

Should I Write a Book?

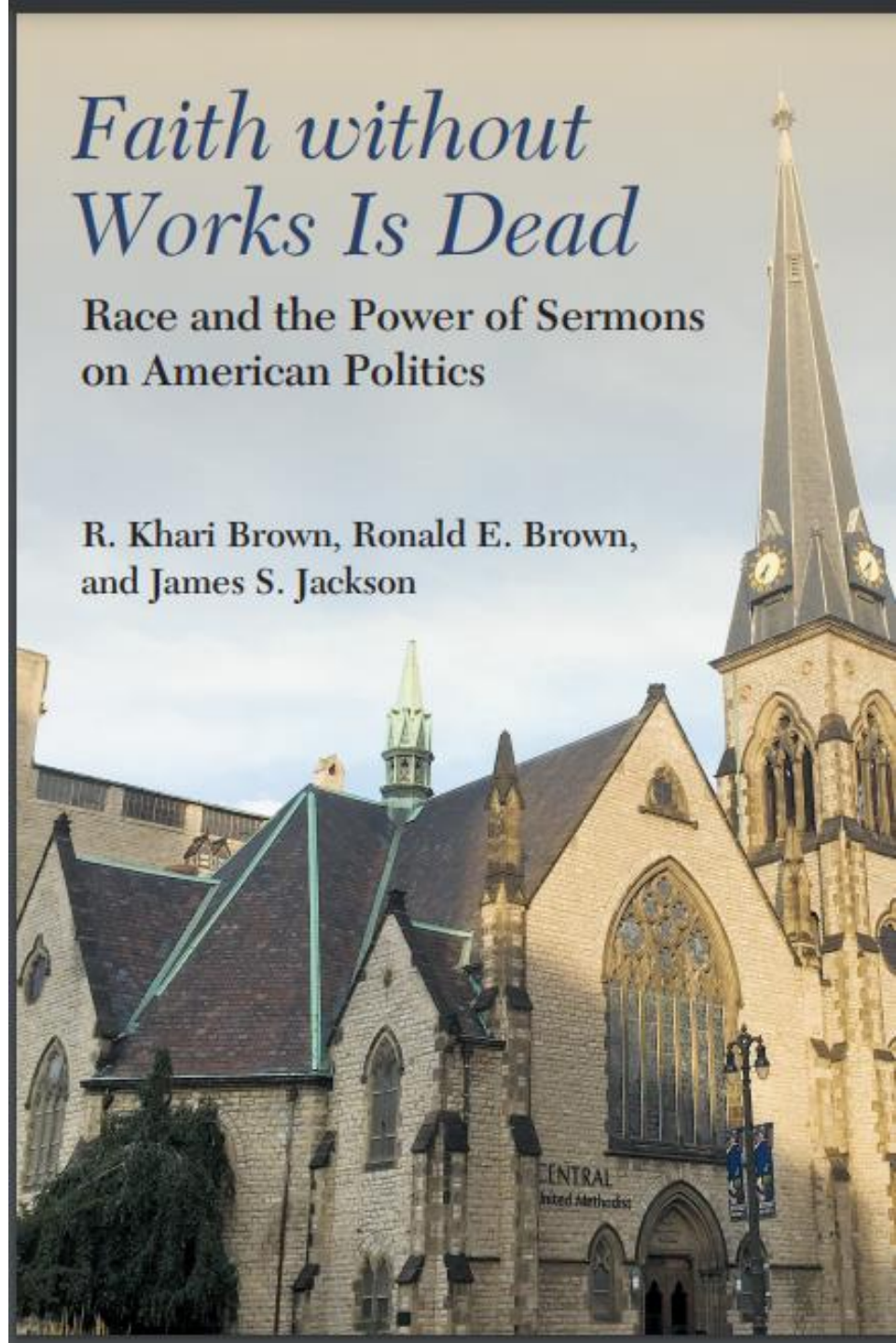
Khari Brown, Associate Professor, Sociology, Wayne State University, Research Core in MCUAAAR



**Michigan Center for Urban African
American Aging Research**

Our Book

- Ronald Brown, the late great James Jackson, and I co-authored the book, *Faith without Works is Dead*, published by The University of Michigan Press.
 - This book examines the relationship between race, political sermons, and politics in America.
 - Our central argument is that race determines...
 - American receptiveness to social justice sermons.
- &
- Association between hearing these sermons w/ progressive policy attitudes & political activism.
 - We use over 70 years of survey data, including the *National Politics Study*, to empirically make our case.



