
Sociology of Religion Section

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American Sociological Association

From the Chair

No sooner had we come together in Atlanta (thanks to Michele Dillon, the section officers and session organizers, and all who presented their research and discussed that of others) than it was my assignment to begin thinking about next year, when we'll meet in San Francisco. Elsewhere in this issue you will find the listing of the session organizers and of the awards committee chairs for 2004. Soon, probably sooner than you wish, it will be time for you to send your submissions and nominations off to them. Right now, I hope I can induce you to think along with me about why you'll want to be there.

As always ("always," of course, being ever since my first ASA meeting, way back in 1967), our primary headquarters hotel will be the S.F. Hilton, at Mason and O'Farrell. Additional ASA meeting rooms and activities will be at the Renaissance Parc 55, between the Hilton and Union Square. I would be less than frank with you if I didn't acknowledge that a main attraction of the 2004 meetings is the city itself—the hills and the cable cars, downtown and the neighborhoods, the bay and the bridges, the urban energy and the near guarantee of cool August weather. Our hotels are convenient to Chinatown, Nob Hill (and Grace Cathedral), the S.F. Museum of Modern Art, the Muni trolleys and buses, which traverse the city, the BART subway, which will take you across the bay to Berkeley and Oakland, and the Caltrain depot, with regular service to Palo Alto and San Jose. In the months to come, watch ASA *Footnotes* for articles about the city—its promise, problems, and attractions.

ASA President Michael Burawoy has chosen the theme of "Public Sociologies" for the meetings as a whole, challenging us to address constituencies beyond our disciplinary borders, beginning with our own students and encompassing mass media, policy makers, social movement organizations, professionals in other disciplines and (I would add) citizens in the other walks of life that we ourselves populate. In line with crossing (sub)disciplinary borders, I am pleased

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Religion, Politics and the Analysis of Culture

Rhys H. Williams
University of Cincinnati

At the 2003 meetings of the American Sociological Association and the Association for the Sociology of Religion in Atlanta, there were two joint-sponsored sessions titled, "Religion, Politics, and the Analysis of Culture." The morning session was subtitled, "Comparative and Historical Perspectives," and the afternoon session was subtitled, "Community Organizing and Local Political Culture." In keeping with the ASA meeting's theme, "The Question of Culture," the sessions examined the concept of culture through the intersections of religion and politics

The first panel used comparative and historical perspectives to consider "culture" as a more or less societal-wide, historically grounded phenomenon. Presenters Gene Burns, Jose Casanova, and Paul Lichterman (Lori Beaman was prevented from getting to Atlanta due to difficulties related to the recent east coast blackout) varied considerably on what was actually being compared. Burns examined the religio-political identities of different social groups and how they developed in American history. He noted that religious identity is often secondary to other statuses in terms of mobilizing political action, but that the symbolic affirmation of the moral order does structure many different political movements. Paul Lichterman analyzed contemporary differences in the languages used by religious people while engaged in civic action through voluntary association and how people in different voluntary associations conceptualized the religious part of their own involvements. These cultural forms can be both unifying and divisive. There was a complementarity to Burns and Lichterman's presentations, as each showed the crucial role of cultural repertoires and social contexts for the ways in which culture becomes meaningful and can inspire public involvement. Jose Casanova presented a paper that offered a reassessment of the connections between sociological approaches to religion and Judeo-Christian western worldviews. He presented a challenge for a new century regarding how to think about sociologically about religion – and in particular "public religion" – while not being constrained by one particular set of cultural lenses. The session concluded with a lively question-and-answer period with the audience, and one-on-one conversations that carried on well after the ending time.

The second panel session was "local" in the sense that papers by Mark Warren, Richard Wood, et al., and Omar McRoberts all pointed to the ways in which local realities and local action are interpreted, how meanings become contextualized, and how what might be called "lived religion" influences daily life in face-to-face

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Section Officers 2002-03

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2004 Section Sessions

Religion and Family Christopher Ellison Population Research Center 1 University Station, G 1800 University of Texas at Austin Austin, TX 78712 512-471-8355 fax: 512-471-4886 <cellison@prc.utexas.edu>

Religion and Immigration Cecilia Menjivar School of Justice Studies Arizona State University Tempe, AZ 85287-0403 480-965-7631 Fax: 480-965-9199 <menjivar@asu.edu>

Religion, Race and Ethnicity (co-sponsored with the Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities) Michael Emerson Department of Sociology--MS28 6100 Main St. Rice University Houston, TX 77005-1892 713-348-2733 <moe@rice.edu>

Roundtables Prof. Jen'nan Ghazal Read Department of Sociology 3151 Social Science Plaza B University of California Irvine, CA 92697 949-824-841; Fax: 949-824-4717 <jennan@uci.edu>

New Member Books

Berger, Helen A., Evan A. Leach, Leigh S. Shaffer. *Voices from the Pagan Census: A National Survey of Witches and Neo-Pagans in the United States*. Columbia SC: The University of South Carolina Press, 2003.

Michele Dillon, ed., *Handbook for the Sociology of Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Fishman, Aryei. *Judaism and Collective Life: Self and Community in the Religious Kibbutz*. Routledge. 2002

Selengut, Charles. *Sacred Fury: Understanding Religious Violence*. Alta Mira Press, 2003.

