

beyond Banister's contributions into more recent developments in Chinese demography.

More seriously, anyone interested in the goals outlined in the foreword — to examine how the Chinese population has been shaped by the interplays of political ideology and institutions, economy, government policies, sociocultural traditions, and ethnic divergences — will be unsatisfied. The breadth of the volume does not readily allow for such investigation. Though some essays do delve into these issues, the book is mostly a barrage of descriptive demographic data with no connecting theme or theory. While the value of having such a large quantity of data in one place is unquestionable, the lack of connecting themes makes the book seem somewhat disjointed and confusing.

The very attempt to provide information on such a wide variety of topics contributes to the sense of confusion. Each topic necessarily receives only superficial coverage. For example, except for the rather weak selection by Tien — an interview with Peng Peiyun — the section on fertility policy gives the reader little sense of the raging debates that have swirled around the implementation and consequences of the one-child policy, or of the resultant changes in policy throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. The demographic and social implications of differential regional implementation of the population policy are also ignored.

If one sticks to the very narrow goal of introducing students to the study of Chinese demography and to the basic findings of research in this field, then the book can be considered adequate to the task. Certainly this collection of essays includes many fine examples of basic data analysis from the 1982 census in particular, as well as other commendable studies from the 1980s. Especially effective is the combination of essays emphasizing empirical data on population trends and levels with essays fleshing out such background issues as ethnic identification and classification, problems of defining urbanization, and so forth. Greenhalgh's contribution, a behind-the-scenes look at how demographic research and collaborative work are carried out in China, is particularly admirable. Students of demography all too often are exposed only to the demographic facts and not to the processes by which those facts are brought to light or to the problems inherent in collecting demographic data.

**The Rise and Fall of Catholic Religious Orders: A Social Movement Perspective.**

By *Patricia Wittberg*. SUNY Press, 1994. 423 pp. \$59.50.

*Reviewer:* DAVID YAMANE, *University of Wisconsin at Madison*

Although not without importance in the Catholic Church and society at large, the decline of Catholic religious orders has garnered little scholarly attention to date. Wittberg's book begins to fill this significant gap in the literature by providing an interpretation of religious orders as recurring movements of "virtuoso" spirituality. While the longest section of the book explores the rise of Catholic religious orders, the author's interest is clearly driven by their contemporary fall. Thus Wittberg opens by establishing the extent of the current crisis, offering some startling statistics: in the past 30 years the number of nuns and nonordained male religious in America has fallen over 50 percent; currently no new members are applying to 54

percent of all women's religious communities; and in 1990 the median age of nuns was 65.

To explain these statistics and the past 16 centuries of cyclical mobilization and demobilization, Wittberg draws on a variety of theoretical perspectives: resource mobilization theory to understand the material support needed in successful religious movements (chapters 4 and 5), frame alignment theory to understand the importance of ideology in successful mobilization (chapters 6-8), and work on commitment mechanisms in intentional communities (Kanter, Zablocki) to understand the internal dynamics of successful religious movements. She treats these bodies of scholarship as theoretical toolkits from which to draw the conceptual resources necessary to shed light on her evidence.

Wittberg does not, however, use her evidence to shed light on the theories. Consequently she passes over opportunities to make theoretical progress by specifying relationships between macrolevel processes (e.g., ideological frame alignment) and microlevel processes (e.g., communal commitment mechanisms), or between resources and ideology. In this regard *The Rise and Fall of Catholic Religious Orders* compares unfavorably to recent books on related topics, such as Finke and Stark's *The Churching of America* or Burns's *The Frontiers of Catholicism* (though it should be noted that Wittberg nowhere claims to be making a theoretical contribution).

Wittberg appropriates Weber's concept of "virtuoso" religiosity, which highlights the differential ability and willingness of individuals to pursue and attain sacred values. In the Catholic Church, religious orders are one of two institutionalized forms of virtuoso religiosity (diocesan priesthood being the other); thus new communities of religious are instances of successful movements of religious virtuosi. Wittberg identifies six varieties of religious virtuosi in the Catholic Church from the fourth through the twentieth century — desert monks, medieval monastics, Mendicants, Beguines, members of apostolic orders, and members of teaching congregations — each defined by the ideological frame expounded in promoting its innovative form of religious virtuosity.