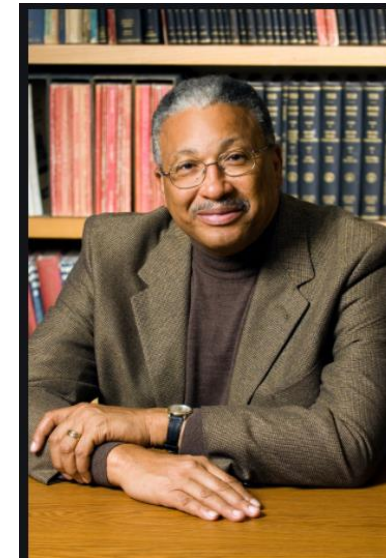
Our Book

- In 2017, we decided to write this book
- This was a new experience for me because it was my 1st book
- It was also Ronald's 1st book.
- James co-wrote one other full length manuscript, *Hope and Independence* (1989)
- But, James was busy w/ other writing & grant proposal projects, including...
 - *2020/2021 National Politics Study*.
- So, he encouraged dad and I to take the lead, and we did, because the book "*could practically write itself*"! And, it did!

Me: Khari



James S. Jackson,
Psychology/ ISR
U. Of Michigan



Ronald E. Brown,
Political Science,
Wayne State U.



Should I write a book? Two questions

1. Why do I want to write a book?

- Utilitarian reasons: Tenure / promotion
- Beyond Utility: To do good
- To tie my work together

2. What's the process?



QUESTION1: Why do I want to write a book?

Utility: Earning a Promotion



Sociology Department

- One of the reasons I co-wrote this book is that I *believed* it would help me earn full professor.
 - Good question: Will it help?
 - 1st Step: I consulted my department's promotion factors, which emphasize:
 - *Nationally recognized scholarship*
- &
- *High quality scholarship*

“Factors for Promotion: The factors for promotion are similar to those for tenure except that the emphasis on the different elements may vary, with more attention given to *scholarship and national recognition* within the profession in the case of recommendations for promotion to Professor. Therefore, a *high quality performance in scholarship* is a necessary condition for a positive recommendation for promotion.”

UTILITY QUESTION: Relative to articles, how likely are books to garner national recognition and be classified as high quality scholarship?

Are Sociologists' Publications Uncited? Citation Rates of Journal Articles, Chapters, and Books

Author(s): David M. Bott and Lowell L. Hargens

Source: *The American Sociologist*, Summer, 1991, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Summer, 1991), pp. 147-160



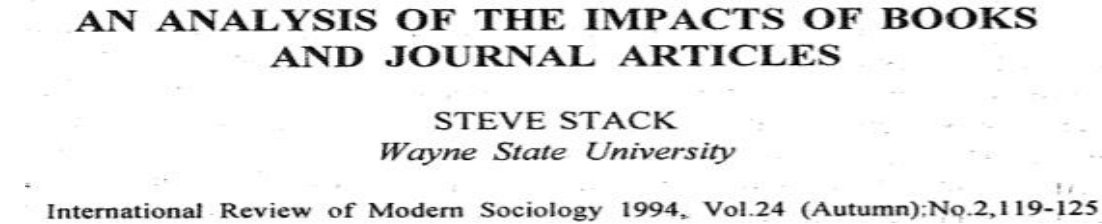
David Bott · 3rd



Lowell Hargens

- In 1974, articles published in the top two highest cited sociology journals were more heavily cited than books reviewed in *Contemporary Sociology*.

But...



- In 1978, there was no difference in number of citations between scholarly books reviewed in *Contemporary Sociology* and articles published in *American Sociological Review*, sociology's flagship journal.

UTILITY QUESTION: Relative to articles, how likely are books to garner national recognition and be classified as high quality scholarship?