Dissertations in the pipe

The following are recent or soon-to-be Ph.ds that will be on the market this Fall.

Rational Enchantment: Transcendent Meaning in the Modern World
Kelly Besecke, University of Wisconsin—Madison.

This dissertation addresses the classical sociological problem of modern meaninglessness. Scholars since Weber have addressed modern rationality as problematic for religious meaning; this project instead addresses rationality as a means by which some Americans are attempting to bring transcendent meaning into modern culture. Drawing on participant observation in a variety of religious and secular settings, the dissertation identifies a *culture of reflexive spirituality* that promotes a rational-critical relationship both to religious traditions and to traditions of rationality, placing them in dialogue with each other and asking each to address the claims of the other. This interactive relationship between religion and rationality suggests that religious traditions might contribute guiding transcendent meaning to the ongoing project of modernity.

Building Community, Building Bridges: Catholic Social Justice and Ethnic Ministries for Haitians in Miami, Montreal and Paris
Margarita Mooney, Department of Sociology, Princeton University

In my research, I compare how a supranational religious institution, the Catholic Church, has impacted the adaptation paths that Haitian immigrants have taken in three contexts—Miami, Montreal and Paris—with different immigration policies, norms about welcoming immigrants, and religious landscapes.

My analysis triangulates quantitative data from the American, Canadian and French census and immigration statistics with 14 months of ethnographic work in my three sites, including over 100 interviews. I argue that in Miami, where Haitians' context of reception was most negative, the Catholic Church has had the greatest impact in opening up paths of upward assimilation for Haitians. In Montreal, the Catholic Church played a crucial role in the initial organizing of the Haitian community, but with time, Catholic social justice programs and the ethnic ministry for Haitians in Montreal have declined in significance. In Paris, the Catholic Church has provided some seed resources for community organizing and a Haitian ethnic ministry, but this aid is small compared to Miami and Montreal.

Analyzing the differences in how the Catholic Church impacts immigrant adaptation in three sites broadens our understanding of how immigrants form communities in different countries and how religious institutions may mobilize their resource and leadership to support immigrant adaptation.

The Section Thanks...

Outgoing section officers Penny Edgell, Michael Emerson, and Elaine Howard Ecklund for their service.

ASA Section on Sociology of Religion Call for Nominations for 2004 Awards

From the Chair, continued from p.1

that one of our sessions is sponsored jointly with the Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities (SREMs). As far as I am concerned, one theme is enough, and Burawoy has given us plenty to think about beyond the confines of our research.

Yet, to me the lifeblood of the meetings is learning what my colleagues are finding out about the social world, and I have tried to structure our section sessions to maximize that potential. All three of our paper sessions are open for your submissions. As is our practice, the council will meet at 7:00 a.m. on our section day so that the half of the hour and forty-minute slot that would otherwise be given over to the council meeting will be set aside for roundtable presentations. I have encouraged the roundtable session organizer, Professor Jen'nan Ghazal Read, to take advantage of all of the tables that ASA makes available for us in order to make room for as many presentations as possible in tables of two, or at most three, papers.

Noticing that the Family, Comparative/Historical and Racial and Ethnic Minorities sections meet on the same day that we do and International Migration the day after, I contacted their respective chairs to see if we might arrange some co-sponsored sessions. (I was motivated to make these inquiries in part by the information on overlapping section memberships provided to section chairs by the ASA office. More than forty of our members are also members of the first three of these sections; the overlap with International Migration, a smaller section, is about half that.) I was disappointed that most had already committed their time but pleased that Marlese Durr, chair of SREMs, agreed to co-sponsor two sessions, both of which will be organized by Michael Emerson, a member of both sections. Emerson will welcome papers on Religion, Race, and Ethnicity as axes of both stratification and solidarity, both invidious privilege and group mobilization.

The other two open submission sessions, on family and immigration, are not jointly sponsored with their respective sections, but I expect that the coincidence (or proximity) of our section day and theirs will attract some interest on the part of their members. I am grateful to Chris Ellison and Cecilia Menjivar, respectively, for taking on the task of organizing these sections. Over the past few years, I have been thrilled to encounter so much good new work at the intersection of our field and these others. I will have something to say about this kind of synergy in the next issue of the newsletter.

Our section day is Monday, August 16, the third day of the ASA meetings, which begin on Saturday, and one day after the conclusion of the Association for the Sociology of Religion meetings on Sunday. For several reasons, the non-overlapping schedule foremost among them, we will not have our section reception jointly with ASR in San Francisco. I am discussing the possibility of a joint reception with SREMs and International Migration, and it seems most likely that our reception will be in one or the other of the ASA hotels on Monday evening at 6:30. If you are making your travel plans this long in advance, please try to stay through Monday. You may well save on airfare.

P.S. For those of you who saw me at the 2002 meetings in Chicago but did not hear the good news I shared in Atlanta, my doctors declared my cancer to be "in full remission" last February and since then have found negative results on each quarterly post-treatment scan. (I never thought I'd be so enamored of the word "negative.") Thank you for your concern.

