

Sociology of Religion Section

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American Sociological Association

From the Chair

Michele Dillon
University of New Hampshire

It is my great pleasure in this brief note to cordially invite all of you to attend the religion section reception during the ASA meetings in Atlanta. As in previous years, we will hold a joint reception with the Association for the Sociology of Religion. The reception is scheduled for Saturday evening (August 16th); please check the final ASA program for the reception time and location. The reception is a wonderful and spirited social gathering and provides us with a great opportunity to renew acquaintances and friendships as well as to meet new people. Please feel welcome to bring along a colleague and especially any graduate students who are discovering the joys of the profession. We also, of course, use the reception to announce and honor the winners of our best book, article, and student paper awards. The respective award committees have been working very hard in assessing the submissions and I look forward to congratulating the award recipients. The Atlanta meetings promise to be very rewarding intellectually: in addition to the section and regular religion sessions (see listings elsewhere in this newsletter), the conference program as a whole has several other panels that should be engaging for sociologists interested in religion. Our section day is Sunday, August 17th, and that is when we will have our section's open business meeting, so please come and share your views on the state of the section. Onward to Atlanta!

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Featured Article

Bishops' Political Influence and the Catholic Watergate

David Yamane
University of Notre Dame

(Adapted from an essay appearing in the May 20, 2003 issue of *Commonweal* magazine.)

There was no bigger story in American religion last year than the scandal in the Roman Catholic Church. The sexual abuse of children by priests and the failure of bishops to address the problem has been called the "Catholic Watergate" by observers across the theological spectrum. According to George Weigel of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, "In the first months of 2002, the Catholic Church in the United States entered the greatest crisis in its history" (George Weigel, *The Courage to be Catholic: Crisis, Reform, and the Future of the Church* New York: Basic Books, 2002, p. 1.).

Although it is too early to assess fully the consequences of this crisis, sociologists ought to be attuned to a number of areas of concern regarding the largest religious denomination in America. Will the scandal affect the recruitment and retention of priests, or the very structure of the Catholic priesthood? Or the willingness of lay Catholics to give their money or time to the church? Or the relationships between bishops, priests, and the laity? Will it lead to a schism in the church, to the founding of an American Catholic Church independent of Rome? Or might the scandal pass without any major transformation in church structure and practice?

Beyond internal church matters is the question of the consequences of the scandal for the public role of the church. As a result of the social mobility of individual Catholics and the *aggiornamento* effected within the church by Vatican II, Roman Catholicism has moved closer the center of American life in the last forty years than it has ever been. The publication of two pastoral letters by the American bishops in the 1980s—*The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response* (1983) and *Economic Justice for All* (1986)—solidified their new position as the most important religious voice in American public life.

Just prior to the publication of the *Boston Globe's* spotlight investigation in January 2002, I began a national study of the bishops' role in state-level politics. By the time I arrived in Charlottesville last August to work on my book, the idea that the bishops would even have a political role seemed dubious. The Catholic Watergate threatened to turn my contemporary sociological study into a work of history or, perhaps, fiction.

But a funny thing happened in the course of my research. I found that—even in the wake of the scandal—the bishops could claim victories in every state in which they sought to influence public policy. To take but one example, last fall the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference led the successful

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Religion Sessions at ASA Atlanta

Sociology of Religion Section Sessions

Religious Cultures and the Propensity toward Violence.

Organizer and presider: John R. Hall, UC Davis.

Robert Prus *University of Waterloo* "Terrorism, Tyranny, and Religious Extremism as Collective Activity: Beyond the Deviant, Psychological, and Power Mystiques"; David Smilde *University of Georgia* "Worthless Enemies and Exasperating Victims: Confronting Violence through Pentecostalism in Caracas"; Silvia Pedraza *University of Michigan* "Cuba's Catholic Church and the Contemporary Exodus"; Mark Gould *Haverford College* "Eschatology and Soteriology: Religious Commitment and Its Consequences in Islam and Christianity"

Religion and Life Course Transitions

Organizer: Lisa Pierce, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

J. Brian Brown *Ohio State University* "Childhood Poverty, Religious- and Secular-based Volunteering, and the Transition to Adulthood"; Katharine Donato, Michael Emerson, Chizuko Wakabayashi *Rice University* "How Do Religion and Migration Affect Adolescent Health?"; Duane Alwin, Jacob Felson, Edward Walker *Pennsylvania State University* "Keeping the Faith: Religious Change and Social Attitudes and Beliefs" Tola Olu Pearce *University of Missouri* "The Charismatic Movement's Vision For Family Life in Nigeria" Discussant: Christopher Ellison, *University of Texas at Austin*

