

John R. Shook

# Recognizing and Categorizing the Secular: Polysecularity and Agendas of Polysecularism

## 1 Introduction: Seeking the Secular

What may count as a “secular” organization, or a “secular” movement? How should secular societies be studied, classified, and compared? The amount of research into group manifestations of secular energy and activism has been limited and disjointed, most likely due to a general lack of clarity and rigor.

This chapter offers a well-defined framework for classifying and contrasting the compositions and agendas of organizations for secular people. That framework must be assembled gradually and carefully, which requires initial sections of this chapter for describing how the secular and secularity can be studied scientifically. The second section shows how to liberate a free-standing conception of the secular from pre-fabricated contrasts against religious normalcies. The third section explains how to avoid the prevalent fallacies in the social sciences that distort the identities of secular people. The fourth section introduces the idea of “polysecularity” to better discriminate the many types of secular people. The fifth section introduces the idea of “polysecularism” to cover primary modes of activism chosen by some secular people in the public sphere, which need not be characterized only by negative opposition to religion. The sixth section orients research into public secular attitudes through the positive self-identities and chosen agendas of secular individuals. The highly diverse array of choices for expressing secularist views and participating in secular agendas in turn sets the stage for the seventh section, which categories a variety of prominent secular organizations in America according to their efforts to serve one or another portion of that diverse array. This chapter concludes by pointing out under-served and neglected segments of the sizable secular population in America, using the example of New Atheism to illustrate how that regrettable situation could occur in the internet age.

The terms “secular” and “secularity” lend themselves to multifaceted and multidimensional conceptions, applicable in many ways to individuals, organizations, social institutions, and whole societies (see Rechtenwald and Richter, this volume). Despite their utility for analytic frameworks in research, the work of observing secularity, tracking secularity, and explaining features of sec-

ularity continues to be methodologically challenging. Expanding the field of Secular Studies on stably academic foundations is difficult enough; presumptions and stereotypes about the nonreligious continue to divert inquiries towards dead ends. Suppositions that the secular is the realm of crudely materialistic and utilitarian matters, secularity indicates an insensitivity or impassivity to religious or spiritual wonders, or that secularism is basically about anti-religious antagonism, continue to exert open or tacit influence across academia. Secular Studies could settle down where religious studies and theology wishes it to remain, as a subfield subordinate to their supervision. Alternatively, it can clear its own academic path with philosophical clarity and scientific rigor.

In the West, unbelief and its secularity has commonly been viewed as a deviant rebellion against theism. That perspective does simplify methodology. If the secular is only perceivable through a religious lens, then secularity seems inconceivable except in relation to religion, and secularity has no meaning apart from religious structures. Only the clarity of religious doctrine about divinity permits any shape and definition to nonreligion, this viewpoint goes on to suggest. Even atheists often assume that theism presents a doctrinally well-defined target for atheism's opposition (Clark 2015). Hence academia's approach, ever since Christian universities arose, has been to let experts in religion handle explorations into impiety and irreligion. Religious scholars have been devoted to explaining religion's reasonableness, its universality, its naturalness, and its usefulness. That devotion has conveniently set standards of normality for judging unbelief's deformities and deficiencies, and protecting society from secularity's corrosions. Historically (and presently), theology has regulated the secular.

There is an alternative. A scholarly field concerned with the secular could control its own methodologies, theoretical terminology, and interpretations of empirical findings. Inquiry into the views, values, and motivations of nonreligious people could begin with observations of them in their own lived worlds, instead of starting from theological portraits of religious people in theirs. Any presumed naturalness and normality to religion (Barrett 2012; contra position in Shook 2012) can be bracketed away from sound methodology. Scholars and scientists studying nonreligious people, in non-Western as well as Western societies, can investigate the affinities and affirmations behind a person's preferred secular views and activities (Beit-Hallahmi 2007; Zuckerman 2010; Caldwell-Harris 2012; Coleman, Silver, and Holcombe 2013; Norenzayan and Gervais 2013; Guenther 2014; Burchardt et al. 2015; Bilgrami 2016). Not believing in a deity, or not behaving religiously, by itself tells us little about what a person does accept and affirm.

The field of Secular Studies and allied disciplines are ready for closer research into phenomena of individual secularity using secular methodologies

and sensitivities to secularity's own histories and agendas. The reality of "polysecularity," as I term it, awaits exploration at the individual level. Polysecularity, in brief, refers to the broad diversity to secularity displayed by people throughout their mundane lives. Secular people needn't be defined in terms of deviancy any more. Some secular people are secularists offering resistance to religion, by participating in the advancement of secularism's affirmative agendas. The diversity and positivity inherent to secularist attitudes and activist agendas is here labeled as "polysecularism."

This chapter concludes by situating secular organizations in America within this polysecularity-polysecularism framework. The framework's classification of ideological niches situates where various types of secular organizations can find their corresponding sorts of supporters. The phenomena of polysecularity at the individual level is accompanied at the social level by the polysecularism of organizational diversity observed in the United States. This framework accounts for the kinds of disagreements, and even inevitable antagonisms, among secular organizations.

## 2 Situating Secularity

Research into secularity too often proceeds as though being secular or not being a believer is predicable upon some basic, static, and singular construct. Theology helpfully cleared the way for that procedure. With only one path up the mountain to the sacred, there is only one path down. Secularization is just de-sacralization; secular people descending to the mountain's base are secular only for having taken the path in the wrong direction. However, scholarly research into the pluralism of religions exposes difficulties for objectively defining religion or faith. Why must research into the secular wait upon any fragile consensus about which mountain is "religion" or which meaning to the "religious" is best? No religion's theology could serve as a good guide for this rough terrain.

How about history? Historians have been heard proclaiming that irreligion is but a modernist creation, emerging about the time when "religion" as a concept was invented. If "religion" is as artificially constructed as some historians of modernity think (consult Nongbri 2012), wouldn't de-centering modernist frameworks bring authentic and non-essentialized secularity back into view? Besides, atheists could not be as constructed to the same degree as "religion" by modernity, since real unbelief could not be produced by an unreal religion. Hence, historians should not classify atheism as a religion's modern spinoff or sect. Medieval scholastics read about atheism from ancient Greeks (Shook 2015), and atheists are visible during the Renaissance (Wotton 1992).

Either way, whether theology's unreliable map or history's dubious framings are followed, confused theorizing rather than methodical observation ends up dictating who is inhabiting societies. That situation is not sustainable for a scholarly field aspiring to any scientific status. Empirical research already points towards immense qualitative and quantitative variances in the beliefs, values, motivations, and psychological characteristics of individual nonbelievers. The people lacking belief in deities may be more varied than all those who do believe in a deity. Studies into personal secularity are confirming that possibility; recent research has accumulated impressive results (Hunsberger and Altemeyer 2006; Beit-Hallahmi 2007; Kosmin et al. 2009; Streib and Klein 2013; Silver et al. 2014; Keysar 2015).