Steve Warner
September 22, 2003

The religion section makes three annual awards for outstanding scholarly contributions, the book award, the article award, and the student paper award. Only members of the section are eligible to be considered for these awards, but enrollment in the section may occur concurrently with the nomination. Only books and articles published and student papers presented in the calendar year 2002 or since are eligible for nomination, and self nomination is acceptable. Authors of papers nominated for the student paper award must be students at the time of nomination, and no paper may be nominated simultaneously for the article and student paper awards. Nominated books, articles, and papers should be sent by mail to each of the committee members by the deadline indicated. Address inquiries to the chair of the respective committee.

Book Award (deadline: March 15, 2004). Send to Kevin J. Christiano (chair), Department of Sociology, 443 Decio Faculty Hall, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556-5644 (Kevin.J.Christiano.1@nd.edu; 574-631-7371); Joy Charlton, Associate Dean, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA 19081; and H. Wesley Perkins, Professor of Sociology, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, NY 14456.

Article Award (deadline: March 15, 2004). Send to Richard Wood (chair), Department of Sociology, MSC 05 3080, 1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001 (rlwood@unm.edu; 505-277-3945); Wendy Cadge, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Bowdoin College, 7000 College Ave, Brunswick, ME 04011; and Michael P. Young, Department of Sociology, University of Texas, Austin, 1 University Station A1700, Austin, TX 78712

Student Paper Award (deadline: May 15, 2004). Send to Marilyn Krogh (chair), Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Loyola University of Chicago, 6525 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60626 (mkrogh@luc.edu; 773-508-3471); Mark Chaves, Department of Sociology, University of Arizona, P.O. Box 210027, Tucson, AZ 85721-0027; and Daniel Olson, Department of Sociology, Indiana University-South Bend, South Bend, IN 46634

2003 Award Winners

Distinguished Book Award,

Richard L Wood. *Faith in Action: Religion, Race, and Democratic Organizing in America.* University of Chicago Press, 2002. (Selection Committee: Michael Hout (chair), Marie Cornwall and Philip Gorski)

Distinguished Article Award,

Michael P. Young, "Confessional Protest: The religious birth of U. S. National Social Movements," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 67, October 2002, 660 – 688 (Selection Committee: Richard L Wood (chair), Susan Eisenhandler, David Smilde).

Student Paper Award,

Kwai Hang Ng "Seeking the Christian Tutelage: Agency and culture in Chinese immigrants' conversion to Christianity," *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 63, Summer 2002, 195 – 214 (Selection Committee: Marilyn Krogh, chair; Sharon Erickson Nepstad and Dan Olson)

Minutes Of The Annual Business Meeting, August 17, 2003, Atlanta

The annual business meeting of the Sociology of Religion Section was called to order at 11:33 am by Michele Dillon, chair. 28 people attended the meeting. The Secretary-Treasurer distributed copies of the minutes of the annual business meeting for 2002. He asked members to review the minutes and send him their corrections. The business meeting voted to accept the minutes. The Secretary-Treasurer distributed copies of the budget for 2004. It is a provisional budget because exact information about income from the ASA and the amount of our reserve fund are not yet available. The business meeting voted to accept the provisional budget with the understanding that changes will be made.

Michele Dillon summarized for attendees the reports of Section committees and actions taken at the Section Council meeting this morning. The section program at the 2003 meeting contains two open paper sessions, one invited paper session, a session for roundtables, a business meeting, and a council meeting. Session topics are "religious individualism", "religion and life course transitions", and "religious cultures and violence". A reception was held jointly with the Association for the Sociology of Religion. Awards winners were announced (see separate article on p.3) The Section now has 500 members. Michele Dillon thanked all of the members who have worked for the section in 2003. Michele Dillon introduced R. Stephen Warner, the chair elect. He discussed his plans for 2004 in which he will organize the program for the annual meeting. The 2004 meeting is in San Francisco which is a great city for a convention. His comments on plans for the 2004 meeting elicited discussion from section members.

Members are invited to send Stephen Warner their ideas about what could be done to advance our field of specialization. The Section has a limited amount of money which may be spent on section development. Section day for our section will be the third day of the 2004 meeting. This means that our program sessions will not overlap with Association for the Sociology of Religion sessions. It is not clear that we will be able to have a joint reception with the Association for the Sociology of Religion in 2004. Warner will ask if they are interested in having a joint reception on the evening of the last day of their meeting. We could organize a joint reception with other ASA sections. Several members commented favorably in support of this option. One purpose of establishing a Sociology of Religion Section is to integrate our field with the ASA. This might be facilitated if the reception is at the ASA hotel. It is possible to rethink the format for a reception. Instead of the lavish buffet dinner which we experienced in 2003 we might provide an opportunity to meet new people and converse. Only finger food would be provided, not a buffet dinner. The event would be an opportunity to meet new people including people from other sections. Some possible topics for sections are "comparative religious regimes", "religion and family", and "religion, race and ethnicity." Warner invites members to send him proposals for sessions and to act as session organizers.

September 15, 2003 is the deadline for submissions to the next newsletter. David Smilde, newsletter editor, plans an author meets critic discussion of the award winning book by Richard Wood. He

plans to include listings of articles that are published in journals that sociologists of religion do not routinely receive and abstracts of dissertations. Rhys Williams will prepare an article for the newsletter about the proposal for naming the three awards that the Section presents each year. He invites comments from members which may be sent to him or published in the newsletter or the listserv.