Roundtables for the Section on the Sociology of Religion

Organizer: Melissa Wilde, *University of Indiana*

1: *Religion, the Family, and Childhood Socialization* - Discussant: Lisa Pierce; Kudler, Taryn. "Coming Out of the Broom Closet: Wiccan Identity"; Wallace, Ruth A. "The Role of a Catholic Pastor's Kid"; Wilhelm, Brown, Rooney and Steinburg. "The Intergenerational Transmission of Generosity."

#2: *Religion and Race* - Discussant: TBA; Hayes, Richard: "Institutional Logics and Entrepreneurial Activity in the Black Church"; Bryant, James. "Divine Calling and the Professionalization of the Black Ministry"; Schieman, Scott and Pudrovska. "It's in God's Hands" Socioeconomic Status and the Sense of Divine Control among Black and White Elderly"; Cherry, Stephen, and Mike McMullen: "Religiosity, Race and the Construction of a Global Identity: The Case of Two Baha'i Communities"

#3: *Congregations and Community* - Discussant: David Sikkink; Bradley, Karen. "The Spatial Contours of Faith in the Community"; Adams, Jimi. "Do Institutional Variables Matter When Modeling Congregational Growth? Some Additions to the Traditional Approach"; Clerkin, Richard and Kristin Gronbjerg. "The Role of Congregations in Delivering Human Services"; Kai-Ti Chou. "Cultivation and Religion: The Case of Taiwan Falun Gong".

4: *Religion and Culture* - Discussant: Brian Steensland Norman; Jon R.: "Inclusive of All? Identity, Power, and Local Culture in a Gay and Lesbian Synagogue"; Enev, Tihomir N. "Dimensions of Culture and Personality in Societies Dominated by Catholic and Eastern Orthodoxy"; Laubach, Marty. "The Social Effects of Psychism"

Regular Sessions On Religion

Organizer: Aaron Culley *Wingate University*

Social Psychology of Religion:

Presider: Aaron B. Culley, *Wingate University*

Gregory Stanczak *University of Southern California* "Engaged Spirituality: An Ontological Alternative to Rational Choice Frameworks"; Martin Laubach *University of Connecticut* "Self Possessed: An Ethnophenomenological Study of Spirit Possession"; Amy Adamczyk, Pennsylvania State University and Roger Finke "Explaining Morality: Using International Data to Reestablish the Micro/Macro Link"; "The Role of Boundaries and Adaptability in Promoting Congregational Participation" Kevin Dougherty, Calvin College

Religion and Religious Institutions in Cultural Conflicts

Presider: TBA

Anthony Pogoreic *Catholic University of America* "Culture Clash: The Relationship between the Vatican and American Catholics"; Richard Pitt, Vanderbilt University "The Discourse of Conflict and Resolution: A Historic Church's Approach to Conflict"; Amy Burdette, University of Texas, Austin "Conservative Protestantism and Tolerance of Homosexuals"; Stephen Johnson, Ball State University "Religion and Anti-Islamic Attitudes"

There are a number of Special Sessions that are jointly-sponsored with the Association for the Sociology of Religion

Religion, Politics, and the Analysis of Culture (I): Comparative and Historical Perspectives

Organizer and Presider: Rhys H. Williams, *University of Cincinnati*,

Lori G. Beaman *Concordia University, Montreal* "Running the Risk of Exclusion: A Comparative Analysis of Religious Freedom"; Gene Burns *Michigan State University* "Is American Religion Politicized? Symbolic Affirmation vs. Religious Hegemony"; Jose Casanova *New School of Social Research*; Paul Lichterman *University of Wisconsin-Madison* "Religion, Politics and Culture in a Global Age" "Religion's Quiet Influence on Civic Engagement."

Religion, Politics, and the Analysis of Culture (II): Community Organizing and Local Political Culture

Organizer and Presider: Rhys H. Williams, *University of Cincinnati*

Mark R. Warren *Harvard University* "Community Organizing and Public Education: Rebuilding the Foundations for Democratic Life?"; Richard L. Wood, Lora Stone, Mozafar Banihashemi *University of New Mexico* "Sustaining a Movement: Congregational Development as Cross-Institutional Flow"; Omar McRoberts *University of Chicago* "The Politics of Revitalization in a Religious District: The Four Corners Case."

