qualify as genuine fundamentalism […] a movement must be concerned first with the erosion of religion and its proper role in society’. This perceived threat can be the result of ‘the general processes of modernisation, from other religions and/or ethnic groups, from a secular state (imperial or indigenous) seeking to secularise and delimit the domain of the sacred, or from various combinations of these’.

2. **Selectivity** – movements are selective in three ways. First of all, they are not simply defensive of the tradition, but select and reshape particular aspects of it. Secondly, they are selective toward modernity, of which they select some aspects ‘to affirm and embrace’, particularly its technological features, and its organisational techniques. Finally, they select some consequences and processes of modernity, and single them out for special attention (for example, abortion in the United States, or the Territories in Israel).

3. **Moral manicheanism** – in the fundamentalist worldview, reality is uncompromisingly divided into light and darkness, into a world inside with ‘a minimum standard’ of purity and a sinful world outside that ‘may be graded in different degrees of contamination’.

4. **Absolutism and inerrancy** – referred to the sacred texts or ‘its analogues (e.g., papal infallibility, a privileged school of islamic jurisprudence, etc.’. Moreover, fundamentalists, although not necessarily monolithic in their approach to religious sources, ‘steadfastly refuse hermeneutical methods developed by secularized philosophers’; their interpretation therefore ‘does not submit to the canons of critic rationality’.

5. **Millennialism and messianism** – in the fundamentalist worldview, history has a miraculous culmination, with ‘an end to the suffering and waiting’ and the coming of ‘an all-powerful mediator’ (the Messiah, the Hidden Imam, etc.).

6. **Elect, chosen membership** – according to the authors, fundamentalist movements tend to have an ‘elect’, a chosen, divinely called membership, described variously as ‘the faithful’, ‘the remnant’, the ‘last outpost’, etc. Some movements
show a further division into an inner fully committed group and a periphery of sympathisers.

7. **Sharp boundaries** between believers and the external world – they can be physical, as in the case of the Israeli *haredim*, or symbolic and implemented through the media and education.

8. **Authoritarian organisation** – movements are usually structured in a charismatic leader–follower relationship, with equality among the believers and the absence of ‘bureaucracy in the sense of rational-legal division of power and competence’. This situation, where there is no loyal opposition recognised, easily leads to fragmentation.

9. **Behavioral requirements** that create ‘a powerful affective dimension, an imitative, conforming dimension’, with distinctive music, rules of dress and rules about drinking, sexuality, appropriate speech and the discipline of children. The fruition of reading and audiovisual material, and also dating and mate selection, are strictly regulated.  

Another well-known typology proposed in the last volume of the *Fundamentalism Project* (FP) is the classification of fundamentalist movements according to their attitude towards the world, which includes and widens Riesebrodt’s model. According to the authors, ‘all fundamentalists expect the enemy to be abolished’, since ‘God’s world is pure, not pluralist’, but they can use four different strategies to try to do so:

1. **World conqueror** – by assuming control of the structures of society which have given life to the enemy.

2. **World transformer** – by reinterpreting and influencing the structures, institutions, laws and practices of a society.

3. **World creator** – by creating alternative and encompassing societal structures and institutions.

4. **World renouncer** – by seeking purity and self-preservation more than hegemony, through the self-construction of a fundamentalist world, in contrast to the threatening outside.

The FP also provides a survey of the fundamentalist political strategies, within democratic and non-democratic regimes. In authoritarian political systems, the analysis singles out a top-down strategy (aiming at seizing political power before societal hegemony) and a bottom-up one (the opposite). However, the authors point out that in democratic regimes, because of the opportunities provided to the movements by free speech and civil rights, they usually prefer the bottom-up (and non-violent) one. Moreover, according to the FP, the fundamentalist strategy is ‘designed first in order to create a “defensive perimeter” and later as a mode of enlarging the hold over civil society, with the hope of achieving hegemony there’. This perspective is connected to the fundamentalists’ reactivity, which can be turned either against a change in national identity (creating fundamentalist movements with a nationalist orientation), or against a governmental attempt to expand the public sphere (creating movements primarily concerned about the role of religion in society).

According to the editors of the FP, fundamentalists are also prevented from behaving assertively in politics because they ‘are first and foremost men and women of religion rather than of government’ and they have little political
experience. Thus, they ‘find it difficult to govern without resorting to the services of professional politicians and nonfundamentalist allies’. This fact can lead to ‘the politics of compromise and the distillation of the fundamentalist sociomoral message’.  

This point of view is not shared, however, by another contributor to the project, Rhys H. Williams, who believes in a much more active role of the fundamentalists in politics. According to this author,

fundamentalists who actively engage public politics seldom approach it with modest, partial agendas. The attack on the distinction between the public and the private in social life is often explicit in fundamentalist programs for change. […] For these reasons periods of large-scale fundamentalist activity coincide with periods of generalized political instability often leading to ‘regime crises’. 

