

# Sociology of Atheism

*Edited by*

Roberto Cipriani  
Franco Garelli



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

# Contents

Preface VII

*Franco Garelli*

List of Contributors XI

- 1 From “Atheism” to “Religious Indifference”: Suggestions for Future Research on Secularization 1  
*Manuel Franzmann*
- 2 Universal and Foundational: Law’s Constitution of an Ethic of Belonging for Nones 17  
*Lori G. Beaman*
- 3 Atheism, Class, and the Ghost of Karl Marx 36  
*Richard Cimino and Christopher Smith*
- 4 Unaffiliated, Yet Religious: A Methodological and Demographic Analysis 50  
*Gina A. Zurlo and Todd M. Johnson*
- 5 Gender and Atheism: Paradoxes, Contradictions, and an Agenda for Future Research 75  
*Landon Schnabel, Matthew Facciani, Ariel Sincoff-Yedid and Lori Fazzino*
- 6 Expressive Nontheism 98  
*Jesse M. Smith*
- 7 The Rise and Fall of the New Atheism: Identity Politics and Tensions within U.S. Nonbelievers 118  
*Amarnath Amarasingam and Melanie Elyse Brewster*
- 8 The True (Non)Believer? Atheists and the Atheistic in the United States 137  
*Evan M. Stewart*
- 9 Forms of Atheism in Contemporary Greek Society: Beliefs, Practices and the Formation of the Atheist Identity 161  
*Alexandros Sakellariou*

- 10 **From God-Fighters to Atheists: Late Soviet Kinship and Tradition as an Expanding Universe of Unbelief** 180  
*Sonja Luehrmann*
- 11 **Czech Republic: The Promised Land for Atheists?** 201  
*Roman Vido, David Václavík and Antonín Paleček*
- 12 **Ambiguous Atheism: The Impact of Political Changes on the Meaning and Reception of Atheism in Estonia** 233  
*Atko Remmel*
- 13 **Secularity, Non-religiosity, Atheism: Boundaries between Religion and Its Other** 251  
*Monika Wohlrab-Sahr*
- Postface** 272  
*Roberto Cipriani*
- Index** 281

## Gender and Atheism: Paradoxes, Contradictions, and an Agenda for Future Research

*Landon Schnabel<sup>1</sup>, Matthew Facciani, Ariel Sincoff-Yedid, and  
Lori Fazzino.*

While once a dominant paradigm in the sociology of religion, secularization theory gave way to work on pluralism, globalization, multiple modernities, and intercultural phenomena. Following recent social change and growing secularization in some contexts, however, more sociologists of religion are now addressing atheism. The empirical research addressing gender is still limited and theoretical synthesis of the available evidence is even rarer. This paper, therefore, will cover what research is available on gender and atheism, focusing primarily on the United States, but situating the American experience within a global context. Because of the limited availability of research on gender and atheism, we will also incorporate our own original research on the topic.

Scholars of religion know there is a gender imbalance among atheists, with men much more likely than women to be atheists. This imbalance is likely a contributing factor to popular discussions that have accused atheism – and secularism more generally – of a sexism problem. This paper will cover the available literature on gender and atheism, focusing on the paradoxes and contradictions of equality and inequality in secular communities: although typically more liberal than the religious on many social issues, the nonreligious are not immune to misleading assumptions about gender or sexist thoughts and actions. Of particular interest to us is why, in contradiction to the assertions of some atheists leaders, the absence of religion does not spontaneously produce equality. Because the empirical literature is far from complete, this paper will of necessity be an agenda setting treatment that highlights the need for more research.

We will first discuss the gender gap in religion and atheism. Then we will cover the contradictions of inequality and equality within secular communities and discourse, focusing primarily on the U.S. Next, we will provide a brief discussion of gender and atheism outside the U.S. We will then discuss how epistemology, language, and knowledge help to situate the paradoxes and

---

<sup>1</sup> Direct correspondence to Landon Schnabel, Department of Sociology, Indiana University, 744 Ballantine Hall, 1020 E. Kirkwood Ave., Bloomington, IN 47405. Email: lpschnab@indiana.edu.

contradictions covered in the chapter. Finally, we will close with directions for future research and concluding thoughts.