The Centennial of W.E.B. DuBois on the Black Church

Organizer—Anthony J. Blasi, Tennessee State University

Convener—Robert Wortham, North Carolina Central University

Andrew Billingsley *University of Maryland* "W.E.B. DuBois: Toward a Sociology of the Black Church"; Cheryl Townsend Gilkes *Colby College* "The Gift of the Spirit: W.E.B. DuBois and a Sociology of Religious Knowledge" Phillip J. Zuckerman *Pitzer College* and Sandra Barnes, *Purdue University*, "On the 100th Anniversary of DuBois's Negro Church" Anthony J. Blasi, *Tennessee State University* "Meditation on DuBois's Critical Fifty Years of Black Religion"

The Question of Contemporary Jewish Culture: Results from NJPS 2000-1 and Beyond

Organizer and Presider: Harriet Hartman *Rowan University*
Uzi Rebhun *Hebrew University* and Shlomit Levy *Hebrew University*
"Diverging or Converging Identities: American and Israeli Jews"; Barry Chiswick *University of Illinois at Chicago* "The Occupational Attainment of American Jewry: 2000"; Carmella Chiswick, *University of Illinois at Chicago* "The Economics of the American Jewish Family Life"; Harriet Hartman *Rowan University* "Gender Equality Among American Jews: An Update"; Sylvia Barack Fishman *Brandeis University* "Interfaith Romance in Literature, Film and Popular Culture"
Discussant: Moshe Hartman

Jewish and American Cultures: Convergences and Divergences

Organizer and Presider, Arnold Dashefsky, *University of Connecticut*
Vivian Klaff *University of Delaware, Newark* "The Dynamics of Jewish Inter-Generational Identity Change"; Laurence Kotler-Berkowitz, *United Jewish Communities, NYC* "Social Bases and Social Consequences of Poverty Among American Jews: An Initial Analysis"; Dov Lacerwitz, *Bar-Ilan University, Israel* "Removing the Strong NonResponse Bias of the 1990 and 2000 NJPS Surveys by Working the Jewish Communities"; Frank L. Mott and Dawn Hurst, *Ohio State University, Columbus* "Semantics and Substance: Interpreting Jewish Intermarriage in the United States"; Bruce Phillips *Hebrew Union College, Los Angeles* "Social and Cultural Differences Among American Jews in Metropolitan America: Convergences and Divergences"

Informal Roundtable Discussion: Why Religion Matters in Sociology

Organizers: Kelly Besecke, *Kenyon College*, and Gail Murphy-Geiss, *Colorado College*

There are also a couple of presentations that deal with religion but are not in religion sessions.

Margarita Mooney *Princeton University* "Ethnic Ministries and Social Justice: Haitian Catholics Construct Paths to Integration in Miami, Montreal and Paris" (Regular Session on Immigrant Communities).
Janet Jacobs *University of Colorado* "Genocide and the ethics of Feminist Ethnography: Refelctions on the Study of Gender in Holocaust Memorial Culture" (Regular Session on Ethnography).
Michael Hout *University of California Berkeley* and Andrew Greely *University of Chicago / University of Arizona* "Religion and Happiness" (Special Session "James A. Davis, An Appreciation").

Opportunities and Initiatives

Contemporary Sociology would like to add to their pool of reviewers. If you are interested send a curriculum vitae to the following address. JoAnn Miller and Robert Perrucci (Editors) *Contemporary Sociology* Stone Hall, 700 W. State St. Purdue University West Lafayette, IN 47907-2059 Ph: (765) 494-0938 FAX: (765) 496-1476 cs@soc.purdue.edu

Call for Papers Edited volume on religious conversion in Latin America. Interested authors should send an abstract on religious conversion, switching or apostasy in any Latin American religious tradition to Timothy Steigenga (tsteigen@fau.edu) by September 1, 2003. Full articles will be due in Spring 2004.

Member Publications

Omar M. McRoberts. *Streets of Glory: Church and Community in a Black Urban Neighborhood*. University of Chicago Press, 2003.