The FP, and particularly its definition of fundamentalism, has been widely appreciated and cited in later works, but also criticised by several authors. According to Massimo Introvigne (who has reviewed in his work several objections posed by other scholars), the editors and the authors participating in the project did not have a common idea of what fundamentalism is. Moreover, they were too influenced by the secularisation paradigm, which made them interpret the movements as declining and going to withdraw more and more into ghettos and enclaves, in the hope that progress would eventually triumph despite the temporary victories of its enemies. At a methodological level, the editors of the FP are accused on the one hand of providing a definition too inclusive of fundamentalism, while on the other hand they do not analyse in the project some movements (such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses) just because they are traditionally not regarded as fundamentalists.

From the point of view of a researcher engaged in a comparative political science analysis of fundamentalisms, however, there are two further flaws to point out. First of all, the project seems to be too hegemonised by religious sciences scholars, which makes its conclusions not satisfactorily account for the political features of movements (first of all, it is difficult to agree with the FP’s conception of the organisation and leadership of the fundamentalist movements, but also with the idea that fundamentalists, as ‘men of religion’ are ineffective in politics). Moreover, they do not mention a feature of fundamentalist movements which had even been included in the conclusions of the first volume of the series: the importance of the enemy (which fundamentalists, according to the early Marty and Appleby, ‘name, dramatize, and even mythologize’ as a kind of anti-hero).

Moreover, in the conclusions of the FP there is an evident cultural and geographical prejudice which identifies the American Protestant case as the ideal type of fundamentalism – highlighting features such as the importance of scriptures and the millennialist ideology – with a relevant impact on the FP’s definition of fundamentalism. This point is confirmed by the authors themselves, who explain that they have included a single Asian case (Sikh fundamentalism) among the full-fledged fundamentalist movements because their ‘definition of the properties of fundamentalism has been derived from a focus on Christian, Islamic and Jewish cases, all of which have sacred texts and codified religious laws and share in a millennial–messianic cosmology’.
The FP is not only a milestone in the literature about fundamentalism that all later contributions had to take into account: the publication of its first volume represents a kind of divide between the pioneering phase of the study on the phenomenon, and a more mature one. While the previous contributions had been written mostly by religious sciences scholars, sometimes with little academic experience, in this new period the debate opened to better known scholars belonging to different fields of study. This change had a double-edged effect on the quality of the research on the theme: on the one hand, the perspective broadened, while, on the other, several works were rather shallow, with authors more interested in including fundamentalism within the frames of their usual fields of study rather than the opposite.

The different theoretical and disciplinary perspectives adopted by the various authors in their works are probably the best way to systematise these latter, and to organise them in sub-groups. One of these clusters of works interprets fundamentalism as an effect of exogenous variables, related to international and/or transnational dynamics. Some authors, for example, maintain that the rise of fundamentalism is directly connected to the worldwide process of globalisation. Roland Robertson, who is probably the most authoritative scholar embracing this perspective, points out that globalisation – synthetically defined as ‘involving the compression of the world’ – unavoidably produces a global ‘search for fundamentals’ in terms of ‘tradition, identity, home, indigeneity, locality, community and so on’. Thus, ‘many forms of fundamentalisms […] constitute ways of finding a place within the world as a whole’. The author, in his early works on the subject, started from an idea of fundamentalism as a reaction to globalisation oriented toward creating and maintaining peculiar identities: a vision which has also been proposed by Misztal and Shupe, who define this phenomenon ‘global fundamentalism’, which means a series of interrelated answers to the process of globalisation.

