

American Sociological Association

Section on the Sociology Religion

From the Chair:

What is the paradigm that orients the sociology of religion these days?



Reading the illuminating interview of Stephen Kalberg in this issue got me thinking about this question. The impetus for the interview is Kalberg's recently published book on the social thought of Max Weber. David Eagle's questions focus on Weber's thinking about religion. Kalberg's answers address some key

aspects of Weber's approach, including Weber's attention to subjective meaning, his efforts to draw connections between the micro and the macro, his skepticism of linear views of history, and his multi-dimensional and conjunctural approach to causality. These perspectives on religion will feel familiar to many of us.

So are we all Weberians now? Of course not. But then where are we as a subfield?

We are without a dominant paradigm. To rehearse an already well-told narrative, the secularization paradigm (in its many varieties) that oriented much of the thinking on religion in the 1960 and 1970s came to be challenged by the religious economies and kindred "new paradigm" perspectives in the 1980s and 1990s. This produced a fertile intellectual debate that sharpened the arguments within both camps. Yet both paradigms have lost traction within the subfield for reasons relating to empirical challenges, methodological criticisms, definitional and conceptual disputes, and, to some degree, the scholarly itch for the next new thing. A further reason is this: Both paradigms direct intellectual attention to a circumscribed range of phenomena: growth and decline, homogeneity and diversity, and exceptions and rules. The two paradigms shed needed light on important concerns, no doubt, but they do not necessarily inform many other interesting questions about religion in society.

A third paradigm gaining traction of late, the lived religion approach, focuses on the phenomenological experience of religion as practiced. This approach often challenges categories and accounts derived from abstract frameworks, official religious doctrines, or large-scale surveys. This attention to subjectivity and meaning is an approach that Weber would surely

Upcoming Calls:

Don't forget to submit your abstracts for:

The Annual Meeting of the Association for the Sociology of Religion

*Montreal, Quebec
August 13-14, 2017*

AND

The Annual Meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion

*Washington, DC
October 13-15, 2017*

SUBMISSION ARE DUE ON MARCH 31, 2017

See page 9 and 10 for details.

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find in harmony with his own views on *verstehen*, though lived religion studies often refrain from explicitly incorporating links to social structure or the mechanisms that generate the macro-phenomena that so motivated Weber's comparative-historical work.

Alongside these paradigms, much good quantitative work in the sociology of religion treats religion as a set of variables in analyses that are not oriented by any particular paradigm in the subfield. Rather this work is oriented either by mainstream positivism or by perspectives in adjacent subfields.

Paradigms focus attention and shape questions. Clashing paradigms launch collective research agendas and sharpen arguments. Whether the sociology of religion is currently in a post-paradigmatic or multi-paradigmatic phase may only become clearer in retrospect. Whatever the case, Weber's attention to religious culture and its articulation with social conditions, his focus on the producers and carriers of religion, and his analysis of religion's differential reception by various groups are dimensions of a framework that has proven to be a hardy perennial.

Brian Steensland

Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

From the Newsletter Editor

I want to thank Stephen Kalberg for the time and careful thought he put into our interview about Weber and the contemporary study of religion. He demonstrates why Weber's ideas continue to endure.

Don't forget that the deadline to submit to SSSR and the ASR meetings are at the end of March. Get your abstracts and proposals together!

Take time to read the descriptions of the five new books by section members. From the evangelical adoption movement, to the politicization of Islam in France and India, to nationalist movements in Quebec, to cross-national opinions about homosexuality, to the state of Catholic parishes in the US, sociologists of religion continue to do diverse, interesting and important work.

Don't forget to skim through the extensive list of publications of many of our members (pages 7 and 8). While I take no credit for the great work you are doing, I do accept responsibility for any errors and omissions in the newsletter.

If you have corrections or ideas for newsletter content, don't hesitate to contact me.

David Eagle
Center for Health Policy and Inequalities Research
Duke University

david.eagle@duke.edu.

