

sociologists should privilege neither political-economic nor ecological processes" (p. 279). But, for scholars looking for a book that engages arguments on urban theorizing this book offers little. His microlevel, ecological approach will leave urban researchers interested in the niches of global cities and urban political economy cold with the lack of connections upward.

Blacks and Whites in Christian America: How Racial Discrimination Shapes Religious Convictions. By Jason E. Shelton and Michael O. Emerson. New York: New York University Press, 2012. Pp. xii+279. \$85.00 (cloth); \$28.00 (paper).

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Blacks and Whites in Christian America: How Racial Discrimination Shapes Religious Convictions set out to explore why substantial differences exist in how black and white Protestants practice their faith. The book is structured around a set of principles that Jason E. Shelton and Michael O. Emerson call "the five building blocks of black Protestant faith" and are designed to be reference points for "understanding the distinctive way that African-Americans think about and practice Christianity" (p. 3). The authors discuss these five central ideas in detail, then turn their attention to using an analysis of data collected from the Portraits of American Life Study (PALS), in-depth interviews with religious clergy, and focus groups of believers to find out if there is empirical support for them. The book is targeted at a nonscientific audience, yet it also includes 50 pages of appendices and chapter notes that contain the details of the analyses performed.

The central focus of the book is on the five "building blocks," which are as follows: "(a) *Experiential*—black Protestant faith is active and experiential and is less concerned with precise doctrinal contours than white mainline or evangelical Christianity; (b) *Survival*—black Protestant faith is critical to survival and helps individuals cope with suffering associated with everyday trials and tribulations; (c) *Mystery*—black Protestant faith is mystical and expresses and appreciation for the mystery in life, including folklore and cultural components deriving from the African diaspora, the consequences of racial inequality in America, and non-Christian religions; (d) *Miraculous*—black Protestant faith is confident and comprehensive and holds that the miraculous is ordinary, and the ordinary is miraculous; and (e) *Justice*—black Protestant faith is committed to social justice and equality for all individuals and groups in society" (pp. 8–9).

These "building blocks" are built clearly on the extensive research about black Protestants and conservative Protestants that has emerged in the sociology of religion over the past 20 years. What separates this book from previous research is the careful attention that the authors pay to questions of

Why? or What does it mean? when presenting these research findings. For example, many studies have found that black Protestants pray more and attend religious services more than white Protestants. In order to discover “what it means” that blacks pray and attend church more than their white counterparts, the authors used both the results of their survey and their interviews to argue that the answer is closely related to the “fact that many African-American Protestants believe that they as individuals and blacks as a group would not have made it in this country *but for the grace of God*” (p. 26). Such an argument is not new in the literature, but it has rarely been delivered with such extensive empirical support.

The qualitative data analysis used by the authors provides unique insights into the differences in how religion is practiced by Christians of different racial backgrounds. The authors used a nonrandom snowball sample of 30 African-American Protestants—14 high-ranking clergy who were interviewed one-on-one and 16 laypeople who were interviewed in focus groups. The authors admit this small sample is by no means an exhaustive representation of black Protestants. However, perhaps the most surprising revelation in the book was the authors’ brief discussion of their attempts to include white Protestants in their interviews. They stated that “many whites were averse to participating in a study about race relations in Christianity . . . and expressed great consternation” about the study (pp. 17–18). There was one off-the-record example cited in which a white Christian explained that she didn’t want to participate in the study because “Christians shouldn’t even be looking at race” (p. 18). On the other hand, so many black Protestants were so eager to participate that the authors had to turn people away. These differences in the willingness to participate clearly led the book to focus much more heavily on the black Protestant experience than this reviewer initially expected. Moreover, these differences, on their face, seem to tell us much about the state of race religions in Christianity and, yet, the authors left this fertile ground relatively unexplored.

The core of the book argues that blacks and whites do share some of the same beliefs regarding the core tenets of Christianity (e.g., creeds, baptism, etc.). However, this general similarity “challenges Christianity’s status as a ‘universal religion’ because black and white believers often radically differ in their faith-based thoughts and practices” (p. 56). This difference includes African-Americans being more likely to incorporate folklore, astrology, and other non-Christian religious traditions, as well as taking a less literal interpretation of the Bible and espousing a much stronger belief that religious faith plays a daily role in protecting them from the consequences of racial discrimination in society. Fundamentally, the authors assert throughout the book that much of the expression of black Protestant faith today is rooted in the history and culture of African-Americans and their unique experiences with both Christianity and social institutions. For example, the authors’ interviews lead to the conclusion that African-Americans pray so often because “for blacks, the trek of devoted prayer is inextricably tied to a Christian experience rooted in slavery, suffering, active critical engagement with authoritative power, and overcoming” (p. 47).

The book concludes with the fifth “building block,” that black Protestant faith is committed to social justice and equality for all individuals and groups in society. Many of the clergy members and laypeople interviewed expressed sentiments regarding racial oppression and racial tensions and various ways that problems might be addressed and solved, providing a running theme throughout the book of the difference between “faith” and “works.” The authors conclude by saying that “we cannot expect to live in a better world if we do not become actively involved in efforts to eliminate racism, poverty, and injustice” (p. 207). This statement echoes the thoughts of many clergy and laypeople throughout the book, and exemplifies the overarching and myriad connections in black Protestant faith between the religious and social worlds.

The Global Pigeon. By Colin Jerolmack. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. Pp. viii+274. \$80.00 (cloth); \$27.50 (paper).

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Global Pigeon begins and ends in New York, but the intervening pages take the reader around the world. Throughout, Colin Jerolmack presents a memorable and complex portrait of the meaning actors inscribe on the pigeon and the practices they generate. In South Africa, the annual Million Dollar Pigeon Race is high stakes. In Venice, pigeon feeding is perfunctory, while London has outlawed the same practice in Trafalgar Square. The book’s richest chapters, both in terms of the depth of data presented and theoretical lessons, focus on working-class men in Brooklyn and the Bronx. These, especially, promise to become staple reading for students in urban and qualitative methods classes.

Jerolmack offers several broad contributions. Foremost, the book challenges two presuppositions about human sociability, nature, and the city. First, it complicates the notion that animals are merely a symbol of or a vehicle for meaning and interaction. Rather than presenting the pigeon as an empty vessel that facilitates human interaction on rooftops, and in pet shops, gardens, and a gaming club, Jerolmack demonstrates the connections men develop with the pigeons as well as how pigeons connect men to “nature”—even in large cities. Here, Jerolmack skillfully dispenses with the notions that the pigeon is less than “natural” and that the city is devoid of nature. Second, just as the reader begins to adopt this view, Jerolmack demonstrates how the pigeon is not just “nature” or “animal” but also a vehicle for human connection and identity. For some, such as Turkish men in Berlin, the pigeon simultaneously represents nature and social identity or order. In short, the pigeon is a flexible object whose meaning is context specific.

The (novel) global focus of Jerolmack’s book underlines and reveals this flexibility. *Global Pigeon* ultimately highlights how place and the cultural and demographic traits of pigeon keepers together shape how people per-