

OMAR M. MCROBERTS

University of Chicago
Department of Sociology
1126 E. 59th Street, #427
Chicago, Illinois 60637

Phone: 773.834.8970
Fax: 773.702.4849
omcrober@uchicago.edu

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Sociology, Harvard University, 2000.
M.A. Sociology, Harvard University, 1997.
B.A. Public Policy Studies, University of Chicago, 1994, with honors.

ACADEMIC POSITIONS HELD

Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago. 2005-Present
Faculty Associate, University of Chicago Divinity School. 2004-Present.
Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago. 2000 – 2005.

PUBLICATIONS

- McRoberts, Omar M. 2004. "H. Richard Niebuhr Meets the Street." In *Taking Faith Seriously: Valuing and Evaluating Religion in American Liberal Democracy*, edited by Mary Jo Bane and Brent Coffin. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- McRoberts, Omar M. 2004. "Beyond *Mysterium Tremendum*: Thoughts Toward an Aesthetic Study of Religious Experience." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 595:190-203.
- McRoberts, Omar M. 2003. *Streets of Glory: Church and Community in a Black Urban Neighborhood*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. DISTINGUISHED BOOK AWARD, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, 2005. HONORABLE MENTION, Oliver Cromwell Cox Distinguished Book Award 2004, ASA section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities.
- McRoberts, Omar M. 2003. "Black Church 'Activism' in an Urban Religious District." In *Handbook for the Sociology of Religion*, edited by Michele Dillon. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- McRoberts, Omar M. 2003. "Religion, Reform, Community: Examining the idea of church-based prisoner re-entry." Washington, DC: Urban Institute Justice Policy Center.
- McRoberts, Omar M. 2001. Review of *Urban Exodus: Why the Jews Left Boston and the Catholics Stayed*, by Gerald Gamm. *American Journal of Sociology* 106:1809-1811.
- McRoberts, Omar M. 2001. "Black Churches, Community, and Development." *Shelterforce* 23 (1): 8-11.
- Berrien, Jenny, Omar McRoberts and Christopher Winship. 2000. "Religion and the Boston Miracle: the Effect of Black Ministry on Youth Violence." In *Who Will Provide?: The Changing Role of Religion in American Social Welfare*. Edited by Mary Jo Bane, Brent Coffin, and Ronald Thiemann. Boulder: Westview Press.
- McRoberts, Omar M. 1999. "Understanding the 'New' Black Pentecostal Activism: Lessons from Ecumenical Urban Ministries in Boston." *Sociology of Religion* 60:47-70.

RESEARCH AND WRITING IN PROGRESS

“Black Religion and Federal Poverty Policy Since the New Deal.” A book project analyzing the development of black religious understandings of urban poverty. Uncovers and explains black church reactions to, and influence on, federal social welfare policy from the New Deal through contemporary welfare reform.

“The New Deal and Black Theodicy.” This article shows how the Roosevelt administration used religiously-tinged rhetorics of “Negro progress” to frame the New Deal as an eschatological reward for black suffering. Even as this administration generally upheld the separation of church and state as a requisite for religious freedom, Roosevelt’s re-election machine, in particular, sought to win black support by directly appealing to and *influencing* black religious thinking about the nature of redemptive suffering. This strategy, in turn, reflected the presence in Roosevelt’s cabinet of black and white religious intellectuals of liberal ilk. The article presents an original theoretical perspective on the influence of the state on organized religion via the self-promoting activities of politicians.

“Beyond Savior, Victim, and Sinner: Neighborhood Civic Life and ‘Absent Presence’ in the Religious District.” Much of the social scientific study of urban religion implicitly views “the church” as a mere symptom of broader urban processes, a source of “moral order” unconstrained by the broader urban process, or a parasitic purveyor of maladaptive “moral orders.” The article traces this reductive tendency to religious interpreters of early Chicago School sociology, and identifies key studies that reflect an alternative, and preferable, conceptual approach. After rendering explicit this alternative approach, the article offers an agenda for future research on urban religious phenomena.

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Louisville Institute for the Study of Religion Sabbatical Grant. “Black Religion and Social Welfare Policy Since the New Deal.” \$45,000 for year 2002-2003.