Robertson, however, confesses that in his later researches he moved toward an idea of fundamentalism not as a reaction against globalisation, but as a direct effect of it. This change of mind is framed by the author within the dichotomy global/local, which, according to Robertson, are usually seen as opposite concepts, while in reality they are two faces of the same coin. This process, defined with the neologism ‘glocalization’, makes the communities no longer able to assert their identity locally: therefore, they try to assert a reinvented version of it at the global level, as in the cases of religious fundamentalisms. This is probably the first theory on religious fundamentalism taking seriously into account collective identities (and the need to assert them). A similar point of view was chosen, some years later, by another American sociologist, Benjamin R. Barber, in the book *Jihad vs. McWorld*. With these two terms (the first used in a broad sense, the second coined by the author), he highlighted two powerful forces acting within modernity: the regressive collective identities (category including fundamentalist movements) and the neo-liberal globalisation. According to Barber, these forces ‘operate with equal strength in opposite directions, the one driven by parochial hatreds, the other by universalizing markets, the one re-creating ancient subnational and ethnic borders from within, the other making national borders porous from without’. However, they are only apparently opposite to each other: they are indeed strictly interrelated and need each other since ‘they both make war on the sovereign nation-state’s democratic institutions.’
Another strand in the studies about fundamentalism is the one interpreting the phenomenon as a consequence of the ‘clash of civilizations’, a concept originally coined by Bernard Lewis and made popular by Samuel P. Huntington. This theory presupposes that ‘culture and cultural identities, which at the broadest level are civilisation identities, are shaping the patterns of cohesion, disintegration, and conflict in the post-Cold War world’. Huntington defines a ‘civilization’ as ‘the broadest cultural identity [...] the biggest “we” within which we feel culturally at home as distinguished from all the other “thems” out there’, whose central elements are language and religion. Among other phenomena (such as the breakup of Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and the struggle of Russia, Turkey and Mexico over their identity), the rise of religious fundamentalism throughout the world is seen by Huntington as one of the international developments that can be explained by the civilisational paradigm. More precisely, Huntington singles out three possible reactions to the western expansion in the world: total refusal of westernisation, kemalism (complete acceptance of it) and reformism (which tries to merge modernisation and preservation of the local values). Fundamentalism is defined as an extreme form of reformism, developed in the twentieth century. However, fundamentalist movements are defined also in more existential terms, as ‘the surface waves of the much broader and more fundamental religious tide that is giving a different cast to human life at the end of the twentieth century’, as a reaction to the feeling of emptiness by the sudden adoption of western social and political institutions and values. Huntington feels worried about this resurgence of anti-western radical religion, particularly about its Islamic version, and recommends to the West to strengthen its values and culture against it.

Another version of the clash of civilisations paradigm is proposed by the German–Syrian political scientist Bassam Tibi, who merges the civilisational thesis with the conclusions of the FP (to which he had been a contributor) to create a less islamophobic version of it. According to Tibi, fundamentalism is a reaction to modernity which is in turn influenced by it, and is a global phenomenon, whose Islamic strand is one among many and cannot be considered as the fundamentalism par excellence. Fundamentalism is defined essentially as a political ideology oriented against the secular national state and pursuing the creation of a theocratic system in the framework of a clash between civilisations defined in religious terms and characterised by an anti-western stance.

A not so different theme is developed by Mark Juergensmeyer in his book *The New Cold War: Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (1993). Unlike Huntington’s, this book focuses not on the clash between civilisations, but on the clash within cultures and nation-states between the supporters of secular nationalism (inspired by democratic and socialist ideologies) and those of religious nationalism. This latter is described by the author as struggling for a revival of religion in the public sphere against western secularism and denouncing both the moral decline in the western world (which is also deemed responsible for the moral decline in the rest of the world), and the failure of the political institutions imported from the West.

All these models have several merits, most of all maybe the fact that they take in due consideration the political factors and the international dynamics. Maybe their greater failure is a kind of colonial perspective on fundamentalism, which does not answer for fundamentalist phenomena spread also in the West, such as...
the American Christian Right. Instead they describe fundamentalism as an essentially African and Asian phenomenon.

FUNDAMENTALISM AS A NICHE OF THE RELIGIOUS MARKET

A more structured and methodologically coherent approach is provided by the model of the religious economy. This school of thought, born between the 1970s and the 1980s with the work of Rodney Stark, analyses religion with the tools provided by the rational choice model. Its approach to religion (not unlike those to economy and politics) is eminently rational, seeing both the supply side (religious institutions) and the demand side (individuals) as aiming at maximising benefits and minimising costs.53

According to Finke and Stark, religious demand can be arranged on a ‘tension [with the environment] continuum, with one end focusing on the supernatural to the fullest extent possible and the other accepting only a remote and inactive conception of the supernatural’. The religious demand takes the shape of a bell curve: the central niches (moderate and conservative), providing low benefits and demanding low costs, will appeal to more people, but also encourage free-riding.54 However, as we move towards both extremes (strict and ultra-strict; liberal and ultra-liberal), and the degree of tension with the environment becomes higher, we will find religious organisations with higher and higher costs and benefits, less followers, and a lower level of free-riding.55

Fundamentalist movements are included in the strict niche (while the ultra-strict is occupied by even more extremist and terrorist religious groups, which are often devoted to violence). According to the authors following this perspective, the organisations which are part of this niche are growing and strengthening because, although they impose higher costs on individuals, they provide these latter with even higher benefits: first of all, by reducing the number of free-riders.56

This approach, as well as the whole rational choice school, has attracted considerable criticism, first of all about the adoption of the economic theory for the study of religion: not only because it reduces the individuals’ behaviour to its rational side, and neglects the idea of religious movements as collective identities, but also because, according to some critics, ‘it has little resonance with the understandings of the people whose behaviour it must explain’.57 Moreover, this perspective seems to consider individuals as undifferentiated, without considering factors such as gender.58 Finally, another limit to this approach is that the only factor which is taken into account to determine the orientation of the individuals is their official religious affiliation. This perspective, strongly US-centred, neglects other kinds of religious behaviour which are not connected to affiliation.

