

racial unrest in 2001, and Franklyn Niles applauds the clergy opposition to the Ku Klux Klan in north-west Arkansas.

The final chapter by Djupe and Olson does not summarize the key findings so much as apply the key findings to theory-building. They begin by characterizing the main theoretical pillars of the religion and politics literature: pluralist assumptions and psychological, cultural, social-psychological, social movement, and contextual approaches. In order to generalize from a limited number of case studies, the editors sought internal validity by imposing pedagogical criteria on all the contributors (e.g., that each chapter focus on a conflict that embraces all the varied community actors). To secure external validity, they include high-profile (gay marriage and race riots) and low-profile (health care) controversies as well as those driven by morality politics and also social justice concerns. Oddly, there are no case studies of abortion, which has been the highest profile and longest-lasting moral conflict in contemporary America.

With respect to why religious interests became involved, Djupe and Olson took note of "the diversity of motivations tied to the location of the conflict" (p. 269), meaning that religious interests were mobilized if they were located near the epicenter of the community conflict. But the conventional wisdom was not confirmed that evangelical Protestants would be expected to become mobilized on culture war issues whereas mainline Protestants would be more concerned about social justice. On coalition-building, the presumption of little cooperation among religious interests is pretty much confirmed by the case studies. The "most dramatic" example of ecumenical cooperation was helping the homeless in Racine (a social justice concern), but I observed that the editors cited no moral conflict (gay marriage or race relations) that elicited cooperation. Surely, James Davison Hunter's reasoning would apply to the organizational priorities of different faith traditions (even if the culture wars thesis does not apply to mass opinion). Overall, one gets the impression that religious interests were not uniformly an activist component of the pluralist system in these communities.

The back-cover endorsement by Professor Kenneth D. Wald says that this volume "is exciting both for what it does and for the subsequent work it will stimulate." Yes, *Religious Interests in Community Conflict* is a pioneering study that charts a new course for religion and politics research. It is path-breaking because, as the editors observe, the "unequivocal claim resulting from this volume is the necessity of including the community in analyses of religion and politics in consequential ways" (p. 278).

Case studies are invaluable research tools for theory-building, but subsequent research on religion and community conflict might well be structured differently. The variety of cases and the variance in community sizes yielded some very tentative conclusions in the final chapter. My own preference would be to

include only two issues, a high-profile moral issue and a low-profile issue of social justice. Devote five chapters to each and identify case studies that represent the U.S. geographically and that are stratified by population size. The classic work on community conflict (by sociologist James Coleman) focused on towns and small cities because the psychological dynamics that polarize relatively small communities do not have similar effects in large urban areas. So consider including for each issue case studies from two rural locales, two small towns, and perhaps one large city. By this strategy, future researchers can control for the all-important community size variable and build upon the insights from this analysis. That is my only caveat to what will prove to be a significant contribution to the religion and politics literature.

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THE FIRST YEAR OUT: UNDERSTANDING AMERICAN TEENS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL. By Tim Clydesdale. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. 239 pp. \$50.00 cloth, \$20.00 paper.

FORBIDDEN FRUIT: SEX AND RELIGION IN THE LIVES OF AMERICAN TEENAGERS. By Mark Regnerus. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. 304 pp. \$25.00, cloth.

The word "teenager" is a relatively recent addition to the English lexicon. The *Oxford English Dictionary* claims that the first use of the term appeared in 1941, when a columnist of the magazine *Popular Science Monthly* remarked, "I never knew teen-agers could be so serious." Historian Steven Mintz has pointed out that later that year, *Life* magazine popularized the term and its associated stereotype when a photo essay's accompanying narrative commented that teenagers "live in a jolly world of gangs, games, movies, and music" and that "they adore chocolate milkshakes."

Such frivolity suggests a time of life, and indeed an entire time period, that we think of as more innocent than today. But the teenager's first appearance also coincided with two more serious and distinct developments in U.S. culture. First, due to the Depression and its lessened demands for labor, growing support for child labor laws finally removed young people from the workforce so that half of all teenagers were enrolled in high school by 1936, as compared with just one-fifth a decade earlier. The second development, related to the growth of the high school, was the recognition on the part of the emergent retail industry that this new collection of young people served as a commercially viable demographic for the marketplace of commercial goods. The term "teenager," then, has both a cultural and an economic valence, and the tensions between these

two definitions of young people continue to animate the way we think of young people today.