Despite what religion's theologians or modernity's historians may claim, secularity is not reducible to a feature of secularism or a by-product of secularization. Trying to reduce secularity to any particular thing, much less something that exists only in relation to religion, is not proving to be empirically or explanatorily satisfactory. Secular people don't share common routes departing from religion, they don't maintain similar attitudes about religion, and many have no attitude or opinion whatsoever about religion. Secular people don't advance the same priorities for opposing religion, and they typically can't agree about effective strategies for countering religion. In fact, it appears that more secular people are not thinking about religion than those who are, and those secular people who happen to ponder religion hardly consider the matter in similar ways. It is not even the case that secularism is a uniformly definable issue, an adjunct or corollary to liberalism, or a singular ideology (Bilgrami 2014; Baker and Smith 2015; Kitcher 2015).

Despite these warnings from empirical studies, sociology and social history have been largely following a dictum accurately pronounced by Rajeev Bhargava: "It should be obvious that the 'secular' and the 'religious' are always and everywhere mutually constituted" (Bhargava 2011, 54). This dictum is false, and Secular Studies must reject it. Its role as a platitude says more about religious scholarship than anything secular. Secular and religious scholars alike should be able to register empirical facts before imposing paradigms. Most evident to objective observation are the shifting cultural forces contending for social authority over time in various countries. What constitutes religion, in the first place?

Religions are hardly the solidly permanent entities – the unmoved movers – that their followers presume or expect. They are continually reshaped and reformed by critical attention, from within and without (Berger 1967). Religions sometimes encounter such attention in the form of resistance, by those trying to modify the scope and degree of religious influence within society. When disputes over religion escalate to the point where some people are questioning its

validity, legitimacy, or authority, these engagements enter the arena of secularism. While sharp criticism of religion is not the same as intentionally advocating secularity, it can nevertheless have that practical effect. No religion fails to notice. Questioning religion in public typically elicits defensive reactions, concerned for repairing any diminishment of religious conviction and public confidence in religion. That is why public criticism of religion easily arouses theological surveillance and intervention, shoring up the reputation of religion with justificatory responses. What starts out as the civil questioning of religious involvement in society can easily transition towards tendentious arguments over doctrines defended by theology and disputed by dissenters. Civic dissenters may become defensive from accusations that they dangerously deviate from the “correct” religious worldview. The mere ability of another person to consider seriously a worldview that differs from one’s own is a clear epistemological threat to the religiously structured way of life (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Those courageous enough to declare their doubts about core theological creeds get cast into the role of being a religious apostate, or perhaps even being an “atheist.” Critics of religious controls over society and politics are then called “secularists” but classified practically as atheists too.

So far, this account of religious-secular engagement can make Bhargava’s platitude seem sensible. An account of civic dissent, as theology would shape it, revolves around unreasonable deviations from religious conviction and correctness. Nevertheless, that is not how civic dissenters necessarily describe their motivations. The religious need not be “constituting” the secular, by any means. Yes, public disputes are often dragged into theological arenas, but that hardly means that the inspiration to civic dissent is exclusively or even primarily about religion itself. Civil dissent with religion can easily erupt over civic matters of concern to all society, not merely creedal issues of theological interest. The way that theological defense mechanisms must regard civic dissent as unwelcome unorthodoxy is just a partisan perspective. It is just one way of framing the matter in a way favorable to religion, much in the same way that entrenched governing regimes can depict political dissidents as traitors motivated by unpatriotic ideology, in order to depict the government as truly loyal to the nation.

The process by which civic dissent from religion and religious influences over society are usually framed as some sort of theological schism, or even a chasm of apostasy, can make it appear that dissenters cannot be understood unless and until a measure of their theological distance from the religious hegemony is measured. The genuine motivations and goals of civic dissent can be easily overlooked by such a single-minded method, especially those aspirations having nothing to do with religiosity, but instead with secular hopes and ideals. Those wanting the least do to with religiosity, desiring to associate with similarly sec-

ular people in a more secular society, are hardly “unbelievers” – they have all sorts of secular motivations and civic goals. As far as religion can tell, however, they are just impious unbelievers and nothing more, bereft of the “correct” convictions that ought to guide everyone. That negativity, from a theological perspective, is their only reality.

Secular Studies researchers can remain beholden to that dependent negativity, in seemingly innocuous ways. A trained inability to apprehend or conceptualize the secular in any independent manner only debilitates secular research, rendering it vulnerable to religious paradigms. In two recent works, exemplary for their struggles against religion-inspired treatments of the nonreligious, we can read the following:

Yet “secularity” is not independent of “religion” at all but is rather only meaningful in relation to it. The idea of something being secular is simply unintelligible without an understanding of something else as religious and a view as to where the (moving) boundary between the two falls. (Lee 2015, 25)

“Nonreligion” denotes phenomena that are generally not considered religious but whose significance is more or less dependent on religion (atheists are an obvious example). (Quack 2014, 439)

With such mantras securely in place, full recognition of anything positive to religion’s supposed “other” won’t be possible. Allowing the meaning of the “secular” or the “nonreligious” to be controlled by religious thinking is only a (moving) measure of religion’s hegemony over scholarship. Distinguishing the “non-religious” apart from the “secular” so that one of these terms might better apply to matters more aloof from religion, all the while insisting that both terms can only ultimately be understood in relation to religion, only leaves the subject more confused and unscientific (Jong 2015). As for atheists, they are indeed of great significance to religion; appealing to them as exemplars of secularity would be expected from that same religious hegemony, not independent secular scholarship.

Instead of waiting for religious thought to explain what “secular” must mean, Secular Studies could instead study social and individual phenomena, noting those that lack religious features and whose significance is independent from anything religious. Despite the mantras now crowding religious studies, and too much of secular studies, a person can be quite secular regardless of whether that person’s thoughts have ever pondered religion or that person’s daily life ever contacts anything religious. To claim otherwise commits either the psychologist’s fallacy or the sociologist’s fallacy, explained in the next section.

### 3 Secular Identity

Identifying secular people is one thing; secular identity is another. A person can be quite secular regardless of whether that person ponders secularity or encounters secularism. Being secular isn't essentially about having a secular identity, any more than being secular is about having a nonreligious identity. The question must be asked, who is really controlling the assignment of identity? Mixing up social classifications with personal identities wasn't invented by theology or sociology. Society itself prefers to deal with evident stereotypes rather than sub-surface identities, and politics finds it convenient to reduce self-identity to group categorization.