### The Gender Gap in Religiosity and Atheism

Even though the nonreligious tend to have more liberal gender attitudes (Schnabel 2016 Hunsberger and Altemeyer 2006; Stinson et al. 2013) and the proportion of atheists and agnostics in a country is associated with greater gender equality (Schnabel Forthcoming), women are less likely than men to be nonreligious and, comparatively, even less likely to identify as atheists.

Although not a universal phenomenon, women being more religious than men is one of the most consistent findings in the sociology of religion (Hastings and Lindsay 2013; Luckmann 1967; Miller and Hoffmann 1995; Miller and Stark 2002; Roth and Kroll 2007; Schnabel 2015; Stark 2002; Trzebiatowska and Bruce 2012; de Vaus and McAllister 1987). The other side of the equation is that men tend to be less religious than women, and men make up a disproportionate number of those who have no religious affiliation and those who do not believe in a god or gods. Figure 1 uses data from the 2014 U.S. General Social

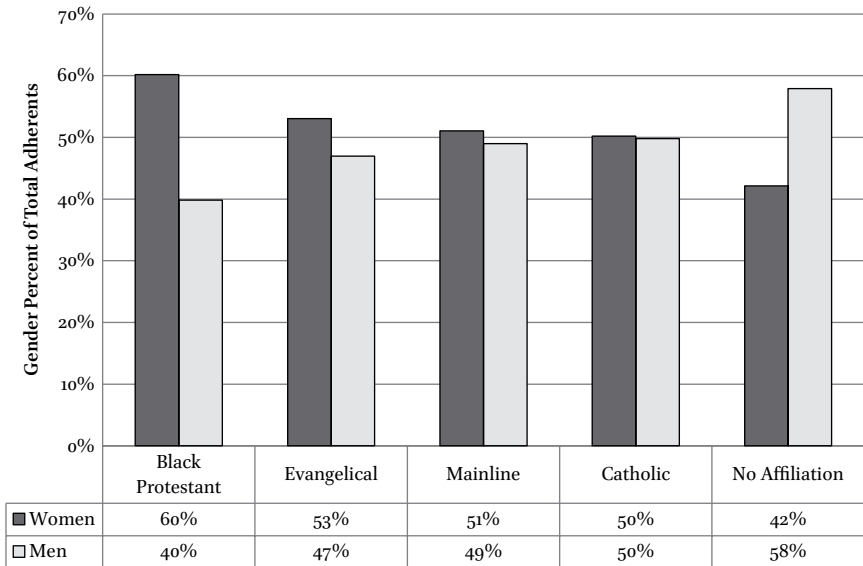


FIGURE 1 *Gender gaps in affiliation with Christian denominations and in being religiously unaffiliated*

Source: 2014 General Social Survey

N=2,507

Note: Cases were equalized by gender for comparison. Non-Christian religious affiliations not shown.

Survey to show that, among the respondents to this nationally-representative survey, men make up 58% of those with no religious affiliation whereas women only make up 42% of the unaffiliated.

Figure 2 demonstrates that the gender gaps in beliefs about whether there is a god are much larger than the religious affiliation gap. In fact, men make up almost three-quarters of the atheists in the United States. So, clearly, if we just think about numbers of people who are nonreligious and/or do not believe in any god or gods, men dominate secularism in the United States, as they also do in many other countries. Secular communities often argue that religion produces inequalities and marginalizes women, but within American atheism women are not far from being “tokens” by the standard proportion of 15% for a strongly skewed sex ratio (Kanter 1977).<sup>2</sup>

### Not Sexist, But Sexist: Four Contradictions

Being a woman and being an atheist are both devalued identities. Many people think sexism is a thing of the past, but it has simply become less hostile and