The nominations committee for 2003 is Rhys Williams, chair, and Marie Cornwall, Harriet Hartman, and Darren Sherkat, members. Election results - Roger Finke is the chair elect for 2005. John Bartowski and Sally K. Gallagher were elected to Council. Kraig Beyerlein was elected student representative.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 am.

Respectfully submitted, William Silverman, Secretary/Treasurer

Religion and Politics from p.1

communities when they try to organize for change. Warren examined how faith-based community organizations affected a local public education system, and what some of the wider implications might be for democratic practice in urban America. While religion and public education have both been foundations for American democracy, the interplay of the two has not been well developed. Rich Wood and his associates are studying congregational organizing, the construction of "internal political culture" and the implications these have for the study of collective action. Far from being able to think about symbols as "found objects" in a social environment, culture needs to be constituted in particularly settings, and congregations are an important site where that happens. Finally, Omar McRoberts, drawing from his new book *Streets of Glory*, discussed what he calls the "politics of revitalization" in a neighborhood conceptualized as a "religious district." Thinking about congregations as having "spatial cultures" is important when understanding how an organization related to its immediate surroundings. The metaphors that interpret the congregation to itself and to its neighborhood influence how these entities and the people that comprise them are "mapped." This shapes the extent to which congregations feel responsible to its immediate environs. Interestingly, this insight also resonated with Lichterman's presentation in the morning session - both of which implicitly opened an invitation for thinking about religion in a sociology of place.

Thus, the two sessions had both macro and local approaches to culture, both larger structures of meaning, and local interpretational dynamics. The presenters represented some of the most current thinking about the important conceptual linkages between social organization and cultural meaning, and between different levels of analyses. At the same time, the concerns with religion and public life resonated with some of the most fundamental concerns of sociology since it became disciplinarily distinct, including Durkheim's focus on "belonging" and Weber's sociology of "meaning." The panels illustrated well the vibrancy in the current study of culture, but also the usefulness and excitement that a focus on religion and political life can bring to that "question."

Off the Beaten Path

Our section chair Steve Warner suggested it might be useful for the newsletter to run a section on recent articles on religion that were a bit off the beaten path. Response was overwhelming. Following are articles from 2000 that appeared in journals other than American Journal of Sociology, American Sociological Review or the three main religion journals.