Social scientists can avoid reifying stereotypes. Any researcher speaking of "identity" should make clear which sort of identity is meant (Turner 2013, chap. 6). A manageable way to discriminate types of identity can include:

You are an "X" if and only if you should prefer others to regard you as an "X." [ideal identity]

You are an "X" if and only if you prefer others to regard you as an "X." [valued identity]

You are an "X" if and only if you openly agree that you are an "X." [admitted identity]

You are an "X" if and only if you sincerely think of yourself as an "X." [self identity]

You are an "X" if and only if X means Y to society and you think of yourself as Y. [social identity]

You are an "X" if and only if X means Y by definition and you happen to fit Y. [categorical identity]

For example, the classification of "atheist" is a categorical identity: so long as a person does not believe in any god, that person is an atheist, regardless of whether that person thinks much about the matter or tells anyone else. (Similarly, a person can be a theist without ever visiting a house of worship to pronounce a creed.) In a way, being an atheist is nothing personal despite being intensely personal – it isn't ultimately about who a person takes themselves to be, or about what sort of person others expect you to be. Sociology's theorists who narrow atheism down to classifications able to sort people by anti-religious signs, such as "I have lost my faith," "There's no god," or "I stand with atheism," are not learning much about atheists in general. Religion's defenders often go

further, narrowing atheists to only people standing out of the crowd as anti-theists and anti-religion secularists. Sociology, by contrast, can be neutral on identity. Sociologists have every right to seek and find people fitting pre-set social identities, if that proves methodologically useful. However, pointing to admitted identities or social identities as if personal identities have been revealed, or vice-versa, is never methodologically sound.

Defending religion by taking advantage of lax psychology or sociology is nothing new, and neither is the need to point out fallacious reasoning in academia. The “psychologist’s fallacy,” as William James noted when psychology was emerging as a scientific field (James 1890, I, 196), occurs when the psychologist expects the analyzed matters described by theorizing to be prominent in a subject’s own naive experiencing. The matters important and meaningful for refined theory are often insignificant and meaningless for coarse experience, and those matters may not even occur within any subject’s experience. Correspondingly, among many fallacies from sociology, a particular “sociologist’s fallacy” occurs whenever the sociologist expects that the social categories applicable to people, while confirmed by sound social theorizing, must also characterize how those people experience their immersion in the social environs around them.

The psychologist’s fallacy is committed when the researcher presumes that a person intuitively and self-consciously appreciates the matters of the mental life just as described by psychological theory. This fallacy worsens when that psychologist further expects that a person’s thought processes rely on those theorized matters while reaching judgments and making decisions. The fallacy is exposed when it must be denied that psychological characterizations determine the entities of one’s self-consciousness. The sociologist’s fallacy is committed when the researcher presumes that a person automatically and habitually appreciates matters about the social life just as described by sociological theory. That fallacy worsens when that sociologist further expects that people’s judgments and actions rely on those theorized matters while conducting their social life. The fallacy is exposed when it must be denied that social categorizations determine the identity of one’s self-conception. A person will not necessarily conceive of themselves in the terms imposed by psychological or sociological theorizing. They can be persuaded to do so, in some cases, but that hardly shows that they were doing so all along.

Consider this analogy. Vegetarian eating could surely be done in a world where no one eats meat, despite the fact that no one in that world would keep calling it “vegetarianism,” and the fact that in our world there are self-professed vegetarians sitting next to meat-eaters. We should not fixate on a definition of “vegetarian” as “the eating of things that are not meat.” Surely “vegeta-

rian” can be categorically defined in its own right as “a vegetable diet,” since vegetables can exist regardless of whether meat also exists, eating vegetation can be done without thinking about animals, and people can be vegetarian eaters without thinking about their meatless condition. The way that the popular notion of “vegetarian” immediately and primarily suggests “not eating meat” to many minds simply reveals how meat-eating is taken for normality in many cultures.

Similarly, the way that “secular” suggests “defying religion” or “disdaining religion” only tells us about what is still taken for normality in our culture. An assigned self identity or social identity within the context of a single society is not automatically a valid categorical identity for universal application. There are legitimately scientific social categories and corresponding social facts that are irreducible to social identities or self-categories, just as the reverse is true. What may characterize so-called “irreligious” people in Christendom during recent centuries is not axiomatically determinative of all secular experience and secular identity everywhere. In sum, secularity and secularization are not limited to locales where religious people are talking about them. Again, nothing religious is required to constitute secularity.

There is one type of secular person who self-consciously rejects gods and openly disdains religion: the secularist. Later sections explore the identity of secularists and their social agendas. However, the classification for “secular person” in general can be a categorical identity, and unrelated to religion, if the “secular” is correctly defined.

## 4 The Secular

The *Oxford English Dictionary* first lists this primary meaning for “secular”:

Of or belonging to the present or visible world as distinguished from the eternal or spiritual world; temporal, worldly.

The *OED*, like earlier dictionaries going back to the seventeenth century, assigns the meaning of “secular” through two concepts: the temporal and worldly. Both “temporal” and “worldly” are terms definable without reference to anything religious. Therefore, etymologically and logically, the “secular” is properly defined without reference to anything concerning religion. That “secular” can make sense as a terminological (not logical) contrary of the “religious” is simply due to the fact that religions usually describe their sacred and divine matters as other-worldly, eternal, and the like. In countries long dominated by Christian-

ity, that terminological convenience within European culture has been hypostatized into an ontological constraint, as if the “secular” must depend on religion everywhere. In fact, thinking about the ontology of religious matters depends on the ontology of this ordinary world, and not the other way around (Atran 2002, chap. 4).

What is the secular? The secular is the temporal and worldly, spanning the breadth of our travels and the course of our lifetimes. Taken to its broadest imaginable extent, the secular coincides with the natural, another concept definable without any reference to religion. Religion must define itself in concepts borrowed from the secular and natural realm in order to form ideas pointing beyond temporal or worldly matters, but nothing in the secular realm must concern itself with religiosity. That includes people. People can live secular lives without thinking about anything religious or nonreligious, or doing anything religious or nonreligious. “Secular” doesn’t essentially mean “non-religious” any more than “athletic” essentially means “non-sedentary.” To be athletic implies being non-sedentary, but people do not consider themselves as athletic simply because they happen to not be sedentary.

To be fully secular, all one has to minimally do is to lead an entirely worldly and temporal life. One needn’t ever have the thought, “My opinions and values are not religious” or “My daily experiences have nothing religious about them,” or “My life’s activities and associations are so worldly and temporal compared to religious living.” Imputing such thoughts to secular people, in order to assuredly classify their secularity in some minimally religious terms, has no academic legitimacy. Committing the psychologist’s fallacy or the sociologist’s fallacy can be avoided.

Taking particular interest in secularity would be an expected feature of religion, of course. To satisfy that religious concern, inquisitors classify nonreligiosity into various types of deviances from religiosity or measured distances from religious matters. But secular people have their own concerns, not involving religion. In societies where a religion wields enough power to impact secular people’s lives, secular people respond by defending their priorities. To the extent that they succeed, “secularization” may be said to be occurring there, and secular people who take action to resist religious influences and coercions may be labeled as “secularists.” All the same, the lives of secular people needn’t depend on secularization. Secular people can exist where no secularization is ongoing, and they can live where no secularization has happened. To imagine otherwise is to dream of a mythical time when all humanity was uniformly religious.