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Revisiting Weber: An Interview with Stephen Kalberg

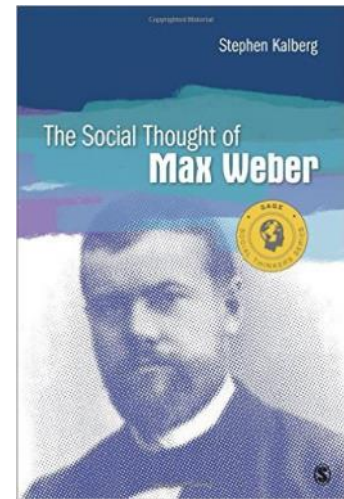
Not only has Stephen Kalberg done a great service to the discipline by translating Max Weber's works into English, he is also a keen interpreter of Weber's ideas. I caught up with Stephen and asked him to reflect on some of the themes and ideas he explores in his new book, [The Social Thought of Max Weber](#) –ed.

DE: *The Protestant Ethic has been on the reading list of nearly every sociologist of religion course for decades. Does it still belong? Have we exhausted the theoretical potential of Weber's thesis? Does it still have contemporary relevance?*

SK: If instructors wish to convey the notion that societies are constituted not alone from rational choices, economic interests, technological tools, and the exercise of power, then assignment of The Protestant Ethic (PESC) is appropriate. Weber's "Protestant ethic thesis" offers on this score a powerful argument: societies possess "a deeper level" comprised of configurations of values. Although often "invisible," these values frequently underpin the basic presuppositions in reference to which people act in daily life. Indeed they may possess an independent causal capacity.

PESC contends that culture – in this case religion – is relevant if economic development (or lack thereof) is to be adequately explained. This "cultural argument" is too often ignored by macrosociologists today. Weber's thesis captures the interest of students and sets off lively in-class debates.

PESC teaches further lessons of importance to us. First, it maintains that an understanding of the present will not occur without comprehension of the various ways in which it is permeated by the past. This historical case study, in connecting John Calvin's reforms to a "Protestant ethic" formulated by seventeenth-century "Puritan Divines," and this ethic's influence upon the formation of a "spirit of capitalism" (as represented by B. Franklin; see chart below), offers vivid examples of how this occurs. Second, this volume links the micro (the devout believer's remarkable attribution of subjective meaning to systematic work and the methodical pursuit of profit and wealth) to the macro (the capacity of a "modern economic ethos" to assist the transformation of capitalism to modern capitalism). Third, PESC stresses that explanations of structural change (the rise of modern capitalism) require reference to the varying strength of traditions ("traditional action") as well as to sets of conducive values ("value-rational action"). Finally, this case study offers an analysis of the ways in which varying intensities of values make for different outcomes [for all of these points see "Introduction to *The Protestant Ethic*." in Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by Stephen Kalberg. New York: OUP, 2011 – ed].



Kalberg, Stephen 2016. *The Social Thought of Max Weber*. SAGE.

From the publisher:

"Stephen Kalberg contends in this volume that a broader reading of this major founder of modern social science is long overdue. Max Weber's numerous conceptual contributions are all examined, as well as his "Protestant ethic thesis." However, Kalberg maintains that Weber's greatest contribution is to be found in his often-neglected investigations of entire civilizations. His big picture themes move here to the forefront: his charting of the uniqueness of China, India, and the West, his discussion of the multiple causes behind their particular trajectories, and his distinct comparative-historical approach anchored in "interpretive understanding" procedures. By reconstructing Weber's analysis of the origin and expansion of the American civic sphere, this volume also illustrates how his research strategies can be applied."



Stephen Kalberg is Associate Professor of Sociology at Boston University.

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DE: *What might Weber make of the trends toward secularization we are witnessing in the West?*

SK: Weber lived in a Europe that was, among its intellectual classes, mostly secularized---and had been for nearly 100 years. Catholicism and Lutheranism seemed not to possess the staying power of American ascetic Protestantism. He viewed the United States as eventually following, in this respect, a “Europeanization” pathway. Thus, Western secularization was not surprising to him. However, his posture was one of trepidation.

He perceived the West’s major “cultural carrier” – the Judaeo-Christian tradition – as having provided, through its values of charity, universal compassion, and brotherhood, the direction of development for 2,000 years. Amid the rapid expanse of modern capitalism’s impersonal market forces, bureaucratization across a variety of arenas, and states devoid of a civic sphere, he sought - but could not find - a new and powerful carrier of these values among Western nations.

In all the great civilizations religion has heretofore played a central role in defining pivotal sets of values and singular pathways of development, he maintained. Albeit weakened in the West, it will continue – given its pluralistic branches - to produce revivals on a regular basis and into the long-term future, he argues. However, to him the major influence of religions in the past does not imply their continued mainstream viability.