- Barman, Emily and Mark Chaves. 2001. "Lessons for Multi-Site Nonprofits from the United Church of Christ." *Nonprofit Management & Leadership* 11:339-352.
- Bartkowski, John P. and Jen'nán Ghazal Read. 2003. "Veiled Submission: Gender, Power, and Identity among Evangelical and Muslim Women in the U.S." *Qualitative Sociology* 26, 1:71-92.
- Chaves, Mark. 2002. "Religious Organizations: Data Resources and Research Opportunities." *American Behavioral Scientist* 45:1523-1549.
- . 2002. "Abiding Faith." *Contexts* 1 (No. 2, Summer 2002):19-26.
- Chaves, Mark and Philip S. Gorski. 2001. "Religious Pluralism and Religious Participation." *Annual Review of Sociology* 27:261-281.
- Chaves, Mark, and William Tsitsos. 2001. "Congregations and Social Services: What They Do, How They Do It, and With Whom." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 30:660-683.
- . 2000. "Are Congregations Constrained by Government? Empirical Results from the National Congregations Study." *Journal of Church and State* 42:335-344.
- Ellingson, Stephan., Nelson Tebbe, Martha Van Haitisma, Edward O. Laumann. 2001. "Religion and the Politics of Sexuality." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 30:3-55.
- Evans, Matthew T. 2002. "William James, Carl Jung, and the Beginnings of Alcoholics Anonymous." *Clio's Psyche: Understanding the "Why" of Culture, Current Events, History, and Society* 9(2):86-88.
- Gallant, Mary and Harriet Hartman. 2002. Holocaust Education for the New Millennium: Assessing Our Progress. *Journal of Holocaust Education*. Winter.
- Hall, John R. "Jonestown in the 21st century," *The Jonestown Report* volume 5 (August 2003): 16-17, 19.
- Hartman, Harriet and Moshe Hartman, 2003. "Gender and Jewish Identity." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 18:1, 2003.
- . 2001. Dimensions of Jewish Identity Among American Jews. Chapter in S. Della Pergola (Ed.), *Papers in Jewish Demography, 1997*.
- . "Jewish Attitudes toward Inter marriage." *Journal of Contemporary Religion*. (Winter, 2000)
- Hartman, Moshe and Harriet. "Attachment to Israel of American Jews." *Review of Religious Research* (March, 2000).
- Kalberg, Stephen. 2001 "Should the 'Dynamic Autonomy' of Ideas Matter to Sociologists? Max Weber on the Origin of Other-Worldly Salvation Religions and the Constitution of Groups in American Society Today." *Journal of Classical Sociology* Vol.1, No.3 (Dec): 291-328.
- . 2001. "The Spirit Of Capitalism Revisited: On the New Translation of Weber's Protestant Ethic (1920)." *Max Weber Studies* Vol.2 No.1 (Nov.): 41-57.
- Marshall, Susan E. and Jen'nán Ghazal Read. 2003. "Identity Politics among Arab-American Women." *Social Science Quarterly* (December issue).
- McDuff, Elaine M. and Charles W. Mueller. "Gender Differences in the Professional Orientations of Protestant Clergy." *Sociological Forum* 17: 465-492. ((September 2002)
- . 2000. "The Ministry as an Occupational Labor Market: Intentions to Leave the Local Church vs. Intentions to Leave the Ministry." *Work and Occupations* 27: 89-116. (February 2000)
- Menjívar, Cecilia. 2001. "Latino Immigrants and Their Perceptions of Religious Institutions: Cubans, Salvadorans, and Guatemalans in Phoenix, AZ." *Migraciones Internacionales* 1 (1): 65-88.
- Read, Jen'nán Ghazal. 2004. "Coming to America: The Effects of Nativity and Culture on Arab-American Women's Employment." *International Migration Review* 38, 4: (forthcoming).
- . 2002. "Challenging Myths of Muslim Women: The Influence of Islam on Arab-American Women's Labor Force Participation." *Muslim World* 96, 2:18-39.
- Read, Jen'nán Ghazal and John P. Bartkowski. 2000. "To Veil or Not to Veil? A Case Study of Identity Negotiation among Muslim Women Living in Austin, Texas." *Gender & Society* 14:395-417.
- Regnerus, Mark D. 2003. "Moral Communities and Adolescent Delinquency: Religious Contexts and Community Social Control." *Sociological Quarterly* 44 (4): TBA.
- Regnerus, Mark D. and Glen H. Elder, Jr. 2003. "Religion and Vulnerability among Low-Risk Adolescents." *Social Science Research*, (in press).
- Regnerus, Mark D., Christian Smith, and Brad Smith. 2004. "Social Context in the Development of Adolescent Religiosity." *Applied Developmental Science*.
- Reed, Jean-Pierre. 2002. "Culture in Action: Nicaragua's Revolutionary Identities." *New Political Science* vol. 24 No.2
- Reed, Jean-Pierre, and John Foran. 2002. "Political Cultures of Opposition: Exploring Idioms, Ideologies, and Revolutionary Agency in the Case of Nicaragua." *Critical Sociology* vol. 28 No.3.
- Rostosky, Sharon S., Mark D. Regnerus, and Margaret L.C. Wright. Forthcoming. "Coital Debut: The Role of Religiosity and Sex Attitudes in the Add Health Survey." *Journal of Sex Research*.
- Schmalzbauer, John. "Telling Catholic and Evangelical Stories in American Journalism: The Impact of the Religious Imagination," *U.S. Catholic Historian*. Spring 2002, 25-44.
- Smilde, David. 2004 "Contradiction without Paradox: Evangelical Political Culture in the 1998 Venezuelan Elections," *Latin American Politics and Society* (Spring) in press.
- . 2003. "Skirting the Instrumental Paradox: Intentional Belief Through Narrative in Latin American Pentecostalism." *Qualitative Sociology* Vol 26, No.3 (Fall) pp.313-29.
- Steenland, Brian, Jerry Park, Mark Regnerus, Lynn Robinson, Bradford Wilcox, and Robert Woodberry. 2000. "The Measure of American Religion: Toward Improving the State of the Art." *Social Forces* 79: 291-318.
- Tucker, James. 2002. "New Age religion and the cult of the self." *Society* January/February: 46-51.
- Warner, R. Stephen. 2000 "Religion and New (Post-1965) Immigrants: Some Principles Drawn from Field Research." *American Studies* 41 (Summer/Fall 2000): pp. 267-286
- Wilcox, Bradford W. 2002. "Religion, Convention, and Paternal Involvement." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 64 (August): 780-792.
- Williams, Rhys H. 2002, "Religion, Community, and Place: Locating the Transcendent." *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* (Summer 2002) 12 (2): 249-263.
- Zubrzycki, Genevieve. 2001 "'We, the Polish Nation': Ethnic and Civic Visions of Nationhood in Post-communist Constitutional Debates," *Theory and Society*, 30: 5, 629-668.

Calls for Papers

Special Issue of Critical Sociology: **Cultural Practices in the Making of Oppositional Politics**. Edited by Jean-Pierre Reed (University of Memphis). This special issue is designed to further explore the mechanisms and processes through which everyday cultural practices assume a radical or challenging nature, and play a role in oppositional consciousness formation. We seek to demonstrate how "traditional" and/or politically unconventional social spaces and cultural practices can exhibit a radical potential under conditions of political mobilization. As such, we invite submissions that critically consider the role of the everyday familiar, cultural practices, and the "traditional" as anti-hegemonic vehicles in the political arena. Please submit a 500 word titled abstract and proposal by December 1st, 2003, outlining the theoretical framework, main points, and methodological angle of your paper. Forward abstracts and proposals to the Special Issue editor at jpreed@memphis.edu. Applicants will be notified by January 7, 2004 on the status of their submissions. Selected papers are due May 1st, 2004.

Research on Aging is announcing a Call for Papers for a **special issue on Religion, Health, and Aging**. We welcome relevant submissions on a broad array of topics, including (but not restricted to) the following: *links between religion, spirituality, and well-being across the life span *religion and health among diverse or understudied populations *conceptualization and measurement of religion and spirituality *religious influences on health behaviors *negative aspects of the religion-health relationship *faith-based programs and interventions related to health promotion *patterns and outcomes of religious coping *gender differences in effects of religion on health outcomes *selectivity in religion-health research *critiques of religion-health studies *health implications of religious meaning, sense of purpose, and forgiveness *cross-national or comparative research on religion and health. Inquiries about this special issue may be directed to the guest editor, Christopher G. Ellison (cellison@prc.utexas.edu). Submissions should be sent to: Angela M. O'Rand, Editor Research on Aging Department of Sociology Duke University Durham, NC 27708-9088. Deadline for submissions is December 1, 2003.