An ethnographic study of religious congregations in Four Corners, a poor, black neighborhood in Boston containing twenty-nine congregations. It explains the high concentration, wide variety, and ambiguous social impact of religious activity in the neighborhood, which McRoberts dubs a "religious district." The book explains, among other things, the implications of the religious district phenomenon for social policy, which increasingly turns to congregations to "save" the inner city.

Ruth Wallace. *They Call Him Pastor: Married Men in Charge of Catholic Parishes*. Paulist Press, 2003

A study of twenty parishes, located in the four census regions in the United States, that are administered by married men: ten laymen and ten deacons. The results of interviews with these men, their wives and children, the sacramental minister (non-resident priest), the bishop, and a focus-group of parishoners revealed that the parish leaders tended to practice collaborative leadership, and their marital status was a key factor for their parishioners' acceptance of and cooperation with these new leaders.

Dissertation in the Pipe

Elaine Howard Ecklund *Cornell University*

The Good American: Civic Adaptation among Second-Generation Korean Americans

Researchers who study recent immigration largely examine economic adaptation of the new immigrants and their children. In contrast, this dissertation investigates what I call *civic adaptation*. Specifically, I study the impact a congregation's ethnic composition has on narratives of American citizenship and civic practices, such as volunteerism and political participation, for religiously involved Korean Americans. I conducted one hundred and three in-depth interviews with Korean Americans around the country, did nine months of fieldwork in, and surveys of two evangelical congregations: one a second-generation Korean-American congregation, and the other a multiethnic congregation with Korean-American participation. I situate this research in the context of larger American civic involvement through analysis of the Social Capital Benchmark Survey. I find religious group memberships are an important part of civic adaptation for Korean Americans. More than a demographic variable, a congregation's ethnic composition provides an arena with the possibility for different kinds of cultural logic. Differences in the connection between ethnicity and spirituality, even between two congregations that are both institutionally evangelical, create different models of American citizenship, and shape not only how Korean Americans adapt to American civic life, but also how they might *impact* larger institutional categories such as American evangelicalism itself. This research shows the value of understanding various ways different group memberships influence social construction of citizenship responsibilities. In particular, research on religion and civic life should consider the ethnic context of religious participation in studies of second-generation immigrants.

effort to pass a Religious Freedom Protection Act. This despite the fact that the ACLU of Pennsylvania tried to play "the scandal card" during the debate by accusing the church of advocating the legislation in order to shield pedophile priests from legal accountability.

In understanding how the bishops remained politically viable through the "Long Lent of 2002," a little sociology goes a long way. My explanation centers on the structure of State Catholic Conferences (SCCs) and their multiple bases of political influence.

Part of the problem in understanding the bishops' political advocacy is that not much is known about SCCs. Even the best studies of the bishops' political involvement (e.g., Gene Burns's *The Frontiers of Catholicism* and Jose Casanova's *Public Religions in the Modern World*) focus exclusively on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). But many of the most important public policies today (on abortion, welfare, capital punishment, etc.) are made by the states. Most SCCs were founded immediately following Vatican II, predating this "new federalism." They are, therefore, well-positioned to engage the issues that have devolved to the states.

Like the USCCB, SCCs appear from the outside to be unitary organizational structures. Sociologically, however, it is useful to see them as dual structures. I owe the concept of dual structures to Mark Chaves, who observes that many religious denominations "are constituted by two parallel organizational structures: a religious authority structure and an agency structure" (Mark Chaves, "Intraorganizational Power and Internal Secularization in Protestant Denominations," *American Journal of Sociology* 99:1 (July 1993)). The primary function of the religious authority structure is to control access to religious goods (e.g., the means of salvation). Thus, although the church properly seeks to engage the world, the *raison d'être* of the hierarchy is internal.

The external face of the church is organizationally expressed in agency structures. As the name suggests, agency structures "function as the agents of the religious authority structure in the secular world" (Mark Chaves, "Denominations as Dual Structures: An Organizational Analysis," *Sociology of Religion* 54:2 (1993):146-169). Examples include missions, social services, publishing and, of course, political lobbying.

Questions about the declining political influence of the bishops during the scandal have focused exclusively on the church's religious authority structure. But the primary vehicle of the bishops' influence at the state-level is a dual structure. As agency structures, SCCs have bases of political influence that are independent of the moral authority of the bishops and, therefore, an ability to continue acting effectively in the political arena through the crisis.