DE: *Durkheim contends that religion is an intrinsic and essential part of society. Would Weber agree? Is religion an intrinsic part of human societies or can non-religion be an option?*

SK: An underlying theme in the PESC case study, as well as throughout Weber’s writings, is the distinction between utilitarian action and values-based action. He is convinced that the spirit of capitalism could not have arisen alone from a utilitarian striving for wealth. The “desire for riches” has been visible in all epochs and all civilizations, yet modern (industrial and highly organized) capitalism appeared first in Europe and northern America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Weber forcefully argues that significant economic developments do not occur simply as a consequence of an intensification of material interests, technological innovations, and a broader appearance of “adventure capitalists” (although they continue to exist amid modern capitalism—e.g., D. Trump).

In this regard, Weber agrees completely with Durkheim: a focus upon material forces omits too much. However, Durkheim’s view – religion or secular ideologies are essential to the very existence of societies (for him, for “social order”) - is not shared by Weber. Societies can exist, he holds, on the foundation of mixtures of economic interests and concentrated political power. And if elements of charisma (or its longer-lasting variant: “office charisma”) and age-old traditions (customs and conventions) are mixed in, then a longer duration can be expected.

Weber’s preferences are clear. He wants societies that broadly cultivate an ethos of brotherhood and individual responsibility. However, his fear is evident: Western civilizations will endure, but drift toward utilitarian action and action oriented to power. What will be lacking are universal ethical values adequately embedded to cultivate compassion and to spread an ethos of brotherhood into public spheres—whether the market economy, the workplace, the political arena, or the civic realm. Despite the enduring influence of values-based ethics of action (the “ethic of responsibility” and the “ethic of conviction”), this vacuum will be filled, he fears, by a “pragmatic approach to life” incapable of bestowing in the end a sense of dignity upon persons.

DE: *There has been much ado about “the clash of civilizations” – the notion that following the Cold War, religion and cultural orientation form the primary axis of conflict in the world. Does Weber’s thinking about civilizations feed into this idea or does it take us in a different direction?*

SK: Weber’s sociology of civilizations constitutes a major theme in my Social Thought of Max Weber book. The distinct “rationalisms” of India, China, and the West are reconstructed in detail. Civilizations today, even in an epoch of intense globalization, retain their own contours and trajectories to a significant degree,

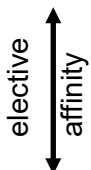
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Weber insists. Homogenization developments, rooted in an all-pervasive social media, advanced and inter-dependent economies, and expansive technologies, are in motion, yet each civilization’s indigenous cultural values, conventions, customs, and stratification arrangements are not swept away by external, “levelling” movements. Boundaries are still retained. Nonetheless, Weber does not see enmity across civilizations as inevitable. Overt conflict may be avoided even if hostilities simmer for centuries at high degrees of intensity. Arrays of on-the-ground, contingent antagonisms must first become manifest.

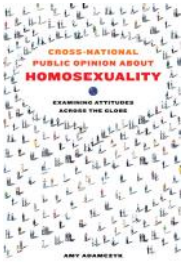
To him, civilizations are multi-dimensional and generally dynamic. Rather than to be comprehended through an organic holism lens, they are better conceptualized as constituted from various “spheres of life” (the law, religion, economy, domination, family, clan, and status group domains) in constant motion, at times falling into coalitions and at other times into antagonistic relationships. Moreover, Weber opposes the notion that a “primary” cause exists and remains committed to multi-causal and conjunctural modes of analysis. Hence, he discusses repeatedly the many ways in which the spheres of life, in interaction with empirical developments, call forth paradoxical outcomes and unforeseen consequences. All linear views of historical development and all “inevitable” scenarios are strongly rejected, above all in his opus *Economy and Society*. Cultural and religious differences across civilizations, as well as varying economic and geopolitical interests, may lead to a “clash,” but do not invariably do so.