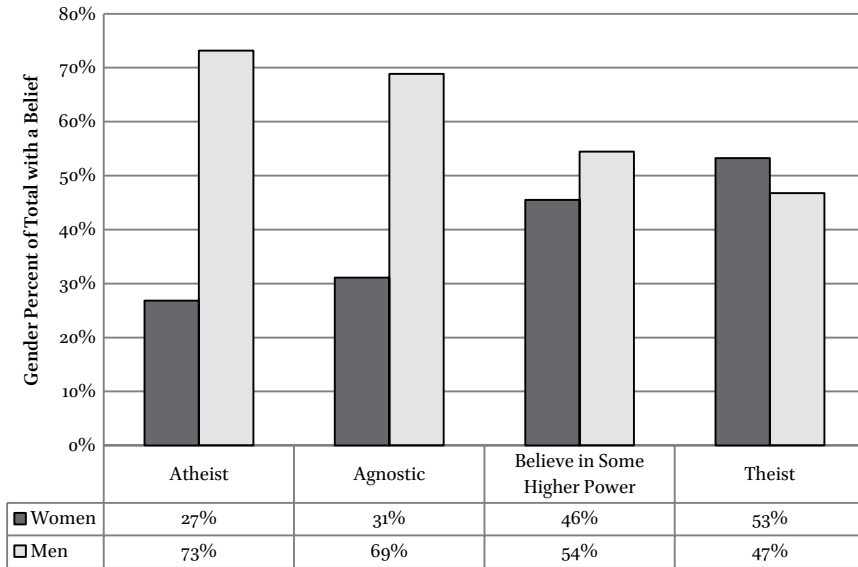


FIGURE 2 *Gender gaps in beliefs about the divine*  
 Source: 2014 General Social Survey  
 N=2,521  
 Note: Cases were equalized by gender for comparison.

<sup>2</sup> New Pew (2015) data does suggest that the growth rate of secular women may now be on par with that of men.

obvious (Swim et al. 1995). The embeddedness of cultural beliefs contributes to the persistence of sexism within social interactions and institutions (Ridgeway and Correll 2004; Ridgeway 2011; Risman 2004). Maintaining and contesting the existing set of social arrangements around gender extends into cyberspace. New media provides virtual “free spaces” that allow both secular and feminist activists to raise awareness about their causes to a global online audience. These spaces, however, have also proved to be a holdout of old-style hostile sexism and uncensored gender norm policing (see Futrell and Simi 2004 for a detailed discussion of virtual free spaces). Armentor-Cota (2010) notes that the same tactics used to control women offline – such as sexualization, silencing, and threatening sexual violence – are also used online. Sexism in the secular community has been documented in both online and offline spaces.

In highly religious contexts such as the United States where being religious is the norm, atheists experience marginalization from friends and family, and are subject to prejudice from the society at large (Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann 2006). The more devalued identities a person has, the more cumulative disadvantage s/he faces (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008). Therefore, from an intersectional perspective, men – especially white, heterosexual, cisgendered, able-bodied, Western men – can more easily sustain the loss of status that comes with affirming an atheist identity (Miller 2013). Moreover, because Christianity is viewed as more feminine and atheism as more masculine, men who embrace a non-religious identity are less likely to face gender norm policing than are atheist women (Trzebiatowska and Bruce 2012). Recent findings on perceived anti-atheist discrimination indicate that the cost of “coming out” as atheist may be too high for women: a positive, albeit moderate, relationship exists between perceived discrimination and both the strength and openness of secular identities (Hammer et al. 2012).