Since the 1940s, a raft of sociological research has contributed to our understandings of the American teenager. But the two books reviewed here each make unique contributions by exploring the moral culture that young people today inhabit and express through the choices they make in relation to two major life-course events that have long been significant in the lives of teens: the transition from high school to the next phase of young adult life, and the initiation into more intimate sexual relationships (of course, as both of these books suggest, these two events usually occur in the reverse order).

Tim Clydesdale's book, *The First Year Out: Understanding American Teens After High School*, provides an insightful look at how most young people experience their last year in high school and first year of college. Analyzing 125 in-depth interviews with 75 different teenagers, notes from a year of field research at a public high school in New Jersey, and additional data from 36 college teen volunteers, Clydesdale refutes the long-held assumption that the first year out of high school is a time of self-reflection and identity-formation. This grappling with self-identity in the first year out was the experience for most of us who went on to become professors, deans, campus ministers, and other members of what Clydesdale refers to as the intelligentsia, or those who make the choices about what the first year of college should look like. Yet for most young people, the first year out is a period of learning daily life management skills. Chief among these concerns is the need to manage personal relationships and gratifications such as alcohol and sex in light of the demands of the workforce and the college classroom. Clydesdale uses the metaphor of the "identity lock box" to describe the way in which young people put their religion and other aspects of their identity away during this time of nonreflection.

The engine of consumption first put in place with the 1940s teenager now is a source of major stress and time pressure, Clydesdale argues, as young people scramble to locate and work in low-wage jobs during college. Yet that work largely does not contribute to young peoples' work ethics or their professional experiences, he finds, but rather becomes an obstacle to other goals such as volunteering and building social networks. Moreover, work does not translate into financial acumen, as the students who saved and were most frugal were those who worked the least.

They may dislike their work and stress, but contrary to the image of the "generation gap" that took hold in the 1960s, Clydesdale found that most teens described their personal relationships with their parents warmly. He concluded that popular American moral culture conveys the idea that happiness comes from two places: in personally fulfilling relationships, and in individual consumption. He also surmised that parents, educators, and clergy have,

in his words, "underestimated what adolescents can learn and overestimated what they can meaningfully integrate on their own," suggesting that adults might reflect upon and change their own consumptive lifestyles in an effort to reorient the priorities of the young people in their lives.

Clydesdale's book offers a challenge to those who seek to design meaningful courses for young people in their first year out. He notes that students would prefer to have courses that are challenging but that deliver information they can use in their everyday lives: how to manage their own money and relationships, for instance—topics that would seem to be well suited to the sociology curriculum.

Interestingly, Clydesdale argues that the teens that seemed most interested in examining the contents of the identity lock box in their first year out were those who attended conservative religious colleges. This is likely to be a surprise for those who think of evangelical colleges as narrow and anti-intellectual. Yet it may be that these colleges provide a certain comfort level and homogeneity that then enables young people to be more aware of the finer points of difference, and they may then find themselves forced to grapple with differences they did not expect. A future work by Clydesdale that explores when other young people encounter similar periods of self-reflection is currently under way.

Whereas Clydesdale's book provides insights for professors and secondarily for parents and others concerned with young people, Mark Regnerus's book, *Forbidden Fruit: Sex & Religion in the Lives of American Teenagers*, speaks more directly to the perennial parental concerns of sexual initiation of younger teenagers. Reviewing telephone survey and in-depth interview data from the National Survey of Youth and Religion and from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Regnerus explores how young people learn about sexual activity from their parents, schools, peers, and other sources. The book examines how adolescents make decisions about engaging in sexual activity, what sexual experiences they profess to have had, and how they make sense of these experiences in light of their own identities as religious, moral, and/or responsible persons. Especially interesting is the emergence of what the author terms a middle-class sexual norm of "everything but intercourse," which has taken hold not because of a desire for "technical virginity," but to avoid risks associated with pregnancy and STDs that can negatively affect one's life outcomes. But there are other gems here, as well, such as the evidence that suggests that evangelical young people are not less active sexually than their nonevangelical counterparts; they just tend to feel guiltier about it. Evangelical young people also tend to have more "unsafe" sex (without birth control) because they do not want to appear as if they "planned" to have sex. The continued existence of the double standard regarding heterosexual sex is much in evidence in

this book's findings, with stories of girls who regret and boys who, in general, do not. The findings regarding the disenchanting sexual attitudes and practices in African-American communities are especially poignant. Adolescent sex in African-American communities, Regnerus concludes, cannot be understood apart from the larger context of a culture in which black men already feel disempowered and black women, in committing to them, feel somewhat resigned to a passive role in the sexual relationship—at least when they are teens.