It is the case that identifying the “atheist” and categorizing types of unbelievers as they are understood nowadays should take into account contemporary secularity’s context within the wider field of civic engagements occurring within

society. Demographic research abandoned biased and essentialist views of “atheist” inherited from religion to discover much variety within that classification. Logically, not having belief in a god encompasses both the rendering of judgment against gods and the withholding of belief about gods, as well as the absence of any thought about gods. Psychologically, the condition of blank indifference feels very different from thoughtful doubt or conclusive denial. That is why a third sub-category, the “apatheist,” has come to light among the Nones (noted by Marty 2003 and analyzed in Shook 2010). Apatheism serves as the “None of the above” category after religious and nonreligious identities are abandoned. The apatheist gives so little thought to religion that the label of agnostic or skeptic bestows too much credit for contemplating the matter. By declining to accept any identity label for unbelief (atheist, agnostic, etc.) as well as belief (Protestant, Catholic, etc.), and having little to no interest in opinions about religion or God, apatheists end up as the “Nones of the Nones.”

Polysecularity, even if its diversity is sorted in relation to religion, stretches very broadly from atheist activists to spiritual-minded seekers. Just a sampling illustrates this point:

- (i) Atheists heartily expecting that religion’s disappearance would benefit humanity.
- (ii) Atheists skeptically doubting that any gods really exist.
- (iii) Agnostics judging that no one can know anything about god.
- (iv) Agnostics simply admitting how they personally can’t know what to think about god.
- (v) Apatheists relieved to no longer be connected to a religion.
- (vi) Apatheists who have never had the first thought about religion.
- (vii) Seekers avoiding religion but wondering if some faith will arrive.
- (viii) Seekers sampling religious practices and expecting some faith to grow.

Does this list illustrate how secularity requires reference to religion? Quite the opposite: all that is required are the affirmative reasons people happen to have for occupying their secular stances. They don’t even have to realize how they occupy those positions. Religions can measure the distance of those stances from orthodoxy, but secular people needn’t mind, or care. Remember our vegetarians – the existence of meat-eating isn’t responsible for the existence of vegetarians. The existence of secular people is not necessarily the responsibility of any religions.

This point needs to be repeated. It is not religion which must establish the possibility of secular nonbelief and atheism. Affirmative grounds – such as reason, morality, and justice – supply ample reasons for adopting alternatives to religiosity. Theologians, it is true, have perpetually claimed that those grounds

came from, or at least depend on, the divine. They have also proposed that unbelief is due to depraved irrationality, deception by pure evil, willful love of sin, or anarchical rebellion. Setting aside magical thinking about impiety's bases and causes, explaining secular unbelief should be grounded in research attending to secular people's own beliefs and life courses. Why do they find secular ways of thinking and living more satisfying than religious ways? Why have some never shown any interest in religious matters? Why are many leaving religious paths to travel other lifestyle paths? For those still engaging with religious matters in their thoughts, by what criteria do they pass judgment upon religion? For those choosing to engage religiosity in society, what civic goals do they try to accomplish?

## 5 Polysecularism

The macrocosm scale of group-level engagements involving secularity, often visible in the form of social controversies and political struggles, have been highlighted by prominent scholars for over two decades (Casanova 1994; Bhargava 1998; Asad 2003; Taylor 2009). Their robust research demonstrates how to be sensitive to the impressive variety of religious-secular stances taken by citizens in many different countries. Bhargava's (2014, 330) attention to individual scales as well as social scales has become even more pronounced. Although "secularism" is usually used in only its political sense, it nevertheless can cover multiple dimensions. He writes,

I begin by distinguishing three senses of the term "secularism." First, it is used as a shorthand for secular humanism. The second specifies the ideals, even ultimate ideals, which give meaning and worth to life and that its followers strive to realize in their life, I call it ethical secularism. I distinguish this ethic from political secularism. Here it stands for a certain kind of polity in which organized religious power or religious institutions are separated from organized political power or political institutions for specific ends.

Secularism remains more useful for Bhargava primarily as a social and political phenomena, rather than as a feature of social processes emerging from secular individuals and their perspectives.

This top-down approach has been typical across much of secular studies, as it was inherited from sociological studies of religion. Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, as another example, has discerned correlations between personal, social, and civic-minded secularisms. Since no single pattern to such correlations could be expected across societies, one can at best speak of "multiple secularities," as she has done (2012). One kind of secularity found in one country may balance

a certain distribution of religious and nonreligious people with given arrangements of civic power allotted to religions and the government. Other countries, depending on their particular development as a nation, have settled into quite different distributions and arrangements (and these patterns are dynamic over time as well). Like Bhargava, Wohlrab-Sahr ascribes secularity principally to collectives such as societies and nations, rather than to individuals. Classifying citizens and their concerns is subsequent upon categorizations for social arrangements and dynamics.

Although individuals hardly exist apart from their social roles and functions, and citizens surely have their political duties and powers, transposing socio-political classifications upon the individual level is methodologically hazardous. Such transposition can seem justifiable. Whatever is studied at the personal level should be correlatable, in some manner, with important features at group, social, and national levels. Even large-scale processes of secularization or re-sacralization concern how many people are managing their social and civic relationships and thinking about their own stances. But those people are not involved in any uniform or predictable way. Secular people do not have identical attitudes towards religion, they do not have the same priorities for opposing religion, and they will not usually agree about effective strategies against religion. A fallacy lurks in an expectation that people themselves are well-categorized for all purposes through the broad social categories for processes ongoing in their locality. The reliable exception is the secularist.

Secularism is primarily about efforts to diminish religious control over social structures and public thinking. There is no uniform or unified way that secularity manifests itself as a public agenda. There are many agendas of secularism, depending on the type of religious control to be monitored and challenged. For example, political secularism seeks adjustments to the relative control of religion and government over each other. There are multiple secular agendas, and many types of activists supporting one or another of those agendas, that do not necessarily cooperate or even cohere. That absence of unity, and ready capacity for fractiousness, calls for the recognition of “polysecularism.”

The evident fact that no two countries arrange political stabilities in religion-state relations in the same manner points to multi-secularity, as we observed. The less-noticed fact that secularist agendas within a country have distinct ideals and goals, and may not care for consensus among them, points to polysecularism. Polysecularism in turn draws attention to the diversity of roles for the pro-secularism citizen, the secularist. Secularists can have allies. Participation in a particular secularism agenda, such as political secularism, is by no means limited to nonbelievers. A religious citizen who supports public education over parochial education or supports separation of church and state should not be la-

beled as a secularist without strict qualifications. Nonreligious citizens (atheists, in the basic sense) who advocate for some secularism agenda(s) can accurately be classed as secularists.

Core agendas of secularism, and secularist supporters of those agendas, typically align with one or more of these activities: (a) endorsing the reasonableness of personal secularity by contesting religious claims about unnatural/transcendent divinities and values; (b) grounding morality with ethical systems consistent with secular personal living and human welfare; and (c) justifying free societies having political systems promoting individual liberties and civic progress. It is no coincidence that these three secular agendas look familiar to intellectual historians recounting major kinds of popular freethought and secular thinking in western civilization (Putnam 1894; Larue 1996). Nor is it a coincidence that demographers tracking secularist attitudes in populations can also detect that familiar pattern.