Symposium: Religion, Conflict And Violence: Exploring Patterns Past And Present, East And West. May 13-14, 2004. Comparative Religion Program Jackson School Of International Studies, University Of Washington. This symposium seeks to foster emerging research that will give us purchase on the changing patterns of religious conflict and violence across cultures, historical time periods and world religions. Send a two page abstract and two-page CV to lpaxton@u.washington.edu electronically in MS word. *Submission Deadline* The submission deadline is January 15, 2004. Finalists will be notified by February 1, 2004 For those selected, we expect a completed essay by April 15, 2004. *Travel Support/Honorarium* Each finalist will present an essay at the Symposium. An honorarium of \$500 to cover travel, lodging, and miscellaneous expenses is stipulated for this purpose. Meals will be provided. Submissions will also be considered for inclusion in an edited volume based on the symposium. Please contact Symposium co-directors for clarification: Professors James Wellman, Western Religions (jwellman@u.washington.edu) and Kyoko Tokuno, Eastern Religions (tokuno@u.washington.edu)

Keeping the Shi'ites Straight

Roy Parviz Mottahedh
Harvard University

No story has been more confusing for the Western news media to cover in postwar Iraq than the politics of the country's Shi'ite majority. That the Shi'ites would be a central story was universally expected. They had suffered systematic repression under Saddam Hussein, especially after the first Gulf War, when they staged a revolt in the South. If anyone required liberation in Iraq, it was the Shi'ites.

But after they failed to welcome their liberators with rapturous joy, and one of their religious leaders was brutally murdered by followers of another one of their religious leaders, the rosy storyline of liberation collapsed amid a host of unanswered questions.

Were the Shi'ites pro-American ("grateful") or anti-American ("ungrateful")? Did they look for direction to the Shi'ite religious leaders in neighboring Iran? What did they want? And why did they have so many leaders?

There were, of course, the normal orthographical problems associated with transliterating a strange alphabet, and some of these had more than merely orthographic significance. For example, after some floundering the *New York Times* (followed by most other papers) decided to identify the leader of the Shi'ite Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution Iraq as Muhammad Bakr al-Hakim, not realizing that "Bakr" is conventionally used by Sunni Muslims, "Baqir" by Shi'ites.

Observing such linguistic niceties mattered less than making readers aware of the basic outlines of Shi'ite religious history. At best, the news media offered brief accounts of the figures of Ali and Husayn, but that, while useful, was not enough to make Shi'ite behavior in Iraq understandable.

Ali was the first cousin of the Prophet Muhammad and the husband of his eldest surviving child, Fatima. According to Shi'ite belief, Ali was designated by the Prophet as his successor, and endowed with divine guidance so that the community of Muslims would not go astray.

In 661 Ali was murdered—an event that for Shi'ites represents the rejection by the Muslim majority of the opportunity for a truly godly government. His burial at Najaf, now an Iraqi city with a population of 585,000, established a religious center for Shi'ism. Shi'ites believe that a succession of Imams, each appointed by his predecessor from the line of Ali, possesses the same infallibility that Ali possessed.

After Ali only the third of these Imams, Ali's son Husayn (through Fatima a grandson of the Prophet) made a bid to be an actual political ruler, and he was brutally murdered in 680. (To their eternal shame, his followers, afraid of the anti-Shi'ite government of the time, failed to come to his aid.) It was not long before some Shi'ites began to flagellate themselves on the anniversary of his death, and his martyrdom is still commemorated on that date.

Husayn is buried at Kerbala (Karbala), which became the second most important Shi'ite shrine city and now boasts a population of 572,000. Reliving his passion is, for Shi'ites, what reliving the passion

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of Jesus is for many Christians.

If some newspapers did get the bare bones—if not the emotional significance—of this early Shi'ite history right, they almost universally skipped everything between 680 and the 21st century. For present purposes the crucial issues in subsequent Shi'ite history are: the absence of a current Imam; the establishment of a *madrasa*, or seminary, at Najaf; and the change in the structure of Shi'ite leadership in the 19th century.

In 941 Shi'ite leaders declared that the 12th Imam had disappeared to return as the Messiah at the end of time. Those Shi'ites who accept this disappearance are often called Twelvers. This left the Shi'ites—the overwhelming majority of whom are Twelvers—with the same dilemma faced by the Jews in the absence of their Messiah. Many Shi'ites chose to withdraw from politics and quietly await his coming.

Around 1057 a man named Tusi, the leading Shi'ite scholar of his day, migrated from Baghdad, where Sunnis had burned his house and books, to Najaf, where he began the systematic teaching of Shi'ite learning. Shi'ites understand this to be the parent of all their madrasas down to the present.