Social Science Research Division Research Grant. “Black Religion and Social Welfare Policy Since the New Deal.” \$3,045 for year 2002-2003.

Hauser Center for Nonprofits Dissertation Fellowship (1999-2000)

Louisville Institute Dissertation Fellowship (1999-2000)

Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship (1998-1999)

Harvard Graduate Society Summer Fellowship (1998)

National Science Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship (1995-1998)

Prize Fellowship, Harvard University (1994-1999)

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Executive Council, Section on the Sociology of Religion, American Sociological Association. 2007-2009

Editorial Board, *Sociology of Religion*. 2005-Present.

Robert and Helen Lynd Distinguished Career Award Committee, Community and Urban Sociology Section, American Sociological Association. 2005-2006.

Society for the Study of Social Problems, Program Committee, 2004-2005.

McNamara Student Paper Award Committee, Association for the Sociology of Religion, 2004-2007.

Advisory Board, "Latino Immigrants in Florida: Lived Religion, Space, and Power." A Ford Foundation Study. 2003-Present.

Manuscript Referee, University of Chicago Press, Duke University Press, Princeton University Press, *Ethnography*, *Social Problems*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *Social Forces*, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *American Sociological Review*.

Editorial Board, *American Journal of Sociology*. 2000-Present

Advisory Board, “Faith-Based Social Service Provision Under Charitable Choice: A Study of Implementation in Three States.” A Lilly Endowment Study. 2001-Present

Lilly Endowment Project on Lived Theology, Working Groups. 1998-2003.

Research Workshop on “Place.” Sponsored by the Northwestern University/University of Chicago Joint Center for Poverty Research and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. May 2002.

Roundtable on Religion and Social Welfare Policy. A Research Consultation for the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government. April, 2002.
Roundtable on Prisoner Re-entry. A Research Consultation for The Urban Institute. March 2002.
Consultant to Interfaith Funders national study of faith-based community organizing. 2000.

INVITED LECTURES

“US Social Welfare Policy and State 'Regulation' of Religion.” Conference on Religion and Nation, University of Konstanz, Germany. July 8, 2006.
“State ‘Regulation’ of Religion and the Art of Bonsai: Black Denominations in the New Deal Era.” Princeton University, Center for the Study of Religion. December 13, 2004; University of Michigan, Department of Sociology. January 20, 2005. Vanderbilt University, Department of Sociology. March 31, 2005. Yale University, Department of Sociology, December 1, 2005. Northwestern University, Department of Sociology, January 19, 2006. Wirzup Lecture, University of Chicago, April 24, 2006.
“Poverty, Nature, and Suffering in Black Religious Thought from the New Deal to Hurricane Katrina.” Church and Black Experience Lecture, Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary. February 8, 2006.
“Black Religion and the Moral Politics of the New Deal.” Calvin College. February 16, 2004.
“Walking the Streets of Glory: Reflections on Religious Presence in a Depressed Urban Neighborhood.” Duke University October 25, 2002; Harvard University, December 2, 2002; University of Southern California, March 7, 2003; University of Chicago Midwest Faculty Seminar, April 4, 2003; Northwestern University, April 24 2003; Loyola University, Chicago, November 11, 2005.
Keynote Speaker, National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus. Saint Louis, Missouri. July 30, 2001.
“Saving Four Corners: The Complexity of Religious Life in an Inner City Neighborhood.” Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Department of Urban Studies and Planning. Housing, Community and Economic Development Group Colloquium. April 1998.
“Race, Ethnicity, and Congregation-Based Activism.” Wellesley College, Department of Sociology. November 1998.