The research literature on gender and atheism is growing rapidly, but it is still a newer field of study with less research than other fields within the sociology of religion and the sociology of gender. In this section, therefore, we draw on both previous research and original ethnographic data to explore gendered beliefs, interactions, and contradictions within atheist communities. In the ethnographic research that helps inform our discussion, field notes and interview transcripts were supplemented with a purposive sample of textual data collected from well-known atheist activist blogs, online new media, and popular atheist literature. The data were collected and analyzed according to the precepts of grounded theory, using a constant comparative method (Barney and Strauss 1967; Charmaz 2006). Our synthesis of the previous research and original findings problematize science as a totalizing metanarrative, and demonstrate how atheism and religion operate in similar ways to perpetuate gender

inequality and reinforce essentialist gender norms. We situate secularism and gender in the context of a larger socio-historical legacy of patriarchy (Kettell 2013; Miller 2013), and, in doing so, push forward the literature on gender and atheism – an area of inquiry that is underdeveloped within the sociology of religion.

### *The Patriarchal and Contradictory Nature of New Atheism*

New Atheist ideology labels religions as patriarchal and inherently harmful to women, and claims that atheism is therefore better for women.<sup>3</sup> Yet, the lack of racial/ethnic and gender diversity within New Atheism has been cited as a substantial problem for the movement.<sup>4</sup> The lack of women in atheist groups appears paradoxical, but is less surprising in light of another paradox – the patriarchal nature of New Atheism. Regardless of the type of event or its location, cisgender men consistently outnumber cisgender women and queer- and transfolk, and the racial composition is predominantly white. Our observations in the field have been consistent with Miller's (2013) rich discussion on the embeddedness of patriarchal systems in the absence of religion.

#### Contradiction 1: The Patriarchal Nature of Religion Still Affects Atheists Despite Their Lack of Faith

Religious belief has been known to play a role in prejudice for quite some time (Allport and Ross 1967; Rokeach 1960). Strong religious believers tend to value the societal status quo including more traditional gender roles, which facilitates sexist attitudes towards women (Mikołajczak and Pietrzak 2014). The dominance and prevalence of religious ideologies in Western history allows for religious ideas to spread into secular spaces and influence nonbelievers (Ray 2009). Even atheists who were never religious are still exposed to cultural messages shaped by religious history.

Not only can atheists internalize sexist beliefs from their cultures, but their emphasis on science can also foster sexism. Religion has historically

---

3 Patriarchy is a system of institutionalized power that privileges men over women, and New Atheism is the label given to a recent atheist movement centered around the writings of Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens, and Daniel Dennett (Cimino and Smith 2011; Pigliucci 2013; Smith and Cimino 2012).

4 Based on the personal involvement and/or ethnographic research of two of the authors on the New Atheist movement (Fazzino and Facciani), we can say this critique has merit. In addition to spending the past three years in the field with a local nontheist groups, one of the authors (Fazzino) is frequently asked to speak about her research at atheist conferences and for different secular groups across the country (Fazzino, Borer, and Haq 2014; Fazzino 2014). Another author (Facciani) also speaks at atheist gatherings, often focusing on gender issues.



constructed rules for dealing with human sexuality, which are often sexist and repressive (Foucault 1990). More recently, science came to dictate what type of sexual attitudes were normal as people went to psychiatrists for “confession” and were told what was acceptable and what was deviant. In short, science took over the job religion had previously done in defining what was appropriate sex, and while in some ways it was more freeing, science perpetuated some aspects of the sexual repression that religion had promoted (e.g., homosexuality being categorized as a mental illness, hysteria being viewed by psychiatrists as an exclusively female disease, and the medicalization of PMS) (Figert 1996; Foucault 1990; Kirk and Kutchins 1992; Seidman 2010). Similar to the scientific justifications for heteronormativity, scientific explanations continue to be used by some atheists to justify sexist attitudes. In the next sections, we will further discuss how atheists draw upon particular scientific narratives to support gender essentialism.

#### Contradiction 2: Atheism is Better for Women, But is Not Women-Friendly

Characterized by its strident critique of religion and aggressive anti-theistic rhetoric, as well as its valorization of objectivist science as the supreme epistemic authority, New Atheism is both a political ideology and the unapologetic branch of the secular movement (Kettell 2013; Stephen LeDrew 2013a, 2013b). With the emergence of New Atheism in 2006, prominent figures including Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris, and the late Christopher Hitchens became the public faces of atheism and are generally regarded as the leaders of the New Atheist movement. As affluent, educated, white, able-bodied, Western men, Dawkins et al. are representational exemplars of their constituents. Analyses conducted by Cragun (2015) demonstrate that New Atheists are very likely to be affluent, educated, white males, which dovetails with the particular materialist and objectivist ideologies held by many nontheists.