The demographic study of a social phenomenon like religiosity, or secularity, can identify three primary features of an individual's outlook: one's belief, behavior, and belonging. These features are organically interfused, so an isolation of one factor is at most a useful abstraction (Day 2011), but they can suggest correlations with other social features and cultural factors. Polysecularism displays three general modes – based on belief, behavior, and belonging – concerning one's worldview, one's social ethos, and one's civic participation. As both scholars of intellectual history and social movements have noted, irreligion and anti-theism are frequently motivated by objections to religiosity's reliance on faith, or to a religion's ethical lapses, or to religion's detrimental effects on societies. Three primary agendas of secularism manifest at the individual level in the secularist; three idealized types are hence available for "the secularist":

- (a) The secularist is the anti-theistic and anti-metaphysical thinker denying religious dogmas.
- (b) The secularist is the anti-religious moralist accusing religion and religious people of ethical failings.
- (c) The secularist is the anti-clerical activist demanding that denominations renounce governing power.

Idealized manifestations of "the secularist" can also be phrased in terms of positive agendas and loyalties:

- (d) The secularist is a staunch advocate of reason and science, over superstition and religious faith.
- (e) The secularist is a dedicated subscriber to a secular ethics, placing humanity first instead of a god.

- (f) The secularist is an equal citizen of a secular polity, keeping other group memberships subordinate.

Where religion exercises cultural dominance, the secularist can stand out as a radical freethinker, a wise sage, or a dangerous agitator. In a country already fairly secularized in many ways, such as the United States, secularists would not stand out so prominently, but they do attempt to sustain momentum inherited from past secularist efforts.

Polysecularity is one kind of phenomenon, while polysecularism is quite another. Only a minority of secular people ever become secularists and participate in one or another of secularism's agendas. That fact is often overlooked or misinterpreted, even in otherwise reliable histories of freethought and secularism. All too often, one feature of secularism is taken to characterize all of secularity, or to define the essence of atheism. Models designed to explain group behavior or make crowd action understandable seek out characteristic social identities, but they don't necessarily characterize all concerned. Social histories focusing on a single era will discern how one or another type of secularist then holds center stage, but extrapolating that starring role across other eras or cultures is unwise. The next sections describe how these three primary agendas (along with many secondary agendas) are capable of being equally potent; they are not necessarily allies, and they don't easily blend together or even cooperate in alignment with each other. Antagonisms are certainly possible, and probably inevitable, as the next section explores.

## 6 Polysecularity and Polysecularism Today

Too much research conducted on secularity has tended to assign nonbelievers into "atheism" for their group identity, and jointly assumed that secularist activism is characteristic of atheism, since activism is an obvious place to acquire observations of atheists. Such presumptions have allowed much research to expect many or most nonbelievers to share a common psychological profile, despite the way that common perceptions of atheism do not essentialize atheists to a high degree (Toosi and Ambady 2011). Trying to explain "the atheist," and what atheists are all doing, works better with a pre-prepared essentialization for atheism, of course. Previous sections of this chapter have raised worries about that essentialization. It is not an unreasonable concern that religious bias against atheists has been predisposing psychological research to "discover" negative personality traits in atheists in order to fit "evolution of religion" narratives composed to normalize religiosity across humanity. Disordered brains

would bring disorder to society, after all. Depicting unbelievers as ready participants for disrupting civil stability with unruly secularist activism has long been a stereotype perpetuated by religion.

What do secular people actually take themselves to be thinking, and doing? Much data can be gathered from open and self-identified atheists already attending atheist, skeptic, humanist, or freethought groups, or participating in online forums sharing those interests (Cimino and Smith 2007; Pasquale 2010; Smith 2010; Baker and Robbins 2012; Williamson and Yancey 2013). Recently, Christopher Silver and Thomas Coleman (2014) led a research team investigating an even broader spectrum, looking for motivations and priorities of nonbelievers who mostly do not affiliate or participate with any group of like-minded nonbelievers. Their research findings allowed them to distinguish six main types of secular people, lending additional empirical support to the sketches of polysecularity and polysecularism in this chapter. These six types do not deviate much from prior understandings of the nonreligious gained by demographers (Kosmin et al. 2009), and they don't appear to diverge greatly from other recent hypotheses for arranging aspects and scales to secular/atheist identities (Cragun, Hammer, and Nielsen 2015; Schnell 2015; Vainio and Visala 2015). These six types are also easily recognizable to secular leaders (such as myself) who are experienced with grassroots recruiting among nonbelievers.

Earlier sections of this chapter highlight three main distinctions within polysecularity (skeptical, agnostic, and apathetic) and three main modes to polysecularism (intellectual, moral, and civic). Interestingly, Silver and Coleman's classification of six types of nonreligious people easily fit six of the boxes in a 3x3 table resulting from crossing polysecularity with polysecularism.

**Table 1.** Classifying the nonreligious by Silver and Coleman

types of polysecularity	types of polysecularism		
	pro-reason	pro-ethics	pro-civics
atheist	IAA		AT
agnostic	SA	RAA	AAA
apatheist		NT	

A brief overview of these six types, quoting from descriptions by Silver and Coleman (2014, 993–996), shows how to situate them.

Intellectual Atheist/Agnostic (IAA). “IAA typology includes individuals who proactively seek to educate themselves through intellectual association, and pro-

actively acquire knowledge on various topics relating to ontology (the search for Truth) and non-belief. ... IAAs associate with fellow intellectuals regardless of their ontological position as long as the IAA associate is versed and educated on various issues of science, philosophy, rational theology, and common socio-political religious dialogue.” These secular people are open about their unbelief and irreligious dissent on intellectual grounds, and they like to associate with others on those bases. The IAA type lies at the congruence of a pro-reason motivation and skeptical atheism.

Anti-Theist (AT). “[A]ntitheists view religion as ignorance ... they view the logical fallacies of religion as an outdated worldview that is not only detrimental to social cohesion and peace, but also to technological advancement and civilised evolution as a whole. They are compelled to share their view and want to educate others ... Some Anti-Theist individuals feel compelled to work against the institution of religion in its various forms including social, political, and ideological, while others may assert their view with religious persons on an individual basis.” Anti-theists are primarily dissenters against religion in society, more than against god in heaven; the anti-theist type is ardently antagonistic against what religion stands for in society and what religious people do. The distinction between IAA and AT types is familiar to sociologists as something akin to the divide between High Church (intellectual) and Low Church (emotional) sides to an ideological movement or religious denomination. The AT type exemplifies combining the skeptically atheist stance with the civic and political secular agenda to limit religion’s influence in society.

Activist Atheist/Agnostic (AAA). “[T]hey seek to be both vocal and proactive regarding current issues in the atheist/agnostic socio-political sphere. This socio-political sphere can include such egalitarian issues, but is not limited to concerns of humanism, feminism, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues, social or political concerns, human rights themes, environmental concerns, animal rights, and controversies such as the separation of church and state.” The AAA type often seeks alliances with other movements, prioritizing positive civic and political agenda(s) without worrying much about labeling as “atheist” or “agnostic.” In the grassroots arena, this type tends to prefer non-confrontation with religion, and often seeks “inter-faith” work with religious groups on shared civic goals. The AAA type results from combining the tolerantly agnostic attitude with civic secular agendas.