Careers in Print: Books, Journals, and Scholarly Reputations
Author(s): Elisabeth S. Clemens, Walter W. Powell, Kris Mellwaine and Dina Okamoto
Source: *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 101, No. 2 (Sep., 1995), pp. 433-494
Published by: The University of Chicago Press



ELISABETH S. CLEMENS

TABLE 3
THE EFFECT OF GENRE ON RATES OF CITATION

GENRE	CITATIONS							
	N	Mean	SD	Median	Q1*	Q2*	Q3*	Q4*
Articles:								
All citations	1,022	11.4	9.2	9	2.5	7.1	12.4	24.7
Citations within sociology	549	6.1	5.1	4	1.0	3.6	6.6	12.9
Citations outside sociology	473	5.3	5.9	3	.4	2.5	5.3	13.6
Books:								
All citations	2,652	33.2	65.2	14	4.4	10.7	21.1	95.7
Citations within sociology	699	8.7	14.9	5	1.1	3.9	7.4	22.1
Citations outside sociology	1,953	24.4	51.6	8	2.4	6.5	13.9	75.1

NOTE.—The sample includes 90 articles and 80 books cited a total of 3,674 times.
* Because of the skewed distribution of citations, we divided the article and book samples into quartiles (Q). Here we report the mean number of cites within quartiles. App. B provides the range for each quartile.

- In 1987 & 1988, the 80 books nominated for *distinguished book awards* by ASA were cited *more frequently* than articles published in ASR and AJS.

UTILITY QUESTION: *So, will writing a book lead to my peers recognizing my work as high quality, resulting in Wayne promoting me to full professor?*

Answer

- Maybe... If someone nominates my book for a distinguished book award.
- So, basically, if I write a great book, I stand a better chance of being recognized as a high quality scholar than if I don't write a great book.
- Makes Sense.
- Even, though the research I'm referencing is 25 years old and older, it still seems plausible.

AJS



OR



**UNIVERSITY OF
MICHIGAN PRESS**

400 x 400

UTILITARIAN QUESTION: What if no one nominates my book, then what?

- The publisher's prestige likely plays a role in how your peers view your work.
- Achieve high quality research by proxy with an acclaimed press.
- I examined academic rankings of sociology and political science presses.
- Political Scientists view U of M press as a top 7 academic press.



Ranking Scholarly Publishers in Political Science: An Alternative Approach

James C. Garand, *Louisiana State University*

Michéal W. Giles, *Emory University*

Table 1

Respondent Preferences for Publisher Submission of High-Quality Book Manuscript, Top-50 Ranked Publishers

RANK	PRESS	1ST	2ND	3RD	TOTAL MENTIONS	WEIGHTED TOTAL [1]	RELATIVE WEIGHTED TOTAL [1]
1	Cambridge University Press	137	80	42	259	613	1.000
2	Princeton University Press	98	102	40	240	538	0.878
3	Oxford University Press	41	46	36	123	251	0.409
4	University of Chicago Press	49	24	54	127	249	0.406
5	Harvard University Press	21	30	26	77	149	0.243
6	Cornell University Press	22	28	23	73	145	0.237
7	University of Michigan Press	12	21	41	74	119	0.194
8	Yale University Press	12	20	21	53	97	0.158
9	University Press of Kansas	15	16	13	44	90	0.147
10	CQ Press	11	6	11	28	56	0.091

UTILITARIAN QUESTION: How can I be more certain that writing a book will help me earn full professor?