In part 2 Wittberg takes the rise of these movements as her *explanandum* and seeks to identify the causal factors underlying their success. She draws attention to a variety of material and nonmaterial factors, both environmental and internal to the group, including demographic pressures (e.g., a shortage of marriageable men); support of ecclesiastical and secular authorities; an ideology resonant with the culture of the time and addressing a felt need or strain among some members of the population; opportunities provided by religious orders for education, financial security, and social status; social networks for evangelization; and basic material resources such as food, clothing, and shelter. While she invokes an array of factors and conditions suggested by social movement theory that are implicated in the successful establishment of religious orders, because there is no variance in her dependent variable (i.e., she does not consider any cases of unsuccessful movements to found religious communities), one cannot assess the relative importance of any of the factors.

Part 3 acts as a transition between the second and last sections. In it Wittberg suggests that the same factors that account for the rise of religious orders also determine their fall. As a prelude to her consideration of the contemporary period of decline, she highlights resource deprivation, frame dealignment, and the decay of communal commitment mechanisms as factors in the fall.

Part 4 is the most interesting. Wittberg's sustained treatment of developments during a single time period in a single national context — the U.S. in the postwar era — is more satisfying than her cursory coverage of the first 16 centuries of Catholic religious life throughout the Western world. She convincingly argues that contemporary religious orders in the U.S. find themselves facing extinction owing to a simultaneous delegitimation of the root ideology that had previously sustained them, a corresponding redefinition of everyday behavioral expectations toward individual preference and away from corporate commitment, and a loss of key resources such as ecclesiastical support and new recruits. Although Wittberg — herself a Sister of Charity — concludes by admitting a personal desire to see her own religious order avoid such a fate, if her analysis is correct, she and her fellow supporters of Catholic religious life have their work cut out for them.

This book does many things well. Among its strengths are its treating a previously neglected but consequential historical phenomenon, and its cross-national and historical breadth, which gives a sense of the diversity and importance of the form of religious expression Wittberg explores. Useful summary tables are interspersed throughout the text, and a brief glossary at the end provides a helpful resource for those not familiar with the language of religious orders.

**A Weberian Theory of Human Society: Structure and Evolution.**

By *Walter L. Wallace*. Rutgers University Press, 1994. 335 pp. \$59.00.

*Reviewer: DAVID NORMAN SMITH, University of Kansas*

Walter Wallace has written a peculiar book, which appears under the auspices of the Rose Monograph Series of the American Sociological Association. It is neither "Weberian" nor a "theory of human society" in any meaningful sense, despite the promise of its title. Another, more significant eccentricity is Wallace's approach to his topic. His apparent goal is to offer a framework for the analysis of social evolution. Ordinarily a project of this kind entails immersion in ethnology and history, in the manner of Sanderson or Krader. Yet Wallace omits almost every matter of fact, offering instead a vague formal model of "social evolution" — a frankly deductive model that he grounds almost entirely in an idiosyncratic reading of Max Weber. This is a peculiar way to approach history, and an equally peculiar way to approach Max Weber.

Wallace opens by cheerfully confessing that his turn to Weber is prompted in part by a wish to be "relevant." Since Weber is almost universally acclaimed, there is, he reasons, a "prima facie assurance that a Weber-inspired theory is likely to address issues of continuing importance." He quickly concedes, though, that his "integration" of Weber's perspectives "is (of course) not to be found in Weber's published work itself." "I have," he writes, "more than half-invented this integration."

Wallace's move is problematic. Since he works without historical data, he is dependent on Weber for insight into history. Unfortunately, however, his Weber is more than half invented and not a good source of data on the past. The problem is not that Wallace is unable to read or grasp Weber. On the contrary, when Weber says what he wants to hear, Wallace is all ears. But Wallace's intellectual agenda is so all-consuming for him, and so exclusive of other sensibilities, that he seems tone-deaf when Weber shifts into another key. The result is that in many places (e.g., in