Table: The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: Stages of Weber’s Analysis

	<u>Period</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Types of Action</u>	<u>Devout</u>
I. Cavlin : fatalism follows from Pre-destination doctrine	15th to 16th C.	<i>Small sects</i>	Value-rational	Yes
II. Baxter : The Protestant Ethic	16th to 17th C.	<i>Churches & sects</i>	Value-rational (methodical worldly activity)	Yes
III. Franklin : the Spirit of Capitalism	18th C. colonies	<i>Communities</i>	Value-rational (methodical worldly activity)	No
IV. The “ specialist ”: capitalism as “cosmos”	20th. C. industrial society	<i>Industrial society</i>	Means-end rational	No

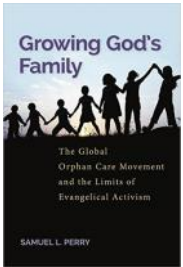


New Books By Section Members



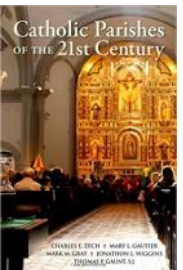
Adamczyk, Amy. 2017. Cross-National Public Opinion about Homosexuality: Examining Attitudes across the Globe. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. [Amazon](#).

Public opinion about homosexuality varies substantially around the world. While residents in some nations have embraced gay rights as human rights, people in many other countries find homosexuality unacceptable. What creates such big differences in attitudes? This book shows that cross-national differences in opinion can be explained by the strength of democratic institutions, the level of economic development, and the religious context of the places where people live. Amy Adamczyk uses survey data from almost ninety societies, case studies of various countries, content analysis of newspaper articles, and in-depth interviews to examine how demographic and individual characteristics influence acceptance of homosexuality.



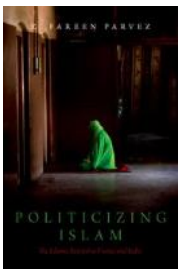
Perry, Samuel L. 2017. Growing God's Family: The Global Orphan Care Movement and the Limits of Evangelical Activism. New York: New York University Press. [Amazon](#).

For over a decade, prominent leaders and organizations among American Evangelicals have spent a substantial amount of time and money in an effort to address what they believe to be the "Orphan Crisis" of the United States. Yet, despite an expansive commitment of resources, there is no reliable evidence that these efforts have been successful. Adoptions are declining across the board, and both foster parenting and foster-adoptions remain steady. Why have evangelical mobilization efforts been so ineffective?



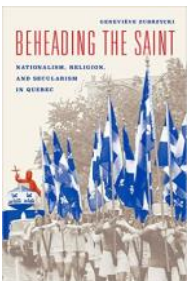
Zech, Charles, Mary L. Gautier, Mark M. Gray, Jonathon L. Wiggins, and Thomas P. Gaunt. 2017. Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century. Oxford University Press. [Amazon](#).

A seminal moment in the study of U.S. Catholic parish life came in the 1980s with the publication of a series of reports from the ground-breaking Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life. These reports are now badly outdated, as Catholic dioceses grapple with new challenges that didn't exist in the 80s. Topics that were not considered then, like greater Catholic mobility, increased cultural diversity, and structural re-organization as well as the rise of lay leadership, have attained new significance. This timely book, based on more than a decade of research, provides an in-depth portrait and analysis of the current state of parish life and leadership.



Z. Faren Parvez. 2017. Politicizing Islam: The Islamic Revival in France and India. Oxford University Press. [Amazon](#).

Home to the largest Muslim minorities in Western Europe and Asia, France and India are both grappling with crises of secularism. In *Politicizing Islam*, Faren Parvez offers an in-depth look at how Muslims have responded to these crises, focusing on Islamic revival movements in the French city of Lyon and the Indian city of Hyderabad. Presenting a novel comparative view of middle-class and poor Muslims in both cities, Parvez illuminates how Muslims from every social class are denigrated but struggle in different ways to improve their lives and make claims on the state. In Hyderabad's slums, Muslims have created vibrant political communities, while in Lyon's banlieues they have retreated into the private sphere. *Politicizing Islam* elegantly explains how these divergent reactions originated in India's flexible secularism and France's militant secularism and in specific patterns of Muslim class relations in both cities. This fine-grained ethnography pushes beyond stereotypes and has consequences for burning public debates over Islam, feminism, and secular democracy.



Zubrzycki, Genevieve. 2016. Beheading the Saint: Nationalism, Religion and Secularism in Quebec, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. [Amazon](#).