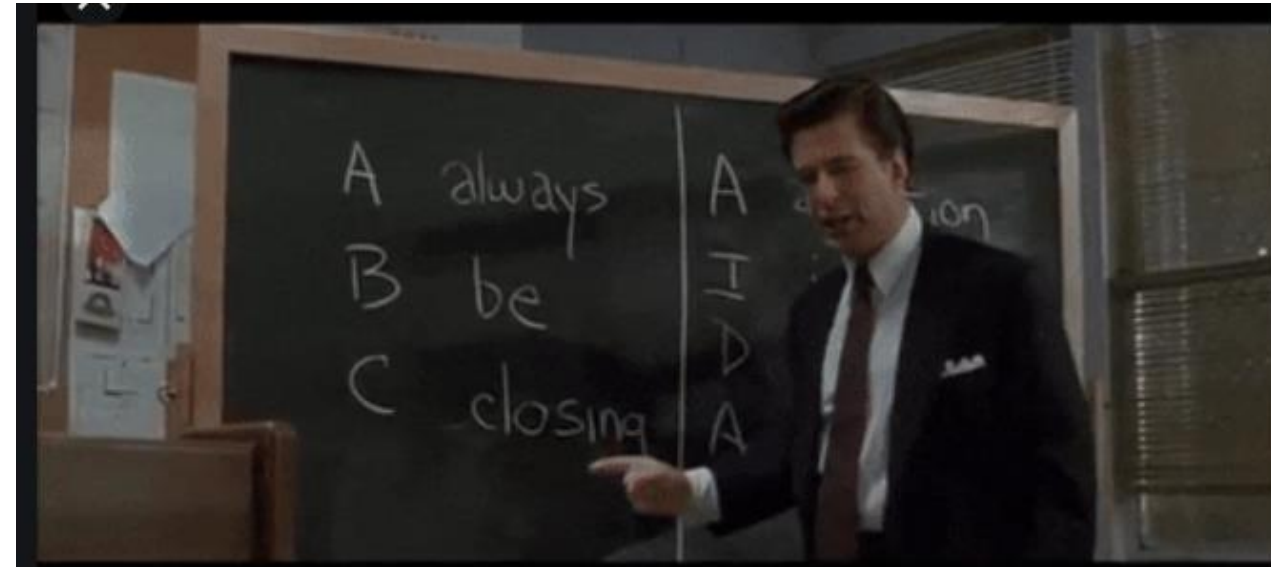
- *2nd step:* Talk to Jeff, your Chair, he's straightforward and an overall great guy!
- Before and while you're writing, you should talk to your chair to ensure that you...
 - Both share the same definition of "*nationally recognized research*"
- &
- That she/he will advocate on your behalf that your book strengthens your position as a *nationally recognized scholar*.
- Jeff and I had this conversation and we're on the same page.



Jeffrey Kentor, Professor and Chair,
Sociology, Wayne State U.

“Coffee’s (Tenure/Promotion) for closer’s only.”

- Jeff also made it clear, that 1 book alone post-tenure isn’t enough to earn full professor.
- I also must continue...
 1. Publishing peer-reviewed articles
 2. Securing external grants
 3. Or, write another book
- **Take Away:** Writing a book may help you earn a promotion, but it is unlikely sufficient.
- *Keep in mind...*
 - Always
 - Be
 - Closing /Publishing



Glengarry Glen Ross (1992)

Why do I want to write a book?