The tenets of modern science – such as rationality, objectivity, and value neutrality – all reflect “masculine” traits. Moreover, women have a historical legacy of exclusion from the ranks of professional science (Hamlin 2014), which is illustrated by gender disparities in STEM fields (Blickenstaff 2005). At the core of New Atheism is a belief in scientism (Cragun 2015; LeDrew 2012; Stephen LeDrew 2013a; Pigliucci 2013): science is not just *a* method of inquiry, but is *the* method of inquiry and all valid knowledge comes through official scientific channels. The scientism promoted by New Atheism, however, is a particular kind that downplays social scientific epistemologies in favor of sociobiology and aims to replace democratic politics with scientific authority (LeDrew 2012; Stephen LeDrew 2013a). As one of the authors (Fazzino) has

observed in her ethnographic research on the secular community, scientism directly impacts gendered interactions within secular groups, and appears to hinder women's continued participation in such groups.

### Contradiction 3: New Atheists Openly Discredit Theological Bases for Sexism, But Invoke Scientific Bases for Sexism

Hitchens, Harris, and Dawkins' views on gender arrangements have received little attention by scholars, despite each of them making explicitly sexist public statements on several occasions (Dennett, the fourth "horseman of the atheist apocalypse," speaks with more tact). None of these prominent figures of New Atheism have expertise in the social sciences or gender theory and hold misconceptions about gender, yet they speak as authorities on the subject within the secular community. As noted by Miller (2013), atheism does not have a theological basis for sexism, but it often uses science as a basis for sexism. For example, Hitchens asserted in a widely-read *Vanity Fair* article that "women aren't funny" because of evolutionary processes, and that women are biologically driven to be full-time mothers (Pollitt 2011). Hitchens' latter idea is supported by a discussion about the "fundamental nature of maleness and femaleness" in Dawkins' best-selling book *The Selfish Gene* (Dawkins 1976:140).

Similarly, Harris has publicly stated his belief that comfort with aggression and critical thinking are essentially male traits. He has thus argued that atheism is less appealing to women because women cannot handle the movement's approach, and rather than saying that the movement should be less aggressive, the problem is with women's desire for kindness (Harris 2014). According to Silver et al.'s (2014) typology of nonbelief, some of the New Atheist leaders fit the description for antagonistic "anti-theists": aggressive, dogmatic, assertive, (potentially) narcissistic, and religiously intolerant (Hunsberger and Altemeyer 2006; Jordan-Young and Rumiati 2012). The sexist beliefs, rooted in quasi-science, commonly expressed by leading atheist public figures contribute to the persistence of gender essentialist assumptions within New Atheism (Hassall and Bushfield 2014). As revealed in Fazzino's observations of atheist gatherings, the gender beliefs and communication styles of New Atheist leaders are emulated by many participants in the movement.

### Contradiction 4: Atheists Support Gender Equality...and Misogyny

A series of controversial events, now known as "Elevatorgate," that transpired between militant atheist Richard Dawkins and *Skepchick* founder Rebecca Watson provide a vivid illustration of the darker side of secular gender relations. At the 2011 World Atheist Convention, Watson spoke about the experiences of many nontheist women who report feeling sexually objectified by

atheist men when attending events. After the panel, conference attendees socialized at the hotel bar until 4:00 am when Watson announced she was ready to retire to her room. A man broke away from the group and entered the elevator with Watson, extending an invitation for her to join him in his hotel room for coffee, which she declined. The nature of the interaction left Watson feeling sexualized. In a *Skepchick* vlog posted a few weeks after the event, Watson (2011a) recounted this interaction and simply said, “Guys, don’t do that.” She calmly explained how this incident exemplified what she had just discussed on the panel at the convention, and suggested that a decline in sexual harassment might attract more women to local groups.