Ritual Atheist/Agnostic (RAA). “The RAA holds no belief in God or the divine, or they tend to believe it is unlikely that there is an afterlife with God or the divine. ... [T]hey may find utility in the teachings of some religious traditions. They see these as more or less philosophical teachings of how to live life and achieve happiness rather than a path to transcendental liberation. Ritual Athe-

ist/Agnostics find utility in tradition and ritual.” This type perpetuates traditions of religious or “spiritual” humanism or religious naturalism, and many congregate with Unitarian Universalist churches or Ethical Culture societies, or other sorts of humanist communities. They are often intellectual, and they endorse worthy civic and political causes, but they typically put more of their energies into local communal activities rather than antagonism against religion. The RAA type connects the agnostic attitude with the secular priority of living an ethical life.

The last two categories are for people who aren’t “secularists” in the strict sense of participating in the advocacy of secularization, although they do contribute to the overall secularity in a society.

Seeker-Agnostic (SA). “[R]ecognizes the philosophical difficulties and complexities in making personal affirmations regarding ideological beliefs... simply cannot be sure of the existence of God or the divine. They keep an open mind in relation to the debate between the religious, spiritual, and antitheist elements within society.” These seekers often turn up in polling as “transient” Nones; they may be attending churches (irregularly) because they care about finding a reasonable fit with their flexible worldview(s). Affirming atheists can disapprove of the SA type for appreciating too many perspectives, but the SA type won’t put all their faith in a single confining worldview, even science’s. This type of nonreligious person represents the combination of an agnostic attitude with search for a reasonable lifescape.

The last category is the Non-Theist (NT). “For the Non-Theists, the alignment of oneself with religion, or conversely an epistemological position against religion, can appear quite unconventional from their perspective. However, a few terms may best capture the sentiments of the Non-Theist. One is apathetic, while another may be disinterested. The Non-Theist is nonactive in terms of involving themselves in social or intellectual pursuits having to do with religion or anti-religion.” These individuals are prototypical apatheists, avoiding cognitive or cultural tensions about being nonreligious. They aren’t anything like non-conformists or anarchists – that would require too much effort – as they participate in lifestyles they judge best.

This sort of classification for types of secular people only superficially classifies people by their evident priorities, as they explain those priorities themselves insofar as they are nonreligious. This classification cannot and does not mean to imply, for example, that IAA types aren’t ethical or don’t care about the civic life. An IAA or AT (etc.) may be a highly energetic promoter for a secular cause or give generously to the Red Cross or the United Way. This sort of classification is about how people connect their nonreligious attitude with their secular views and preferred activities.

There are a total of nine possible combinations. Three boxes stand empty only so far as Silver and Coleman’s initial presentation of their research is concerned. There probably are nonreligious people in their data better fitting into these three boxes. The top middle box is for people too anti-religious to enjoy congregating, while preferring some sort of “lifestyle humanism” expressing their personal principles, so they affirm humanist ideals without communal validation. The lower left box is for people too apathetic to have an opinion about religion so they aren’t using logic to argue against it, yet they feel strongly devoted to advancing critical thinking and rational analysis, so we can label them as “rationalists.” The lower right box is for people apathetic about both religion and ethical ideas. They aren’t protesting against religion using government, but they do support a civil order guaranteeing stability and liberty for everyone regardless of religiosity, so they can be called “republicans.” (The lower-case “republicans” advocated constitutional democracy in the annals of politics, while “Republicans” belong to a particular political party.)

No ideal schema awaits at the “end” to this kind of research, but more detailed classifications have theoretical value in conjunction with further productive investigations. An example is provided below, taking cues from polysecularity. It provides a row for those occasionally seeking religious inspiration, and a column for those expecting science to refute and replace religion.

**Table 2.** Classifying the nonreligious by attitude and agenda

	Secular agenda			
Nonreligious attitude	pro-logic	pro-science	pro-ethics	pro-civics
skeptical	IAA	confrontation CON	lifestyle humanism HUM	AT
agnostic	SA	NOMA	RAA	AAA
apathetic	rationalism RAT	accommodation ACC	NT	secular republican SEC
seeking	Platonism PLA	syncretism SYN	congregational CON	deist republican DEI

With any such classification, no presumption should be made that an individual fits only a single classification, thinks of one’s self as fitting a category, or understands that category’s intellectual history.

Agnostics who appreciate science can be comfortable with truces sounding like NOMA: science and religion are “non-overlapping magisteria” that yield different yet valid knowledge. (“Religion knows what happens after death, some-

thing science could never refute.”) By contrast, staunch skeptics relying on science demand non-negotiable confrontations with religion over the truth. Those apathetic about religion can drift into optional stances. Logic-lovers will find rationalism’s neutrality quite sensible (lending appeal to stoicism), while admirers of science will expect it to admit that plenty of religious views get scientific confirmations (“It looks like evolution works best when God causes mutations.”) Prioritizing civic order finds agnostics advocating, with Thomas Jefferson, a civil republic that stays strictly neutral about religion.

Looking across the bottom row, seekers have several options. Few seekers know anything about Plato, for example, but seekers expecting logic to identify god (or be god) would head towards a dualistic metaphysics like Platonism. Scientific-minded seekers will expect a synthesis of divine guidance with nature’s laws, so some sort of syncretic worldview (Deism or Theosophy, for example) can appeal to them. Seekers prioritizing ethics gravitate towards eclectic religious or quasi-religious communities. Seekers prioritizing civic order may judge, as James Madison did, that a providential god favors a god-fearing republic over decadent aristocracies.

## 7 Organized Polysecularism

Organizations advancing the interests of secular people can be classified using these sorts of frameworks, because public support rests on those able to play the role of a secularist through their attendance at events and financial giving. Like individuals, organizations may or may not neatly fit a single box. However, few attempt to equally represent many boxes, because of the inherent discrepancies and disagreements among them, as the theory of polysecularism explains. This theory also can account for the kinds of disagreements, and even antagonisms, between secular organizations, and the fragile nature of alliances.

Research into secular movements and organizations has accelerated recently (Smith 2013; Cimino and Smith 2014; Langston, Hammer, and Cragun 2015; LeDrew 2015b). Secularists trying to find or re-shape their identities are participating in dynamic and growing organizations from neighborhood- to nation-level sizes, which are simultaneously molding their messages to attract participants. The typical type of organization at the local level is the “single-issue” secular group, so that even a small city has pro-science, atheist, and humanist meetups (see Schutz this volume). Larger organizations take a “small-cluster” approach covering a few neighboring boxes, such as American Atheists at IAA/CON/AT, or the American Association for the Advancement of Science at NOMA/ACC. Some national-level organizations are “horizontally-integrated” to represent an

entire row – the Center for Inquiry, for example, from IAA to AT. Very few organizations would or could attempt a vertically-integrated approach – the American Humanist Association is the closest example by clustering at HUM/RAA/AAA (for more on these national groups, see Fazzino and Cragun, this volume).