Beyond Utility: To Do Good

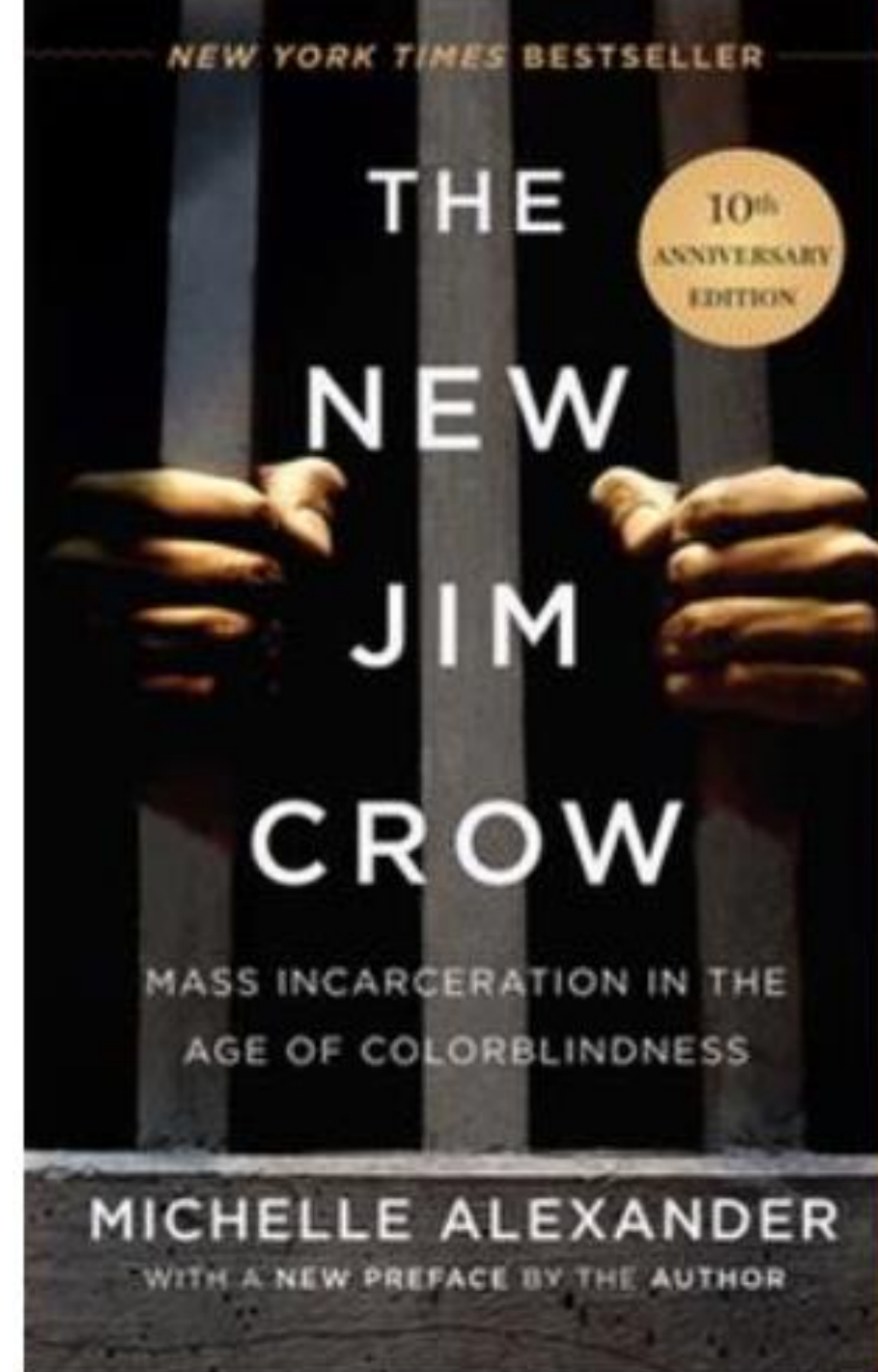
- My hunch is that many if not most social scientists, social workers, and public health scientists hope that their work will...
 - Raise awareness about a some form of human suffering and exploitation they're examining
 - Increase concern about that social problem &
 - That people in decision-making positions (*government, corporate, philanthropic*) will use their research to implement necessary social reforms.



Why do I want to write a book?

Beyond Utility: To Do Good

- For example, I get the impression that in addition to wanting to do high quality scholarship, Michelle Alexander wrote her book, *The New Jim Crow* (2010) to...
 - Raise *awareness* about how the war on drugs unfairly targets black men.
 - Raise *concern* about how racist sentencing standards contribute to the mass incarceration of black men. &
 - Lead to *policy changes* that drastically reduces the disproportionate number of black men in correctional facilities for non-violent drug offences.



Beyond Utility: Doing Good

- **QUESTION:** Do books allow scholars to reach a broader audience so to raise public awareness & concern?
- Since 2010, she's talked to tens of millions of people about the problem of mass incarceration on;
 - MSNBC
 - Democracy Now
 - PBS
 - NPR
 - C-SPAN
 - & many other media platforms
- Also, since that time, other authors cited her book [11,134](#) times.



All In with Chris Hayes, MSNBC, April 5, 2016

Beyond Utility: Doing Good

- Of course, Michelle Alexander is a unique case.
- **But, my hypothetical question is:** Do you think she would have had the *same potential* to raise public concern about race and mass incarceration by writing articles on the topic instead of writing her book?

Answer

- I don't know, but, it's plausible because books...
 - Tend to rely upon a narrative structure with less technical language that make them more readable to people outside one's discipline.
 - Also, depending upon the press, the press will market your book to your target audiences.



- **Take Away:** If you're interested in raising public consciousness, you may consider writing a book.