FUNDAMENTALISM AS TOTALITARIANISM

Another group of contributions – far less homogeneous than the latter – interprets fundamentalism as a manifestation of totalitarianism (and, particularly, assimilates it to ‘left-wing’ totalitarianisms, such as stalinism). Ernest Gellner, for example, maintains that fundamentalism ‘repudiates the tolerant modernist claim that the faith in question means something much milder, far less exclusive, altogether less demanding, and much more accommodating; above all something quite compatible with all other faiths, even, or especially, with the lack of faith’. The
British philosopher is however convinced that all the great civilisations can be defined as almost irreversibly secularised, except Islam. Therefore, although ‘fundamentalism occurs in many religions’, it is today ‘at its strongest in Islam’. In an essay published in the last volume of the FP, Gellner was more specific, and explicitly compared Islamic fundamentalism and Soviet Marxism, singling out the reasons for the success of the first and the failure of the latter in Islam’s ‘routinization’. This factor, unlike in Marxism, enables Islam to provide guidance in the faithful’s daily life without being excessive in its demands. Gellner maintains that ‘Islam fulfils some of the very functions which nationalism performs elsewhere’, namely the transition to a modern society: what elsewhere ‘expresses itself as nationalism, expresses itself in the Muslim world as religious revivalism, as fundamentalism’.

A more thorough analysis is provided by Shmuel Eisenstadt, who highlights the Jacobin face of fundamentalism, defined as ‘a modern Jacobin anti-modern utopia and heterodoxy’. According to the author, although promoting ideologies which are clearly opposed to modernity, fundamentalists do not refuse the technological and organisational features of this latter, as well as its totalitarian, especially Jacobin, components, such as the nearly complete overlapping of centre and periphery which denies the existence of intermediate institutions; the sacralisation of the centre; the missionary expansionism. In this perspective, he compares fundamentalist movements to ‘Communist ones, with whom they share some paradoxical and some mirror-like characteristics’ and to ‘the major types of nationalistic movements and regimes, especially fascist and national-social ones, that developed in modern societies’. Particularly, ‘communist and fundamentalist movements and regimes share the tendency to promulgate a very strong salvationist vision or gospel’, and their visions entail ‘the transformation of both man and society, and the construction of new, personal and collective identities’, demanding ‘total submergence of the individual in the general totalistic community’. Politically, they emphasise ‘the active construction, by political action, of a new social and cultural order […] aiming at transforming the structure of society in general, and of centre-periphery relations in particular’.

A somewhat similar perspective is proposed by the Spanish political scientist Antonio Elorza, who – using the term *integrismo* (integralism) – compares the phenomenon to the communist regimes and to nationalism. This analogy is based on the concept of ‘transfer of sacredness’ which, according to the author, is common to many kinds of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. Analysing the possible causes of religious fundamentalisms, he points out that their emergence and growth is fostered by the frustration of wide sectors of society confronted by the failure of the two great utopias of the twentieth century: communism and technological progress. After the end of the dreams of universal prosperity created by modernity, the only possible resource was the regressive and totalitarian rediscovery of the socio-cultural and religious values which were widespread before the coming of the modern era.

**Building a definition of fundamentalist movement**

After the review of the literature, this section will try to build a working definition of fundamentalist movement suitable for a political science research, by analysing different coordinates.
Religious Fundamentalism

FUNDAMENTALISM SEEN AS A COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

How should we look at fundamentalism – as an unicum, a phenomenon with its own rules and characteristics, or as a part of the contemporary world, obeying to the same laws as other phenomena?

If we analyse a fundamentalist movement and its members, we find out that these latter feel as a part of the movement, recognise each other as similar, identify themselves with the group’s purposes, are willing to sacrifice for it their interests, and cooperate with other members, enjoying a symbolical fulfillment which opposes the free-rider logic. These are precisely the points which mark out a collective identity. Therefore, we must conclude that a fundamentalist movement can be studied from a political science perspective as a collective identity, and analysed with the tools available in this field of study. This fact has two important consequences. First of all, we must consider a fundamentalist movement as more than the sum of its parts (in this case, the individuals belonging to it), and we cannot fully appreciate the social and political role it plays without using a holistic perspective. Secondly, although showing some peculiar features, fundamentalist movements are best analysed and understood in comparison with other kind of collective identities and according to the theoretical perspectives developed about this kind of phenomenon.