Through much of its existence, Québec's neighbors called it the "priest-ridden province." Today, however, Québec society is staunchly secular, with a modern welfare state built on lay provision of social services—a transformation rooted in the "Quiet Revolution" of the 1960s. In *Beheading the Saint*, Genevieve Zubrzycki studies that transformation through a close investigation of the annual Feast of St. John the Baptist of June 24. The celebrations of that national holiday, she shows, provided a venue for a public contesting of the dominant ethno-Catholic conception of French Canadian identity and, via the violent rejection of Catholic symbols, the articulation of a new, secular Québécois identity. From there, Zubrzycki extends her analysis to the present, looking at the role of Québécois identity in recent debates over immigration, the place of religious symbols in the public sphere, and the politics of cultural heritage—issues that also offer insight on similar debates elsewhere in the world.

New Articles and Book Chapters Featuring Section Members

Adur, Shweta and Purkayastha, Bandana. (2017). "Claiming "Tradition", Naming the Cause: Examining the Language of Social Identity among Queer South Asians in the U.S." *Journal of South Asian Diaspora*, 9: 1-16. DOI: 10.1080/19438192.2016.1199456

Ammerman, Nancy T. 2016. "Lived Religion as an Emerging Field: An Assessment of its Contours and Frontiers." *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society* 29 (2):83-99.

Armaline, William Armaline, Glasberg, Davita, and Bandana Purkayastha (2016): "De Jure vs. De Facto Rights: A Response to "Human Rights: What the United States Might Learn From the Rest of the World and, Yes, From American Sociology." *Sociological Forum*. DOI: 10.1111/sof.12303

Blake Victor Kent. 2017. "Attachment to God, Religious Tradition, and Firm Attributes in Workplace Commitment." *Journal Of Social Psychology*. DOI: 10.1080/00224545.2016.1242470

Bradshaw, Matt and Blake Victor Kent. "Prayer, Attachment to God, and Psychological Well-being in Later Life." *Journal of Aging and Health*. forthcoming

Coley, Jonathan S. 2017. "Reconciling Religion and LGBT Rights: Christian Universities, Theological Orientations, and LGBT Inclusion." *Social Currents* 4 (1): 87-106

Chan, Esther, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. 2016. "Narrating and Navigating Authorities: Understandings of the Bible and Science Among Evangelical and Mainline Protestants." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 55(1):54-69.

Ecklund, Elaine Howard, Christopher P. Scheitle, Jared Peifer, and Dan Bolger. 2016. "Examining Links between Religion, Evolution Views, and Climate Change Skepticism." *Environment and Behavior*. DOI: 10.1177/0013916516674246.

Ecklund, Elaine Howard, David R. Johnson, Christopher P. Scheitle, Kirstin R.W. Matthews, and Steven W. Lewis. 2016. "Religion among Scientists in International Context: A New Study of Scientists in Eight Regions." *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*. DOI: 10.1177/2378023116664353.

Günther, Christoph, Kaden, Tom (2016), "The Authority of the Islamic State." *Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Working Paper Series* 169. [link](#).

Johnson, David R., Christopher P. Scheitle, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. 2016. "Conservative Protestantism and Anti-Evolution Curricular Challenges Across States." *Social Science Quarterly* 97(5):1227-1244.

Johnson, David, Elaine Howard Ecklund, Di Di, and Kirstin Matthews. 2016. "Responding to Richard: Celebrity and (Mis)representation of Science." *Public Understanding of Science*. DOI: 10.1177/0963662516673501.

Kaden, Tom (2016): 'Thousands... Not Billions!': Professional Creationists and Their Opponents in the United States. *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Gemeinde* 21: 277-289. [link](#).

Stephen Kalberg, "Max Weber's Sociology of Civilizations: A Preliminary Investigation into its Major Methodological Concepts." Pp. 75-116 in [The Anthem Companion to Max Weber](#), edited by Alan Sica. London: Anthem Press, 2016.

Martí, Gerardo. 2016. "'I Was a Muslim, but Now I Am a Christian': Preaching, Legitimation, and Identity Management in a Southern Evangelical Church." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. 55:2 250-270.

Martí, Gerardo. 2016. "Found Theologies versus Imposed Theologies: Remarks on Theology and Ethnography from a Sociological Perspective." *Ecclesial Practices* 3:2 157-172.

Martí, Gerardo. 2016. "A Sociologist Learns to Study Religion." *Critical Research on Religion*. 4:3 267-273.