Why do I want to write a book?: To tie my work together

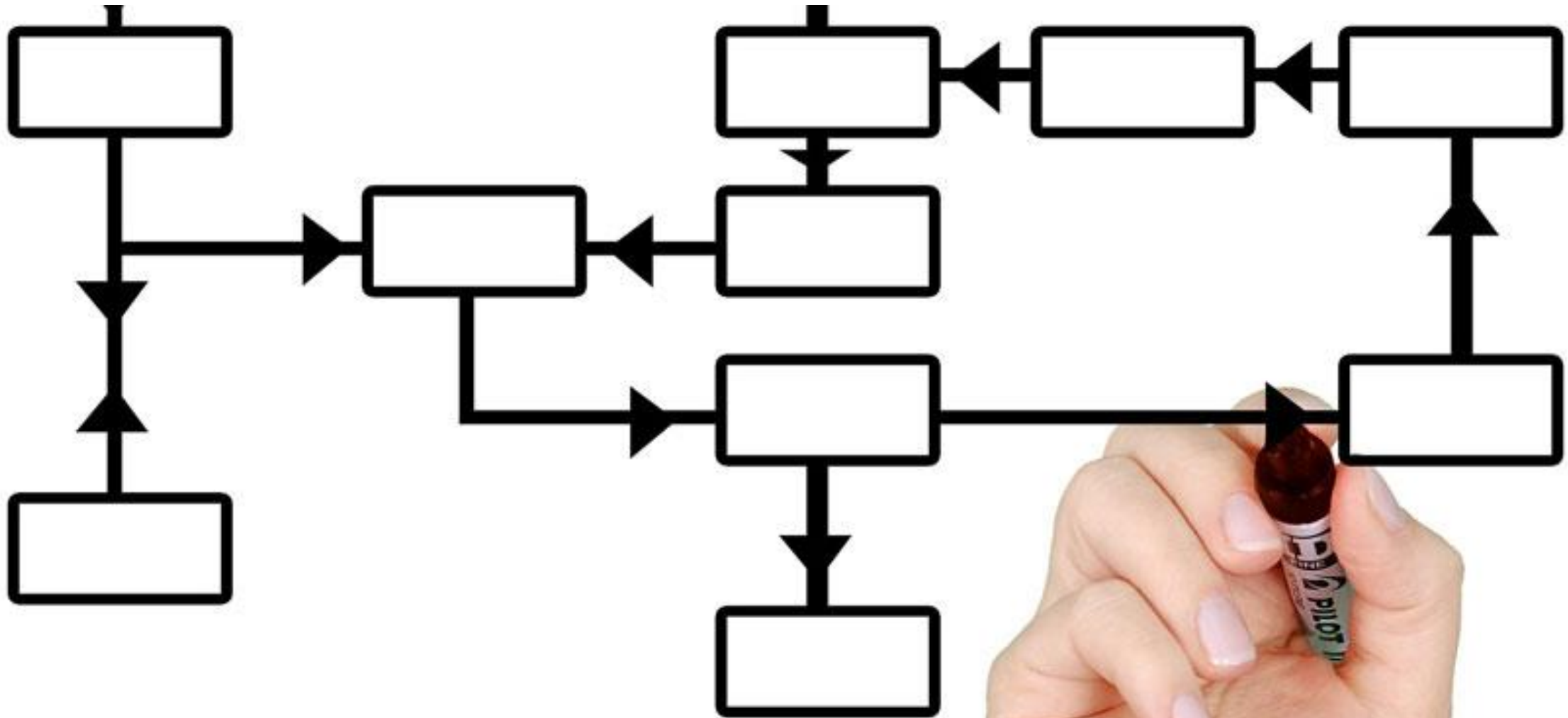
- The book's "the rug that ties the room together."
- Since tenure, I've written 20 or so articles on race differences in the relationship between hearing political sermons with:
 - Immigration policy attitudes
 - Foreign Policy attitudes
 - Race-based policy attitudes
 - Anti-poverty policy attitudes
 - Political Partisanship &
 - Political Behavior.