RELATION BETWEEN FUNDAMENTALISM AND MODERNITY

This is a point on which the literature on fundamentalism is rather unanimous, dismissing some early interpretations of the phenomenon as ‘traditionalism’ or ‘patriarchalism’. Fundamentalism – although phenomena of proto-fundamentalism in the pre-modern era are not ruled out – is essentially a consequence of (and not only a reaction to) modernity. It is a consequence of modernity because its growth as a nationally recognised social movement in most contexts is closely connected both to technological and media advancements and to phenomena of deep socioeconomic change. However, it is also a reactive phenomenon, since the fundamentalist mobilisation is precisely oriented against cultural and behavioural changes brought by modernity. Fundamentalists have therefore a dialectic (or, in the words of the FP, selective) relation with modernity, accepting most of its material features (particularly those related to technology, media and organisation), but categorically refusing its cultural (relativistic, pluralistic and secular) underpinnings.

CENTRALITY OF THE ENEMY

According to the FP’s authors and other theorists, fundamentalism is, more specifically, a reaction against the erosion of religion in the public sphere. The FP, therefore, singles out some full-fledged fundamentalist movements which are oriented directly against the erosion of religion in the public sphere, and others (named ‘fundamentalistlike’) which are more nationalist-oriented. However, this theory does not take into account (as already remarked in the review of the literature in the first part of this paper) the oppositional nature of fundamentalist movements, which exist mainly because they identify an enemy to mobilise against. In the cases without strong religious minorities, this enemy is usually the secular state trying to secularise the public sphere; movements are mainly
active in order to influence its policies and, possibly, conquer it. In the contexts with strong religious minorities, the perceived threat comes (not always exclusively, but mainly) from these latter’s demand for recognition and assignment of public spaces. In such cases, fundamentalist movements tend to focus not (only) on the confrontation with the state, but on the – often more radical and violent – dispute about the control of the public sphere with communities belonging to other religions. In addition to the ‘external’ enemy, we can also find an ‘inner enemy’ of the fundamentalist movements: all the people belonging to the same (ethno-)religious community the fundamentalists belong to, adopting pluralist, relativist, liberal and atheist points of view. Sometimes, they are perceived as sinners to redeem; some other, as allies of the ‘external’ enemy that must be fought and annihilated. The perception of the rest of society as redeemable or irreversibly fallen is relevant, also because it can determine the choice to be active in society and politics or to withdraw within safe boundaries with a more traditionalist and less aggressive strategy.

**IDEOLOGY AND ITS SOURCES**

As pointed out by the conclusions of the FP, the ideology of a fundamentalist movement is based on the selective reinterpretation of sacred texts, or equivalents institutions. Selectivity, however, makes texts less critical than they are regarded in the scriptural theories based on Protestant fundamentalism. As already pointed out, fundamentalism is oriented neither toward a traditional vision of religion, nor accepting the modern philological and hermeneutical interpretations of texts. Thus, the interpretations chosen by the ideologues of a movement and the issues they single out as crucial (such as, for example, the mosques built on pre-existing Hindu temples in Hinduism, the land in Jewish fundamentalism or the headscarf in Islam) are often original and innovative. Moreover, they are often designed to be part of a political agenda, rather than to be an accurate interpretation of a religious tradition. In many cases, it is even possible to talk about invented traditions (as happened, for example, in the Buddhist movement in Sri Lanka, where the lack of revealed scriptures has been filled by the sacralisation of epic poems and traditions). Therefore, in order to understand a movement and its activities we must look at the ideology proposed by its leaders and ideologues, rather than at religious scriptures and traditions. The role of political entrepreneurs is indeed crucial, not only for the role they play in the early mobilisation of the movements, but also for their adaptation (‘frame alignment’) of values and objectives (in our case those of a religious tradition) to the segment of society to which they are addressing.

**ORGANISATION AND LEADERSHIP**

This is another point on which the conclusions of the FP are unsatisfactory, since the authors seem to have in mind small sects rather than full-fledged fundamentalist movements. This stance is probably the consequence of a well-known dilemma of the social movements studies. As pointed out by Rhys Williams, definitions of social movements range from the broad (and sometimes not very useful in empirical analysis) conception of a movement as ‘socially shared activities and beliefs’, to the narrow idea of ‘a formally organized group’. This latter, which is perhaps closer to the definition of an interest group, seems to have been adopted by the authors.
Religious Fundamentalism

This way, a researcher is maybe able to effectively analyse single groups, but he/she fails to take into account adequately wide and differentiated movements such as the US Christian Right (composed by a multitude of formally organised groups, and also by individuals not formally affiliated to a group).

This problem can be solved by taking into account the model proposed by McCarthy and Zald within the framework of the resource mobilisation approach to social movements. The innovation brought in by their work is the discrimination between a ‘social movement’ (‘a set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society’) and a ‘social movement organization’ or SMO (‘a complex, or formal, organisation which identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement or a countermovement and attempts to implement these goals’). This distinction allows us to talk about a fundamentalist movement as a whole (such as for example the US Christian Right or the Jewish nationalist religious movement), without losing sight of the organisations inside of it.