Deep fault-lines between many of the boxes are sufficient to prevent any single secular organization from growing into a large cluster, and often obstruct alliances among secular organizations.

First, promoting a humanist ethics about equality and rights agreeable to people of all faiths can be deeply upsetting to anti-theists unwilling to set aside objections to faith just for the sake of social harmony. The anti-theism agenda can sound out of tune with the humanist ethics agenda, because humanism is unwilling to denigrate or demonize religious believers for their “foolish” faiths. Promoting a humanist ethics about equality and rights agreeable to all peoples can collide with anti-theism’s typical degree of intolerance towards religious believers. Anti-theists won’t see anything ethical at all about faith, despite humanism’s efforts to understand religion as something quite human, and anti-theism won’t award any rights to religion just for the sake of social harmony.

Second, the anti-theism agenda doesn’t harmonize well with the secular polity agenda. Prioritizing open attacks against the reasonableness or even sanity of religious believers will alienate the believers who do agree on separation of church and state. Religious believers couldn’t really be blamed for losing interest in a political alliance with anti-theists to reduce denominational control in government. For their part, advocates of a secular polity can tolerate non-theocratic religions as legitimate social organizations promoting the good life for their members, but anti-theism refuses to recognize churches as truly healthy for their congregants.

Third, the anti-clerical agenda can sideline the humanist ethics agenda. Prioritizing the establishment of a secular government on value-neutral principles, as liberalism proposes, demotes secular ethics to private values instead of potent political ideals. Humanist ethics are demoted from a universal framework of principled ideals down to just another lifestyle choice for people who happen to be secular. Humanism once upon a time positioned itself as the supreme arbiter of human rights and democratic values. It gave birth to liberalism, which went on to disavow its heritage while searching for non-ethical foundations to political rights and institutions. Liberalism, for its part, has staked its legitimacy on lacking any partiality towards one or another competing view of the good life or a comprehensive conception of “the good.” That excludes any favoritism or reliance on humanism, so humanism is reduced to the same civic status held by every religion, and loses its distinctiveness alongside that company.

Polysecularity is the demographic backdrop to the cultural and political stage where polysecularism is enacted in multiple agendas and secularists choose their preferred roles. Polysecularity forbids any simplistic reduction of secularity to something uniform and predictable. Homogeneity and consistency will not be found anywhere. Whether secular organizations like it or not, the three main secular agendas are difficult to pursue simultaneously, and in fact they usually tend to frustrate and obstruct each other. As the second table reveals, more nuanced discriminations among secular viewpoints and secularist positions only expose additional fault-lines.

The course of “New Atheism” also illustrates both polysecularism and its challenges. Self-identified new atheists don’t sound like humanists (Cragun 2015; LeDrew 2015a), but their distinctive tone conveyed substantive agendas (Kettell 2013; Kettell 2014). Few organizations seemed ready for those agendas. Secular organizations that re-arranged priorities after the rise of New Atheism in the mid-2000s, for example, promptly generated external scrutiny and internal challenges. Was the energy of New Atheism about science confronting religion’s illusions (CON), or was it more about shaming religion for its social conservatism and complicity in rights violations (AT)? Perhaps both, but it caused organizational strain to divert resources to both simultaneously. (Full disclosure: this author was a staff member of two major secular organizations during the height of New Atheism.) For their part, humanists didn’t see how those controversies helped deconvert religious people through values, while agnostics didn’t see science disproving God or the Bible, so New Atheism left both types wondering how much they really had in common with aggressive atheists. As for New Atheism, it quickly identified traitors – NOMA, ACC, and AAA – while dismissing humanist communities as too “religious” (“They are still singing together?!”). Mobilizations in defense of AAA priorities (such as “Atheism+” and “The Orbit” initiatives) distanced themselves from New Atheism. The secular organizations focused on church-state separation clustered with AAA/SEC and tended to avoid New Atheism bombast, while larger organizations mimicking New Atheism rhetoric found fewer allies among religious organizations also defending church-state separation.

In the meantime, vast constituencies are still getting overlooked. Seekers comprise a large majority of the Nones. Types of seekers such as SYN and CON want toleration and church-state separation. They could supply vast ideological and financial support to core secular agendas, but they have been mostly ignored.

## 8 Conclusion

An accurate definition of the “secular” relieves it from conceptual dependency upon religiosity. The diverse secularity of individuals can therefore receive empirical study and classification independently from religious categories. Religions typically regard anything too unorthodox as atheistic, and any alternative to their social domination as anti-religious secularism. Through that biased lens, secularity would appear to owe its nature to religiosity, but academic study can reach for objectivity. The phenomena of polysecularity and polysecularism are accessible to fallacy-free psychological and sociological research. The evident diversity to positive secular agendas contradicts simplistic views offered by either religion’s defenders or New Atheism.

Nevertheless, “organized polysecularism” need not be an oxymoron. That breadth to polysecularity provides many social niches for successful organizations serving their circumscribed but focused bases. Temporary alliances on specific secular agendas can be powerful in democracies that pay attention to multiple interest groups able to work together. After all, flourishing secularity and secularism in a country should exemplify more pluralism, not less.

## Bibliography

- Asad, Talal. 2003. *Formations of the Secular*. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press.
- Atran, Scott. 2002. In *Gods We Trust: The Evolutionary Landscape of Religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baker, Joseph O., and Buster G. Smith. 2015. *American Secularism: Cultural Contours of Nonreligious Belief Systems*. New York: New York University Press.
- Baker, Matthew J., and Mandy Robbins. 2012. “American On-line Atheists and Psychological Type.” *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 15(10): 1077–1084.
- Barrett, Justin. 2012. *Born Believers*. New York: Free Press.
- Beit-Hallahmi, Benjamin. 2007. “Atheists: A Psychological Profile.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*, ed. Michael Martin, pp. 300–317. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Berger, Peter. 1967. *The Sacred Canopy*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.
- Berger, Peter, and Thomas Luckmann. 1966. *The Social Construction of Reality*. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books.
- Bhargava, Rajeev. 1998. “What is Secularism For?” In *Secularism and its Critics*, ed. Rajeev Bhargava, pp. 486–520. Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.
- Bhargava, Rajeev. 2014. “How Secular is European Secularism?” *European Societies* 16(3): 329–336.
- Bilgrami, Akeel. 2014. “Secularism: Its Content and Context.” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 45 (1): 25–48.