Already by the end of the 10th century Shi'ite scholars had developed full systems of theology and jurisprudence that—like Catholic but unlike Sunni thought—were based on natural law. In the 19th century Shi'ite teaching underwent a dramatic transformation when, after much controversy, the majority of madrasas accepted that only the most qualified jurists could establish norms of behavior for ordinary Shi'ite believers. Each of these few jurists, who seldom numbered as many as 10, was called a "Source of Imitation" (*marja' at-taqlid*). Consequently, unlike most other Muslim groups, the Twelver Shi'ites have a semi-hierarchy with figures roughly equivalent to Catholic bishops or the Grand Rabbi of Vilna.

Knowing this history would have saved English-speaking reporters from many mistakes. Take, for example, the Hawza of Najaf, identified by the *Los Angeles Times*' Megan K. Stack April 29 as a "council of scholars" and by the *Washington Posts*' William Booth May 15 as an "open university." Abbreviated from "al-Hawza al-Ilmiya" ("the learned area"), the Hawza was supposedly established by Tusi and is now used to designate that part of the city where the madrasas are located—and, metaphorically, the seminary community as a whole.

Western reporters sniffed but could not identify the Shi'ite hierarchy. By far the most important Source currently on the scene in Najaf is Ayatollah Sistani, and this is what makes him, as many reporters did say, the "senior" cleric. In fact, no other Iraqi mullah possesses his learning or piety, and he has more followers in the Twelver Shi'ite world than any other Source alive.

Also confusing to reporters were the Sadrs, an important clerical family that has been a source of at least two Sources. Muhammad Baqir as-Sadr (or al-Sadr) was the most innovative Iraqi Shi'ite thinker of the 20th century. Aware that the Communists had a disproportionate appeal to Shi'ites in Iraq, Sadr studied Marxist thought with a view to fighting back. He believed in "Islamic government" but thought the time was not ripe for it, and his exposition of the principles of Shi'ite jurisprudence has replaced older books in Iran as well as Iraq.

In the 1970s Sadr's followers founded a political party and, excited by the success of the Iranian Revolution in 1979, attempted to assassinate the foreign minister Tariq Aziz. The shock was enormous when Saddam had him and his sister killed in 1980, because he seemed destined to head Iraqi (and possibly Iranian) Shi'ites. When

the Shi'ites in the South revolted in 1991 it was Muhammad Baqir as-Sadr's portrait that was seen everywhere.

After the revolt, the Baathist government asked the leading member of the Kelidar family in Najaf to suggest, as the Kelidars had done for generations, an official head of the Shi'ite community. Rather than consult the Sources or their close associates, the man put forward a list of clergymen considered to be politically pliant and of strong Arab identity. One of these was a remote cousin of Muhammad Baqir as-Sadr's named Ayatollah Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr. Muhammad Sadiq was pious, and he had written on morality and the history of Shi'ism, but he was not a great legal expert. Nevertheless his "pastoral" ability gained him increasing favor with the ordinary Shi'ites and he was accepted as a Source.

Eventually Muhammad Sadiq's piety and pastoralism led him to voice the desires of his flock and he became his own man to an extent intolerable to Saddam. In 1999 he was killed along with two of his sons.

But another son, Muqtada as-Sadr, was not killed, and, now in his twenties, he is seeking to play an important role in post-Saddam Iraq. While the press caught the essence of this father-son story, the relationships were often jumbled. For example, on May 14 Peter Ford of the *Christian Science Monitor* wrote that Muqtada "derived most of his popularity from his relationship with his grandfather, Muhammad Bakr Sadr, and his uncle, Mohamed Sadeq Sadr."

The semi-hierarchical system means that no one but a Source can give an answer (or "fatwa") to a question on a disputed point of law. A local mullah might tell a member of his flock that a strange species of fish was or was not kosher, but he would be ashamed to issue a fatwa on how to behave toward the central government as long as superiors were available. (It was thus embarrassing to discover, in a good *New York Times* article by Douglas Jehl and David E Sanger April 24, that U.S. special forces troops and intelligence officers were "identifying friendly clerics in small towns and cities and encouraging them to issue fatwas in support of the postwar American administrations.")

For his part, young Muqtada as-Sadr, who may not have passed even the intermediate stage of Shi'ite seminary study, would be at sea without the advice and counsel of Sayyid Kazim Ha'eri, an Iraqi who lives in Iran. Indeed, the interaction of Shi'ites in Iraq and Iran explains a great deal about Shi'ite politics both countries today.

Shortly after Muhammad Baqir as-Sadr was executed, Saddam put Ayatollah Khomeini, the senior Source at the time, under house arrest and expelled the so-called "Iranian" Shi'ites, many of whom were so Arabized that they could not speak Persian. About 40,000 left in 1980, more in succeeding years, and their property was confiscated and auctioned off.

Out of fellow Shi'ite feeling Iranian clergymen got government jobs for some of these refugees. One, the highly conservative Sayyid Mahmud Hashimi Shahruddin, now heads the Iranian judiciary. (He and Haeri were Muhammad Baqir as-Sadr's closest pupils.) As the mood in Iran has turned against the conservatives, the Iraqis, who have long been seen by Iranians as more hard line, are less and less welcome, particularly in positions of authority.

Something of an exception is Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, who mirrors

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the views of more moderate Iranian clergymen. Like Muqtada as-Sadr he is the son of a Source but unlike him he has more than his lineage to rely upon.