Fundamentalist movements, as well as other kinds of social movements, are indeed complex entities, highly differentiated. A useful tool to analyse them is Hanspeter Kriesi’s model, singling out within each movement a ‘political mobilization’ sector (including the main organisations of the movement, which organise the mobilisation), a ‘political representation’ one (including the political parties which are part of – or close to – the movement), a ‘self-help’ one (including all the services that members provide for free to other members, including welfare activities, which in the case of most fundamentalist movements are particularly relevant) and a ‘services’ one (including all the organisations and other subjects close to the movements, which sell services to their members).

In terms of leadership, the charismatic authoritarian principle highlighted by the FP is only partly verifiable (and, as already pointed out, connected to a ‘narrow’ definition of fundamentalist movement). While in many SMOs which are part of the movements we can find indeed single leaders with a tight control on the group, the movements as a whole usually do not meet this criterion. Fundamentalist movements are in fact all pluralistic, with the participation of different organisations each one with its own leadership, and, even, of individuals and groups sharing the worldview and the purposes of the movement without recognising a particular leadership. In some cases (for example in the US Protestant movement), the leadership is particularly fragmented, since the leaders of the different religious factions forming the movement want to safeguard their power. In other cases, either because of a stronger religious homogeneousness, or because of a particular organisational history, we can find more widely recognised leaderships. This is the case, for example, of the Hindu movement in India (where the RSS leadership maintains a degree of moral and practical influence over the other groups of the sangh parivar) and, until the 1980s, also of the Jewish religious–nationalist movement in Israel. About the egalitarian principle among the followers, it is partly real, but every organisation, after its institutionalisation, develops some hierarchical features, and the fundamentalist movements’ SMOs make no exception.

ISSUES

The core issues of a fundamentalist movement are always connected to the role of religion in the public sphere and its restoration. The movements whose enemy is
the secular state usually do it by focusing on issues connected to education, sexual behaviour and other cultural and behavioural features such as clothing. The promotion of religious education (both state-sponsored and private) is common to most movements, as well as the battle against sides of the modern society which are perceived as immoral, such as pornography, sexual freedom, gay rights and religious pluralism. These movements are also concerned about the traditional family and the role of women in it and in society (although, quite interestingly, they often include female branches in which women perform non-traditional militant roles). The fundamentalist movements oriented against (mainly or exclusively) another religious community usually do it in a more physical and confrontational way, focusing mainly on the control of the territory (as we can see in Israel, but also in other cases of fundamentalism, such as the Hindu movement in India and the Buddhist movement in Sri Lanka). Often their attention concentrates on particular sacred places and buildings they want either to protect or to open to religious worship, or (when religious buildings belonging to another religion are built on sites portrayed as sacred, such as the Ayodhya mosque in India and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem) to destroy. They also focus on the legal framework’s recognition of the rights of the other religious communities, for example in India, where Hindu militants oppose the existence of a separate Muslim civil code. We can also observe that the nationalistic kind of issues is often promoted through more confrontational (and not rarely violent) repertoires of mobilisation.

STRATEGIES

The FP’s assumption that in democratic regimes fundamentalist movements are oriented toward achieving hegemony in society before conquering political power is basically right. However, this assumption must not be interpreted according to old-fashioned social movements theory (which, however, has influenced several works about fundamentalism), which interprets this kind of collective identities as a raw, primitive and irrational kind of political participation, doomed to disappear once movements become ‘incorporated into the polity’. On the contrary (as the political events happened throughout the world in the past decades have showed, and the theorists of the contentious politics approach have explained), fundamentalist movements’ activity ‘is not so much an alternative to institutionalised politics, diminishing as the latter increases, rather it is a complementary mode of political action, which increases even as democratic politics spreads’. Therefore, fundamentalist strategies are best understood if we take into account both the ‘bottom-up’ action consisting in the mobilisation of the movement, and the contextual ‘top-down’ action, achieved by creating or infiltrating political parties (with different degrees of harmony or tension between the two fields in different contexts and moments). In this latter field, the behaviour of fundamentalist movements seems to obey to the generalisations highlighted by political scientists about party systems in democratic regimes. Particularly, in political systems with a majority electoral system, movements (such as the US Christian Right and the Indian sanh parivar) choose a single-party strategy, by creating a party, or infiltrating an existing one. In political systems with a proportional electoral law (as in the case of the Jewish movement in Israel), they choose instead a multi-party strategy.