Perry, Samuel L., and George M. Hayward. 2017. "Seeing is (Not) Believing: How Viewing Pornography Shapes the Religious Lives of Young Americans." *Social Forces*. doi: 10.1093/sf/sow106

Perry, Samuel L. 2017. "Does Viewing Pornography Diminish Religiosity Over Time? Evidence from Two-Wave Panel Data." *Journal of Sex Research* 54 (2):214-226.

Peifer, Jared, Simranjit Khalsa, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. 2016. "Political Conservatism, Religion and Environmental Consumption in the United States." *Environmental Politics* 25(4):661-689.

Scheitle, Christopher P., and Elaine Howard Ecklund. 2016. "Examining the Effects of Exposure to Religion in the Workplace on Perceptions of Religious Discrimination." *Review of Religious Research*. doi: 10.1007/s13644-016-0278-x.

Scheitle, Christopher P., and Elaine Howard Ecklund. 2016. "Recommending a Child Enter a STEM Career: The Role of Religion." *Journal of Career Development*. doi: 10.1177/0894845316646879.

Schwadel, Philip. 2016. "Does Higher Education Cause Religious Decline? A Longitudinal Analysis of the Within- and Between-Person Effects of Higher Education on Religiosity." *Sociological Quarterly* 57:759-786.

Schmidt-Lux, Thomas, Kaden, Tom. 2016. "Scientism and Atheism Then and Now: The Role of Science in the Monist and New Atheist Writings." *Culture and Religion* 17(1): 73-91. DOI: 10.1080/14755610.2016.1160944

Schwadel, Philip. *Forthcoming*. "The Republicanization of Evangelical Protestants in the United States: An Examination of the Sources of Political Realignment" *Social Science Research*.

Tong, Joy K.C. and Fenggang Yang. 2016. Trust at Work: A Study on Faith and Trust of Protestant Entrepreneurs in China. *Religions* 7(12), 136; doi:10.3390/rel7120136

Vaidyanathan, Brandon, David Johnson, Pamela Prickett, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. 2016. "Rejecting the Conflict Narrative: American Jewish and Muslim Views on Science and Religion." *Social Compass* 63(4):478-496.

Whitehead, Andrew L., and Samuel L. Perry. 2017. "Unbuckling the Bible Belt: A State-Level Analysis of Religious Factors and Google Searches for Porn." *Journal of Sex Research* (forthcoming).

Waring, Chandra and Purkayastha, Bandana (2017). "I'm a Different Kind of Biracial:" How Black/White Biracial Americans with Immigrant Parents Negotiate Race." *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation, Culture*. DOI: 10.1080/13504630.2016.1271739

Yang, Fenggang. 2016. "Confucianism as Civil Religion." in *Confucianism, A Habit of the Heart: Bellah, Civil Religion, and East Asia*, edited by Philip J. Ivanhoe, Sungmoon Kim. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Yang, Fenggang. 2016. "The Growth and Dynamism of Chinese Christianity" in *Christianity and Freedom. Volume II: Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Allen D. Hertzke and Timothy Samuel Shah. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yang, Fenggang. 2016. "Exceptionalism or Chinamerica: Measuring Religious Change in the Globalizing World Today". *Journal for the Scientific Study of*

Religion. 55(1), pp7-22.

Yousaf, Farhan and Purkayastha, Bandana (2016). Social world of organ transplantation, trafficking, and policies. *Journal of Public Health Policy*, 37: 190-199.

Member News and Notes

Melissa Wilde has been appointed Associate Director for Survey Research for Penn's Program for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society. There should be lots of good things to come from this soon! Here's a [link](#) to the announcement.

After spending several weeks as a Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, **Bandana Purkayastha** completed her first month as a Fulbright-Nehru scholar at the University of Hyderabad. She is gathering data on her project Water, Inequalities and Rights.

Anjana Narayan and **Bandana Purkayastha** have been awarded a 2017-2018 Global Religion Research Initiative grant to set up an interdisciplinary, multi-country coalition of scholars who will study living Islam and Hinduism from an intersectional perspective. The scholars from the US, India and Pakistan will also examine appropriate methodologies for studying lived religions.