TEACHING

Graduate Ethnographic Methods (Sociology 40112)
Undergraduate Qualitative Field Methods (Sociology 20140)
Urban Structure and Process (Sociology 361)
Religion and the City (Sociology 364)
Power, Identity and Resistance (Social Sciences 113)
Sociological Methods (Sociology 202)

DEPARTMENT AND UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Sociology Department, Curriculum Committee. 2005-2006
College Council, 2004-Present.
Chair, Undergraduate Sociology Program. 2003-Present.
Department of Sociology Administrative Committee. 2003-Present.
Faculty Board Member, Masters of Arts Program in the Social Sciences. 2002-Present
Faculty Board of Directors, Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture. 2001-Present.
Faculty Sponsor, Workshop on Urban Social Processes. 2000-Present
Faculty Sponsor, Workshop on Race and Religion: Thought, Practice, and Meaning. 2004-Present.
Mentor and Research Supervisor, Mellon Undergraduate Minority Fellowship. 2001- Present.
Research Supervisor, Summer Research Opportunity Program. 2001-Present
Sociology Personnel Committee. 2003, 2004
University Committee on Minority Issues. 2001-2004.
Social Sciences Divisional Research Committee. 2002, 2004
Graduate Admissions Committee, Sociology. 2001, 2002.
Graduate Fellowships Committee, Sociology. 2001, 2002.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Sociological Association, Association of Black Sociologists, Association for Research on Non-Profit Organizations and Voluntary Associations, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Association for the Sociology of Religion, Society for the Study of Social Problems.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Board Member, Seminary Coop Bookstore. 2006-
Board Member, Crossroads Fund. 2002-Present.
Co-Chair, Crossroads Fund Grantmaking Committee. 2002-2004
Member, Crossroads Fund Grantmaking Committee. 2001.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Panelist, "Didactic Session: The Art and Craft of Researching Religion." Association for the Sociology of Religion, Philadelphia, 2005.

Panelist, "Author Meets Critics: Amitai Etzioni, *From Empire to Community: A New Approach to International Relations*." Society for the Study of Social Problems, Philadelphia, 2005.

Presider/Discussant, "Diverse Approaches to Issues of Social Class and Ethnicity." Society for the Study of Social Problems, Philadelphia, 2005.

"Paving the Way: Author Meets Critics – Omar M. McRoberts' *Streets of Glory: Church and Community in a Black Urban Neighborhood*." Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Kansas City, MO 2004.

"Author Meets Critics—Omar M. McRoberts' *Streets of Glory: Church and Community in a Black Urban Neighborhood*." Association for the Sociology of Religion, San Francisco, 2004.

"Power and Politics in Ethnographic Practice," American Sociological Association, San Francisco, 2004.

"Federal Social Welfare Policy and Shifting Strategies of Faith Based Activism." American Sociological Association, San Francisco, 2004.

Session Convener/Discussant, "African-American Churches," Association for the Sociology of Religion, San Francisco, 2004.

"The Politics of Revitalization in a Religious District: The Four Corners Case." American Sociological Association, Atlanta, 2003.

Panelist, "Author Meets Critics—Ram Cnaan's *The Invisible Caring Hand—American Congregations and the Provision of Welfare*." Association for the Sociology of Religion, Atlanta, 2003.

Panelist, "Author Meets Critics—Jerome Baggett's *Habitat for Humanity*." Association for the Sociology of Religion, Chicago, Illinois, 2002.

Panelist, "Author Meets Critics: Reuben A. Buford May's *Talking at Treva's: Everyday Conversations at an African-American Tavern*." Association of Black Sociologists, Chicago, Illinois, 2002.

"The Church and the 'Street': Clergy Confront the Immediate Environment." American Sociological Association, Anaheim, California, 2001.

Panelist, "New Perspectives on Religious Identity." American Sociological Association, Anaheim, California, 2001.

Panelist, "Strengthening Marginalized and Diverse Families: The Challenge of Urban Realities." Association of Black Sociologists, Anaheim, California, 2001.

Panelist, "Author Meets Critics: Lowell Livezey's *Public Religion and Urban Transformation*." Association for the Sociology of Religion, Anaheim, California, 2001.

"Who is my Neighbor? Religion and Institutional Infrastructure in a Depressed Neighborhood." American Sociological Association, Chicago, Illinois, August 1999; Association for the Sociology of Religion, San Francisco, California, August 1998.

"Congregation-Based Community Organizing and the Challenge of Religious Pluralism." Association for the Sociology of Religion, Toronto, Canada, September 1997.

"Understanding the 'New' Black Pentecostal Activism: Lessons From Boston Ecumenical Urban Ministries." Association for the Sociology of Religion, Toronto, Canada, September 1997; and Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, San Diego, California, November 1997.