Another interesting point consists in the alliances (both inter-party and intra-party), which are usually chosen in the conservative and nationalist right. Such
GOALS

This is a controversial point, both because it is difficult to find out what the real agenda of a movement (beyond official statements) is about, and because within each movement there are moderate and radical wings, often with different worldviews and plans. Generally, movements active in non-democratic regimes are oriented toward a complete (and often achieved through violent means) conquest of power and the rebuilding of society according to the religious law (as for example Muslim clerics tried to do in Iran), while those engaged in democratic politics usually adopt more nuanced approaches, understanding that a complete implementation of their agenda is not possible, and orienting toward the fulfillment of their plans in a distant and vague time through long-time and gradual strategies. Such movements engage therefore in mainstream democratic politics (although not renouncing to non conventional and non-institutional forms of mobilisation) and focus on change through education, media propaganda and modifications of the institutional and legal framework. The totalitarian face of religious fundamentalist movements is thus undoubtedly real, but seems to fade away (at least partially) when movements become engaged in democratic politics.

A DEFINITION

Building a concise definition of fundamentalism is a difficult task, which has not been addressed by several scholars. However, since the focus of this work is to provide a guide for researchers dealing with this phenomenon within a political science framework, at least a working definition should be provided. Therefore, we will tentatively define a fundamentalist movement as a collective identity including different groups, organisations and individuals which grounds its religiously based ideology on a selective re-interpretation of sacred texts (or equivalent institutions), acts in the public sphere in institutional and non institutional ways, in order to make as suitable as possible to its worldview lifestyles, laws and institutions, takes a dialectic stance towards modernity and opposes other social and political actors, identified as unyielding rivals.

Of course, this definition does not claim to be uncontentious and definitive. It only aims at providing a contribution towards a better understanding of the political features of the phenomenon of fundamentalism, and possibly to foster the debate about it, which is to date still lacking.

More specifically, this work’s purpose is to try to consolidate and legitimise the role of this concept within political science, overcoming an old mistrust and the specious objections posed by many scholars who would rather confine religious fundamentalism within the walls of religious studies. First of all, it asserts the idea of religious fundamentalism as (also) a political phenomenon, which can be studied effectively with the tools provided by political science. Secondly, it highlights the relevance of the collective and contentious side of the phenomenon, which cannot be understood by only adopting an individual perspective.
Among the relevant points which remain outside its scope, and needing further research, we must mention: the action of fundamentalist movements in democracy and their effect on democratic institutions and the quality of democracy; their impact on public policies; the degree of truthfulness of the moderation achieved by many fundamentalist movements once they engage in democratic politics; the differences and similarities between fundamentalist movements and other kinds of collective identities (especially those with totalitarian orientations).

Each of these subjects would of course require, in order to be correctly investigated, understood and explained, the work of whole pools of research, and thorough empirical analyses and historical surveys on many different cases. We must therefore conclude that there is a whole field opened to the research of political scientists, with much work still to do.

Notes


2. It is possible, thus, to single out three different uses of the term ‘fundamentalism’: (a) the name of a conservative faction of American Evangelicalism; (b) a pejorative term used by the mass media to qualify virtually all kinds of religious extremism and fanaticism; (c) a concept used in social and human sciences to indicate several phenomena of religious reawakening in the public sphere that have happened throughout the world since the 1970s.

3. Although this idea is undoubtedly valuable and needs more research (for example about possible similarities between the behaviour of religious and ‘secular’ fundamentalists), it will not be mentioned further in this paper, not only because it is based on the attempt at building a definition of religious (and not secular) fundamentalism, but also because its analysis will be focused on consolidated literature. The concept of ‘secular fundamentalism’, although mentioned in some academic works [see for example Daniel O. Conkle, “Secular Fundamentalism, Religious Fundamentalism, and the Search for Truth in Contemporary America”, Journal of Law and Religion 12 (1995–96), pp. 337–70] is still mainly used by journalists and by religiously oriented public actors who criticize their opponents (see for example Tobias Jones, “Secular Fundamentalists are the New Totalitarians”, The Guardian, 6 January 2007).

4. Some scholars defend the term as a prerogative of Christianity: for example, James Barr argues that although ‘somewhat similar views exist within the bosom of some other religions […] in none did these built-in features of the Biblical tradition and its interpretation go on to produce a full fundamentalism of the Protestant type’ and it is ‘the Protestant phenomenon, to which alone the term “fundamentalism” in its primary sense is normally applied’ [James Barr, Fundamentalism (London: SCM Press, 1981), p.7; Bruce Lawrence, Defenders of God (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1989), p.5]. Others refuse it as an allegedly too Christianity-related concept: John Esposito regards the term as ‘too laden with Christian presuppositions and Western stereotypes, as well as implying a monolithic threat that does not exist’ [John Esposito, The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.6].