- Bilgrami, Akeel, ed. 2016. *Beyond the Secular West*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Burchardt, Marian, Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, and Matthias Middell, eds. 2015. *Multiple Secularities beyond the West: Religion and Modernity in the Global Age*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Caldwell-Harris, Catherine. 2012. "Understanding Atheism/Non-belief as an Expected Individual-Differences Variable." *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 2(1): 4–23.
- Casanova, José. 1994. *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cimino, Richard, and Christopher Smith. 2007. "Secular Humanism and Atheism beyond Progressive Secularism." *Sociology of Religion* 68(4): 407–424.
- Cimino, Richard, and Christopher Smith. 2014. *Atheist Awakening: Secular Activism & Community in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Coleman III, Thomas, Christopher Silver, and Jenny Holcombe. 2013. "Focusing on Horizontal Transcendence: Much More than a 'Non-belief'." *Essays in the Philosophy of Humanism* 21(2): 1–18.
- Clark, Stephen. 2015. "Atheism Considered as a Christian Sect." *Philosophy* 90(2): 277–303.
- Cragun, Ryan T. 2015. "Who Are the 'New Atheists'?" In *Atheist Identities: Spaces and Social Contexts*, ed. Lori G. Beaman and Steven Tomlins, pp. 195–211. Berlin and New York: Springer.
- Cragun, Ryan T., J. H. Hammer, and M. Nielsen. 2015. "The Nonreligious-Nonspiritual Scale (NRNSS): Measuring Everyone from Atheists to Zionists." *Science, Religion and Culture* 2(3): 36–53.
- Day, Abby. 2011. *Believing in Belonging: Belief and Social Identity in the Modern World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Guenther, Katja. 2014. "Bounded by Disbelief: How Atheists in the United States Differentiate Themselves from Religious Believers." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 29(1): 1–16.
- Hunsberger, Bruce, and Bob Altemeyer. 2006. *Atheists: A Groundbreaking Study of America's Nonbelievers*. Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books.
- Hunter, Ian. 2015. "Secularization: The Birth of a Modern Combat Concept." *Modern Intellectual History* 12(1): 1–32.
- James, William. 1890. *The Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols. New York: Henry Holt, 1890.
- Jong, Jonathan. 2015. "On (not) Defining (Non)religion." *Science, Religion and Culture* 2(3): 15–24.
- Kettell, Steven. 2013. "Faithless: The Politics of a New Atheism." *Secularism and Nonreligion* 2: 61–72.
- Kettell, Steven. 2014. "Divided We Stand: The Politics of the Atheist Movement in the United States." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 29(3): 377–391.
- Keysar, Ariela. 2015. "The International Demography of Atheists." In *Yearbook of International Religious Demography*, ed. Brian J. Grim, Todd M. Johnson, Vegard Skirbekk and Gina A. Zurlo, 136–153. Leiden: Brill.
- Kitcher, Philip. 2015. "Secularism as a Positive Position." In *Global Secularisms in a Post-Secular Age*, ed. Michael Rectenwald, pp. 65–70. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Kosmin, Barry, Ariela Keysar, Ryan Cragun, and Juhem Navarro-Rivera. 2009. *American Nones: The Profile of the No Religion Population*. Hartford, Conn.: Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture.

- Langston, Joseph, Joseph Hammer, and Ryan T. Cragun. 2015. "Atheism Looking In: On the Goals and Strategies of Organized Nonbelief." *Science, Religion and Culture* 2(3): 70–85.
- Larue, Gerald A. 1996. *Freethought Across the Centuries*. Amherst, N.Y.: Humanist Press.
- LeDrew, Stephen. 2015a. "Atheism Versus Humanism: Ideological Tensions and Identity Dynamics." In *Atheist Identities: Spaces and Social Contexts*, ed. Lori G. Beaman and Steven Tomlins, pp. 53–68. Berlin and New York: Springer.
- LeDrew, Stephen. 2015b. *The Evolution of Atheism: The Politics of a Modern Movement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lee, Lois. 2015. *Recognizing the Nonreligious: Reimagining the Secular*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Marty, Martin E. 2003. "The Triumph of 'Whatever'." *Context* 35(11): 1–2.
- Meier, Brian, Adam Fetterman, Michael Robinson, and Courtney Lappas. 2015. "The Myth of the Angry Atheist." *The Journal of Psychology* 149(3): 219–238.
- Nongbri, Brent. 2012. *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Norenzayan, Ara, and Will M. Gervais. 2013. "The Origins of Religious Disbelief." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 17(1): 20–25.
- Pasquale, Frank. 2010. "A Portrait of Secular Group Affiliates." In *Atheism and Secularity*, ed. Phil Zuckerman, vol. 1, pp. 43–87. Santa Barbara, Cal.: Praeger.
- Putnam, Samuel P. 1894. *Four Hundred Years of Freethought*. New York: The Truth Seeker Company.
- Quack, Johannes. 2014. "Outline of a Relational Approach to 'Nonreligion'." *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 26(4–5): 439–469.
- Seed, John. 2014. "'Secular' and 'Religious': Historical Perspectives." *Social History* 39(1): 3–13.
- Schnell, Tatjana. 2015. "Dimensions of Secularity (DoS): An Open Inventory to Measure Facets of Secular Identities." *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 25(4): 272–292.
- Shook, John R. 2010. *The God Debates: A 21st Century Guide for Atheists and Believers (and Everyone in Between)*. Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Shook, John R. 2012. "Atheists are Rejecting Today's Culturally Evolved Religions, not a 'First' Natural Religion." *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 2(1): 38–40.
- Shook, John R. 2015. "Philosophy of Religion and Two Types of Atheology." *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 76(1): 1–19.
- Silver, Christopher, Thomas Coleman III, Ralph W. Hood Jr, and Jenny Holcombe. 2014. "The Six Types of Nonbelief: A Qualitative and Quantitative Study of Type and Narrative." *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 17(10): 990–1001.
- Smith, Jesse M. 2010. "Becoming an Atheist in America: Constructing Identity and Meaning from the Rejection of Theism." *Sociology of Religion* 72(2): 215–237.
- Smith, Jesse M. 2013. "Creating a Godless Community: The Collective Identity Work of Contemporary American Atheists." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 52(1): 80–99.
- Streib, Heinz, and Constantin Klein. 2013. "Atheists, Agnostics, and Apostates." In *APA Handbook of Psychology, Religion and Spirituality, Volume 1*, pp. 713–728. Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association.

- Taylor, Charles. 2009. "The Polysemy of the Secular." *Social Research* 76: 1143–1166.
- Toosi, Negin R., and Nalini Ambady. 2011. "Ratings of Essentialism for Eight Religious Identities." *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 21(1): 17–29.
- Turner, Jonathan H. 2013. *Theoretical Sociology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Vainio, Olli-Pekka, and Aku Visala. 2015. "Varieties of Unbelief: A Taxonomy of Atheistic Positions." *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 57(4): 483–500.
- Williamson, David, and George Yancey. 2013. *There Is No God – Atheists in America*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013.
- Wohlrab-Sahra, Monika, and Marian Burchardt. 2012. "Multiple Secularities: Toward a Cultural Sociology of Secular Modernities." *Comparative Sociology* 11(6): 875–909.
- Wotton, David. 1992. "New Histories of Atheism." In *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment*, ed. Michael Hunter and David Wotton, pp. 15–53. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zuckerman, Phil. 2011. *Faith No More: Why People Reject Religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zuckerman, Phil, ed. 2010. *Atheism and Secularity*. 2 vols. Santa Barbara, Cal.: Praeger.