The Big Lebowski, 1998

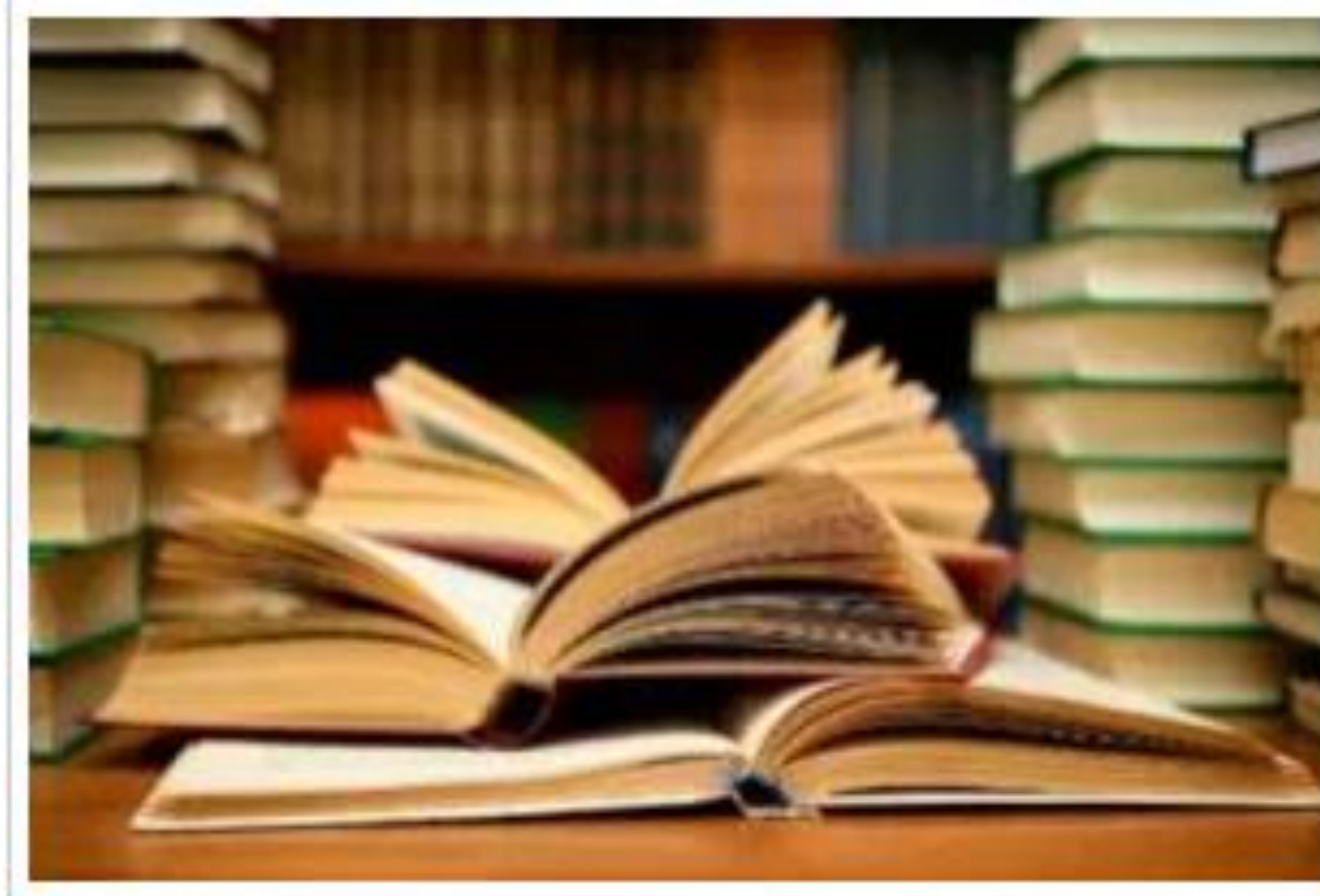
- The book gave us the space to discuss the connections between our studies' core findings & present a central theoretical argument that ties all of this work together.
- **Take Away:** If you're interested in telling a story that ties your work together, you may consider writing a book.