Healthy sex, according to this book, is something that teens do not do until they are married, which happens presumably in their young adult years. Yet this book shies away from critiquing the assumption, presumably made on the part of most of those surveyed, that sex is an act, and specifically one of heterosexual coitus. Viewing sexuality as an aspect of identity that is shaped, performed, and experienced in relationships might have raised different questions, specifically with regard to issues of gender, power, and control in relationships, whether heterosexual or not. An analysis stemming from this critique might consider whether young people discuss guilt in relation to religion as proxy for other, harder-to-express concerns: guilt about allowing oneself to feel disempowered and vulnerable in a sexual relationship, perhaps; regrets about possibly disempowering someone else; or unexpressed concerns about how sexual relationships take the form of an exchange that echoes the consumptive environment in which they are so deeply enmeshed, and that empties such relationships of deeper meaning and consequence.

Also left unexplored are both the relatively few young people who articulate only minor regrets about prior sexual encounters, and the parents who seem less nervous about the sexual relationships in which their young people have participated. One such interesting case was the evangelical young woman who not only described herself as religious and participated in two evangelical organizations, but also described a previous sexual relationship in terms of pleasure rather than guilt and noted that her mother had been aware of the relationship. Future research might seek to explore such anomalies to tease out how some young people draw upon alternative narratives or combine narratives of religion and culture in surprising ways. This could be disquieting, but could also provide points of departure for those who wish to deepen discussions beyond "no sex before marriage"—discussions Regnerus rightly advocates given the discrepancy between stated views and actual practices.

Of course, there are many reasons to harbor concerns about some forms of teen sexuality, and this text indeed covers issues of sexual abuse, STDs, AIDS, pornography, and exploitation, as well as casual sex. For this reason, it is an eye-opening read for those who share concerns about adolescent health and well-being.

Both of these books draw upon extensive interviews with young people, which provide an admirable level of depth and thought to their analyses. It is curious, however, that whereas each book acknowledges multiple interviewees in its early pages, the works are each presented in a single, authoritative voice. It may be that this is the preferred style among publishers who press for such coherent narratives, but as sociologists increasingly follow anthropologists into the realm of large-scale interview-based projects, it would be wise to consider that field's greater attention to interviewer-interviewee interactions and the role of these interactions in relation to the knowledge constructed for consumption in book form. We may need new models for writing up such projects in the future.

The high school and one's peers remain important in young peoples' decision-making processes. Both of these books suggest that it is within the context of these and other close relationships that identification with religion seems to emerge as an indirect rather than direct influence on decisions and, perhaps, on the narratives through which young people make sense of those decisions. Teenagers, it seems, do indeed confront serious choices beyond chocolate or vanilla milkshakes, and these two important books help readers to make sense of the myriad reasons why they make the choices that they do.

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AMERICAN CATHOLICS TODAY: NEW REALITIES OF THEIR FAITH AND THEIR CHURCH. By William D'Antonio, James Davidson, Dean Hoge, and Mary Gautier. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007. x + 204 pp. \$65.00 cloth; \$24.95 paper.

American Catholics Today is an important book, both for the number of findings about U.S. Catholics from preceding studies, which it confirms, and for the new findings, which it reveals for the first time. The authors have summarized their 1987, 1993, 1997, and 2003 national studies of American Catholics—plus numerous other studies of Catholic subpopulations—and add the findings of a new survey in 2005, resulting in a compilation of trends in Catholic beliefs and practices over almost two decades.

Overall, the authors find that identification as Catholic, commitment to the church, participation in the sacraments, and willingness to accept church authority vary greatly by generation. These differences are key, and will assume an even greater importance in the near future. The impending death of the oldest, pre-Vatican II, generation implies the loss of the most committed and active generation of American Catholics unless subsequent generations experience