Call for Papers:

Social Inclusion and Religion
Special Issue on "Complex Religion: Intersections of Religion and Inequality."
Guest Editor: Melissa J. Wilde

Although scholars of American religion acknowledge religion's deep interconnectedness with race, class, and ethnicity in the U.S., we nonetheless typically study religion as a factor that is independent from other social structures. Likewise, we rarely systematically examine class, race or gender differences between or within American religious groups. This journal issue will highlight research that moves beyond these weaknesses by publishing papers that intentionally examine aspects of inequality as they relate to religion. Papers that discuss either/both theoretical and methodological conundrums (and solutions) are welcome.

For more information, or to submit an abstract, please email mwilde@upenn.edu. Abstracts are due by September 1, 2017 and will be accepted on a rolling basis. Papers are to be submitted for peer review by January 1, 2018.



SOCIETY FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF RELIGION
Call for Papers: 2017 Annual Meeting
Marriott Wardman Park, Washington, DC
October 13-15

Building on this year's focus on the diverse public roles of religion, the theme of next year's annual meeting of the SSSR is "Going Public: The Social Impact of Scientific Research on Religion." Increasingly, funding agencies require researchers to include in their proposals knowledge transfer strategies or plans for ensuring that the research results have an impact on a broader public audience. A subcommittee of the American Sociological Association recently tabled a report on including the evaluation of public communication by university scholars as part of their assessment for tenure and promotion. How does thinking about public impact influence the way that we do research? Where do knowledge transfer strategies fit into the research process? How do we know if our research on religion makes a difference? And does it matter?

We invite proposals for individual papers or sessions that focus on various aspects of the process of translating the results of scientific research on religion to a variety of audiences beyond, and within, academia including religious individuals, groups and organizations; government and politicians; public service providers; educators; medical professionals and health care workers; therapeutic professionals; members of community agencies; non-governmental organizations; and the media, to name just a few.

Potential topics may include:

- The use of diverse media including newspapers, magazines, trade journals, newsletters, television, radio, social media, websites, and blogs;
- The opportunities and challenges of new technologies;
- Issues related to the process of knowledge translation;
- Evaluating the impact of knowledge transfer strategies;
- Collaboration with non-academic partners and stakeholders;
- The promises and pitfalls of public engagement in shaping the research process;
- The democratization of scholarly research;
- The role of scholarly research in public debates about religion;
- The development of policy guidelines;
- Blurring of the lines between the scholarly and the public;
- The rise of religious nones;
- Diverse methods: visual, action-oriented, community-based, qualitative, and quantitative;
- How diverse contexts of religious establishment influence knowledge transfer strategies;
- The impact that the research of graduate students and emerging scholars is making;
- The challenges involved in going public with scientific research on religion;

Of course, proposals for panels and papers on any topic in the scientific study of religion are welcome.

Submissions Open: February 1, 2017 (see <http://www.sssrweb.org>)



RELIGION AND DIVISION: CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND COUNTERS

August 13-14, 2017 (with Opening Reception on Aug. 12th)

[InterContinental Montreal Hotel](#)

[InterContinental Montreal Hotel Reservations](#)

Montreal, Quebec

PROGRAM CHAIR: Di Di, Rice University, dd20@rice.edu

Nearly daily, it seems, religion makes news across the globe. From long-term conflicts, to terrorist acts, to racial segregation, to conflict with other social institutions, to intra-religious battles, we witness the dividing power of religion. But though perhaps reported less, religion also daily counters division. From movements to create diverse congregations, to peace movements, to non-violence, to demonstrations of forgiveness, to massive movements for justice, we witness the uniting power of religion.

What is the impact of religion on division and unity? Why and when does one or the other occur? The very same religion can be used for divergent purposes. As social scientists of religion, our responsibility is to understand the role of religion in the social world. We must understand when it tends toward division and conflict, why, and the implications. And we must understand when religion tends toward unity, peace, and justice, why this occurs, and the implications.

This year's annual meeting is open to all topics within the sociology of religion, but especially welcomes sessions and papers focusing on any aspects of religion and division, conflict, or violence; religion and unity, peace, justice, and other social movements. In so doing we can move to greater knowledge on these central issues, issues impacting humanity around the globe.

DEADLINES: Session Proposals are due by **March 31, 2017** (submit to dd20@rice.edu)

Paper Proposals and abstracts are due by **April 30, 2017**

Meeting registration is due by **July 1, 2017**

Hotel reservation is due by **July 11, 2017**

See: <http://www.sociologyofreligion.com/annual-meeting/> for complete details