Academic Book Writing Process



Academic Book Writing Process

1. Identify a Press
2. Submit Book Proposal
3. Book Proposal Review Process
4. Submit Book
5. Book Review Process

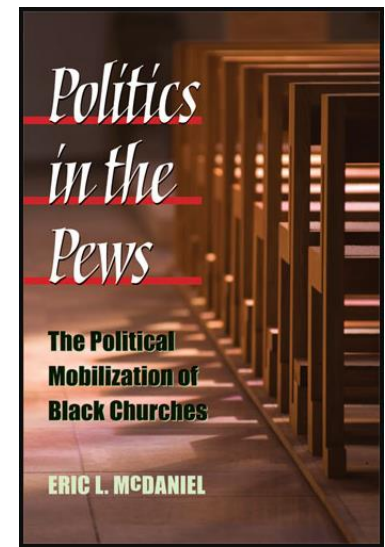


Questions I asked myself when *Identifying a Press*

1. How prestigious is the press?
 - U of M: Top 10 Press among Political Scientists
2. How aggressive will they market my book?
 - The marketing department at U of M Press works with authors to identify organizational, academic, and media targets for their work.
3. Do they publish work in my subject area?
 - U of M publishes books on the following subjects:
 - Race/Ethnicity
 - Political Science
 - Religion



Theresa Schmid,
Publicity &
Promotions
Coordinator,
U. of M. Press



Submitting a Book Proposal: Content Areas

- Purpose or rationale
- Similar or competing books in the field
- Target audience
- Why the manuscript is suited to the Press
- Manuscript length
- Table of contents
- Chapter outline
- Project overview
- Sample chapter



Book Proposal Review

1. Submit Book Proposal to editor
2. Revise & Re-submit Proposal
3. Editor awards advanced contract
4. Meet w/ **Elizabeth!**, press editor, about reviews!
 - She's very cool and nice and believes in your project!
 - Treat her to coffee at a downtown coffee shop.
 - Don't be cheap, buy her a muffin if she wants one!
 - Take her advice about hiring a copy editor, she knows what she's talking about!



Elizabeth Demers,
Editorial Director,
U of Michigan Press.

Book Review Process

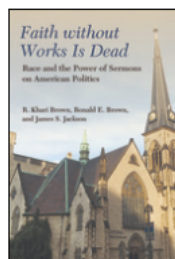
1. Submit book to Elizabeth, editor
2. Elizabeth sends the book out for review
3. We revise the book
4. The Press accepts book for publication!



Book Review Process II

5. We further revise the book before sending it to the editor
6. Elizabeth emails the book to the Press's copy editor
6. After reviewing the copy editor's page proofs, we further revise the book
7. We submit page proofs
8. **Done!:** 3 year process from beginning to end





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Faith without Works Is Dead

Race and the Power of Sermons on American Politics

R. Khari Brown, Ronald E. Brown, and James S. Jackson

How race influences religious engagement in politics

Description

This book examines the intersection of race, political sermons, and social justice. Religious leaders and congregants who discuss and encourage others to do social justice embrace a form of civil religion that falls close to the covenantal wing of American civil religious thought. Clergy and members who share this theological outlook frame the nation as being exceptional in God's sight. They also emphasize that the nation's special relationship with the Creator is contingent on the nation working toward providing opportunities for socioeconomic well-being, freedom, and creative pursuits. God's covenant, thus, requires inclusion of people who may have different life experiences but who, nonetheless, are equally valued by God and worthy of dignity. Adherents to such a civil religious worldview would believe it right to care for and be in solidarity with the poor and powerless, even if they are undocumented immigrants, people living in non-democratic and non-capitalist nations, or members of racial or cultural out-groups. Relying on 44 national and regional surveys conducted between 1941 and 2019, *Faith without Works Is Dead* explores how racial experiences impact the degree to which religion informs social justice attitudes and political behavior. This is the most comprehensive set of analyses of publicly available survey data on this topic.

R. Khari Brown is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at Wayne State University.

Ronald E. Brown is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Wayne State University.

James S. Jackson is Daniel Katz Distinguished University Professor of Psychology at the University of Michigan.

Praise / Awards

"...others have analyzed the political attitudes and behavior of clergy, but this is the first book to analyze what congregants report hearing from their clergy and how the messages given may shape the political attitudes and behavior of their congregants."

—Corwin E. Smidt, Michigan State University

"*Faith without Works Is Dead* provides an important contribution to our understanding of the political and social consequences of our highly segregated religious practices. By demonstrating the differences in messages between Black and White congregations and the political ramifications of these differences, this

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DOI: 10.3998/mpub.9956530

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Questions!