There are at least three bases of influence that SCCs as agency structures draw upon in their political advocacy: grassroots mobilization, Catholic institutions, and political credibility. I will touch on each very briefly.

(1) Grassroots mobilization. When I interviewed him recently, Richard Daly of the Texas Catholic Conference told me, "This is a big institution, the Catholic Church. I always use the phrase with the members [of the legislature], 'We have a branch office in every part of your district.' There's hardly a community of any size that doesn't have some Catholic presence. We're everywhere." Although not all SCCs utilize these branch offices for grassroots mobilization to influence public policy, many do and at times do so effectively. A recent example was a letter writing campaign in New Jersey, orchestrated in part by the New Jersey Catholic Conference, which led to the withdrawal of a stem cell research bill that was expected to sail through the legislature this session (*Newark Star-Ledger*, 11 February 2003).

(2) Catholic institutions. Beyond individual Catholics, the Church has a massive institutional presence in the United States. This includes 1,110 hospitals and health care facilities serving 78,000,000+ individuals, 1,085 residential care facilities serving 415,000+ individuals, and 1,406 Catholic Charities USA-affiliated social service agencies serving 10,600,000+ individuals (Bryan Froehle and Mary Gautier, *Catholicism USA: A Portrait of the Catholic Church in the United States* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books,

2000).

When SCCs speak to public policy, particularly in the area of health and human services, they often do so on behalf of or with the support of these institutions. The Church's tangible history of fulfilling the biblical mandate to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and care for the ill is a storehouse of legitimacy that SCCs can draw on in their advocacy work—certainly in good times, but perhaps especially in bad times.

For example, when they bring Catholic prison chaplains to the capital, the Connecticut Catholic Conference is able to speak legitimately to criminal justice even if the bishops of Connecticut are under criminal investigation themselves.

(3) Political credibility. A third source of influence is the political credibility that comes from having relationships with policy makers, providing them useful information, and telling the truth.

Consider, for example, the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference. The executive director, Robert O'Hara, previously worked for 19 years as the director of state government affairs for a local utility in Pennsylvania. As he explains his situation, "The guy who I followed was a bit of a legend. People knew him. He had a good reputation. And I was pretty well-known, too. After 19 years, people know you." O'Hara continues, "We're still only armed with a handshake and a smile around here. But credibility over time means more than just about anything because people get to know you. They may not agree with you, but they don't think you're going to lie to them."

Relationships take time, and so the longevity of SCC directors is a great advantage. Even with a number of new hires recently, the average tenure of directors is nearly a decade. And among new hires, there has been a clear trend toward bolstering credibility by picking individuals who already have experience in state government.

This extensive experience is then put into action in the practice of lobbying. Hollywood images of influence peddlers in Gucci loafers doling out money to politicians aside, "the major currency lobbyists pedal today is information" (Dennis Dresang and James Gosling, *Politics and Policy in American States and Communities* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1996)). As society has grown more complex and the political responsibilities of state legislatures have increased, legislators rely more and more on interest groups to supply them with the information they need to make policy decisions.

The centrality of information peddling in the legislative process suits SCCs well. As 501(c)(3) organizations, they cannot play the campaign finance and candidate endorsement game. Because information is their main currency, SCC directors frequently tie their credibility to their reputations for "telling the truth." The experience of Robert O'Hara, the former utility lobbyist in Pennsylvania, is typical. "When I first started working for [the utility], I was told that the most important thing you've got up here is your credibility and don't ever lose it. The best way to maintain your credibility is to tell the truth." Some bishops may be suspect in this respect in the wake of the scandal, but this does not directly impugn the reputation of SCC directors like O'Hara.

Understanding SCCs as dual structures helps us to see why the bishops' political influence is not wholly dependent on their moral authority. Whether it is desirable for SCCs to have bases of political legitimacy independent of the moral authority of their bishops is, of course, another matter. The fact is, they do, and discussions of the political implications of the scandal ought to recognize this.

Many of the most important questions about the consequences of the scandal are empirical ones, ones which sociologists of religion are well-suited to help answer. While Catholics have done a lot of hand-wringing over the scandal, I hope sociologists will use this historic moment as an opportunity for some hard-nosed empirical analysis and application of the sociological imagination to one of the major institutions in this society. We may be surprised by what we find. I know I was.