5. Massimo Introvigne states that its use has widened so much that it is, often, scarcely scientific [Massimo Introvigne, Fondamentalismi. I diversi volti dell’intransigenza religiosa (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 2004)]. Mark Juergensmeyer is convinced that ‘fundamentalism’ is an imprecise category for making comparisons across cultures’ [Mark Juergensmeyer, “Why Religious Nationalists are not Fundamentalists”, Religion, 23 (1993), pp. 85–92, at 86].

6. Juergensmeyer argues that ‘to call someone a “fundamentalist” suggests that he or she is motivated solely by religious beliefs rather than broader concerns about the nature of society and the world’ [Juergensmeyer (note 5), p.87].

7. William Shepard notes that the term is ‘too partisan, usually in a pejorative sense, to be anything but damaging to some of the most important goals of religious studies’ [William Shepard, “Comments on Bruce Lawrence’s Defenders of God”, Religion 22 (1992), pp. 279–83, at 281]. According to Juergensmeyer, ‘fundamentalism’ ‘refers […] to those who hold “an intolerant, self-righteous, and narrowly dogmatic religious literalism”’: people who ‘by implication […] should not be taken seriously’. It ‘reflects our attitudes towards other people more than it describes the people themselves’ [Juergensmeyer (note 5), p.86].
17. Although Lawrence is often cited as a supporter of the equation fundamentalism = traditionalism, the opposite stance is clearly pointed out in his work.
24. Ibid., p.9.
25. Ibid., p.15.
33. This model had already been proposed by Gilles Kepel in his analysis of the Egyptian Islamist movement *Le prophète et pharaon. Les mouvements islamistes dans l’Égypte contemporaine* (Paris: La Découverte, 1984).


39. Introvigne (note 5).


44. Robertson (note 41), pp.166–80; see also Pace and Guolo (note 28), pp.123–5.


47. Huntington (note 46), p.43.


51. It must be said that Juergensmeyer (as already explained early in this paper) is a fierce opponent of the concept of fundamentalism. However, his work has been included in this review since the phenomena he deals with are mostly what other scholars label as fundamentalism.

52. Juergensmeyer (note 11).


56. Introvigne (note 5).


61. Quite interestingly, both Gellner and Eisenstadt use concepts such as stages of history and axial age, first proposed by Jaspers. Another, more recent, study based on these concepts, but with different conclusions, is *The Battle for God*, by the theologian Karen Armstrong. Her work – analysing fundamentalism in historical perspective, from the end of the fifteenth century – is based on the dialectical opposition between *mythos* (myth) and *logos* (rational thought). While these two principles were coexistent in the pre-modern world, in recent centuries the first became more and
more predominant over the second. Fundamentalists, in Armstrong’s theory, just try to adapt religion to modernity, by transforming mythos into logos [Karen Armstrong, The Battle for God (New York: Ballantine Books, 2000)].

64. A word choice widespread in southern European countries, where ‘integralism’ (integrismo in Spanish, intégrisme in French and integralismo in Italian) is often preferred to ‘fundamentalism’.
67. Almond, Sivan and Appleby (note 31).
68. The role of the enemy in the development and the worldview of collective identities has been singled out by many prominent political theorists, from Carl Schmitt [Der Begriff des Politischen (Berlin: Dunkel & Humblot, 1962)] to Michel Foucault [Il faut défendre la société (Paris: Gallimard, 1997)] and Michael Walzer [The Exclusion of Liberal Theory (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1999)].
71. Tarrow (note 70); more generally, the concept of framing, defined by Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald [Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.6] as ‘conscious, strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action’, has however been criticized [see for example Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, “Caught in a Winding, Snarling Wine: The Structural Bias of Political Process Theory”, Sociological Forum 14/1 (1999), pp.27–53] because it allegedly highlights too much the structural and strategic features of collective action, neglecting (or misrepresenting) the cultural ones.
72. Williams (note 37), p.786.
75. The structure of the Hindu fundamentalist movement is very interesting, because the sangh parivar is formed by a plurality of formally independent organizations (which has been portrayed as a ‘constellation’ by Christophe Jaffrelot) [Jaffrelot (note 11), p.17], but the ‘mother’ organization RSS retains a degree of control over the other groups, whose cadres are often nominated directly by the RSS (and not rarely are RSS members themselves). This was true especially until the 1980s; later, the growth of the sangh parivar-affiliated Bharatiya Janata Party has made the coordination between organizations more difficult and the contrasts more frequent.
76. The first (and probably best known) work pointing out this kind of dynamics was Robert Michels’ Zur Soziologie des Parteiweisens in der moderne Demokratie (Leipzig: W. Klinkhardt, 1911).
77. For the concept of repertoires of mobilization, see Charles Tilly, The Contentious French (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986) and Tarrow (note 70).
81. Ozzano (note 69).
82. Marty and Appleby (note 34); Ozzano (note 69).