Now 63, al-Hakim completed the higher level of seminary study with Muhammad Baqir as-Sadr and went on to run the office of his father and, eventually, the office of Sadr himself. (Every popular Source has an office in order to supervise, among other things, the payment of religious taxes.) Somewhat before Sadr's death, al-Hakim fled to Iran where he became the head of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolutions in Iran (SCIRI), which commands the 10,000 to 15,000-member Badr Brigades of Iranian-trained Iraqi exiles. He has watched the conservative Iranian clergy lose their following and in certain respects distanced himself from them.

Aware of the limitations of trying to establish a place for himself in Iraq from an office in Tehran, al-Hakim has sought to enhance SCIRI's standing by diplomatic efforts. These have ranged from meeting with Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia to serving as a member (not always active) of the Iraqi National Congress, the organization led by the indefatigable and unquestionably liberal secularist Shi'ite Ahmed Chalabi.

Al-Hakim's well-orchestrated return to Iraq was well covered on May 12 by the London *Times*' Stephen Farrell, who traveled a considerable distance with him and paid close attention. The cleric's line has been fairly consistent. As Farrell reported, the motifs throughout his speeches are "Islam, democracy, Islamic law, unity, freedom and tolerance of other religions"—and, one might add, Iraqi nationalism.

Of course, some of this is accommodationist: The Americans are listening. But everywhere al-Hakim was greeted by large crowds. He is a real politician, and he understands the need to pay a political price for what he gets.

The Americans are suspicious of al-Hakim. After all, the conservative "Supreme Leader" of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei, accompanied him to the airport as he left Iran. He received Iranian financial support during his long years in Iran and may still receive such support. Yet the Americans need him as much as he needs them. As a Shi'ite vegetable and fruit merchant in Nasiriya told the *New York Times* Craig S. Smith April 12, "If Hakim is shut out, the Iraqi people, especially in the South, will not accept this."

Unlike al-Hakim, Ayatollah Abdul al-Majid Khomei, the Shi'ite cleric favored by the U.S. and Britain, was a known quantity to the West. A respected cleric in his own right as well as the son of a Source, Khomei made the Khomei Foundation in London into a center for devout but liberal Iraqi Shi'ites. But when he returned to Iraq in May he was murdered by thuggish followers of Muqtada as-Sadr as he was about to enter the shrine of Ali in Najaf—an event well narrated with interesting detail in the May 19 issue of *Newsweek*.

The most telling event in Shi'ite clerical affairs in post-Saddam Iraq as of this writing may have been the siege of Ayatollah Sistani's house in Najaf. The thugs that killed Khomei besieged the house and asked Sistani to leave. After a few days Shi'ite tribesmen arrived and the besiegers departed. The tribes from which so many settled Iraqi Shi'ites trace their origin have always looked for guidance to that Source whose authority has been recognized by the consensus of the teachers at the Hawza in Najaf, and Sistani is the genuine article. While he detests politics, his circle has repeatedly asserted that Iraq should be ruled by Iraqis. The Americans would do well to show him and his opinions respect.

Only William Booth, writing in the *Washington Post* May 15, has

demonstrated a grasp of the importance of national origins when it comes to the leading figures in the Hawza. Sistani is from Mashhad in Iran but has spent most of his life in Iraq and was the leading pupil of Khomei, the previous Najaf Source and father of the Ayatollah Khomei who was killed. He is accepted by some Iranians and most Arab Shi'ites. But the Afghan Shi'ite community looks to their own Ayatollah in Najaf, Fayyad. The South Asian Shi'ites look to Bashir Najafi, who is of Pakistani origin. And the complexities of ethnic allegiance in the Hawza only begin here.

The difficulty of reporting on the Iraqi Shi'ites has at times been physically dangerous. I join the many friends of NBC's David Bloom who mourn his loss under fire. So many reporters traveled to the same mullah-controlled hospital and mosque in Sadr City because it was a relatively safe destination. Fartusi, a comparatively minor mullah who preaches there, became perhaps the most interviewed Shi'ite cleric in history, which he doesn't deserve to be. The public would have been better served had the journalists been a little more adventuresome.

Meanwhile, it would have been a service if someone had tried to move beyond the issues of what the Shi'ites think of the United States and actually told us what the Shi'ites believe. The *New York Times*' Daniel J. Wakin filed a characteristically interesting story on Shi'ite self-flagellation in metropolitan New York on April 25. But might the shock at seeing self-flagellation among Iraqis (forbidden by the great ayatollahs but so far unstoppable) have been tempered for both the reporter and the reader by the realization that Jesuits flagellated themselves until recently and that members of Opus Dei and Native American Christians in the Southwest still do?

When it comes to the Iraqi Shi'ites, the U.S. government would do well to heed the views of Brandeis University's Yitzhak Nakash, a foremost expert in the field, writing in the July-August issue of *Foreign Affairs*. Reminding us that Fadl Allah, once the guiding spirit of Hezbollah in Lebanon, no longer advocates an Islamic government, Nakash suggests reaching out to moderate Shi'ite clerics. Their pragmatic approach to their flocks suggests that they are accomplished at adjusting to political realities if they have a say in matters vital to them.

It will be very hard, and possibly very unwise, to build a new Iraq without allowing some of the Shi'ite clergy to participate. President Bush might feel comfortable with calling them "faith-based political leaders."

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