As a result, Watson received an outpouring of misogynistic Internet hate mail threatening physical and sexual violence. Contributing to the sexist backlash against Watson, Richard Dawkins, who had been on the same panel as Watson at the convention, penned a satirical letter to a hypothetical “Muslima.” This Islamophobic and sexist letter trivialized Watson’s experience by telling “Muslima” to “stop whining” about genital mutilation, intimate partner abuse, and the threat of death by stoning and to “grow up, or at least grow a thicker skin” (Watson 2011b). Watson and other women who speak out against sexism in the atheist community are often vilified on the Internet by secularists, both men *and* women. It is now Watson, not Dawkins, who is blamed for the Elevatorgate controversy and related schisms in the secular movement.

Although a self-proclaimed “passionate feminist,” Dawkins has a well-documented history of misogynistic comments on Twitter and other platforms. These comments tend to be rooted in a legacy of race, class, and gender privilege, and, because of Dawkins’ status in the secular community, have serious implications (see Lee 2014). Not long after Dawkins’ letter to “Muslima” went viral, a man on Twitter tweeted a comment stating that he would assault Watson given the opportunity to be alone in an elevator with her. Such direct threats against atheist women, as well as other allegations of sexual harassment experienced at the hands of atheists, demonstrate the need for sexual harassment policies at atheist conferences. Yet, when Watson brought threats against herself to the attention of conference organizers, they refused to ban from conference attendance the man who had made direct threats against her (Watson 2012).

The higher profile examples are supported by results from the American Secular Census (American-Secular-Census 2013), which has found that secular women are less likely than men to be involved in the secular movement, in part because of bad experiences with groups, people, or events; the words and actions of other people in the secular movement; and, tellingly, unwanted advances by other participants. The census also shows that women are much

more likely to be former participants in the secular movement because of the same problematic social experiences within secular groups.

The absence of religion does not automatically lead to equality. Instead, cultural norms contribute to a re-inscription of social inequalities in new settings. Furthermore, the re-inscription of sexist ideologies is not only implicitly accepted, but explicitly endorsed by atheism's public figures when they promote sexist beliefs. Therefore, not only is atheism made up of more men than women, viewed as more masculine than feminine, and open to adopting traditional gender norms from the larger society, but its leaders are aggressive and tend to demonstrate intellectual arrogance by presenting themselves as experts on topics outside their areas of study. It is not surprising, therefore, that atheism is not free of the gender problems of traditional, belief-based religious groups, nor the leaders of atheism free of the same potential to reinforce privilege and express arrogance held by other religious leaders. Just as concerted efforts are required within religious communities for equality to be achieved, concerted efforts will be required within atheist communities for equality to be achieved.

### **Feminist Atheism**

The atheist community is rapidly developing and attempts are being made to rectify its sexism problem. Women in STEM fields have benefitted from female-friendly STEM spaces (Welde and Laursen 2011), and atheism seems to be following suit: the obvious gender imbalance (Brewster 2013; Mahlamäki 2012) in atheism has prompted the creation of several female atheist spaces. As these types of female-atheist-friendly spaces develop, it may make women feel more comfortable with the secular movement.

Change is possible and already happening, but the very epistemology of New Atheism poses challenges given that it is rooted in scientific rather than humanistic approaches to nontheism (LeDrew 2012). So far, the secular community has elevated those with expertise in the physical sciences and philosophy while neglecting those with social science backgrounds. Although atheism in general may be associated with more egalitarian values (Zuckerman 2007), there are still relatively few male atheist leaders who are vocal about gender equality. Moreover, the atheist community continues to celebrate leaders who aggressively attack religion (Dawkins 2006; Harris 2006; Hitchens 2007) and emphasize traditionally masculine traits, which may make some women feel less accepted in the atheist community and culture (Brewster 2013). The American Humanist Association (AHA 2015) has emphasized social justice and inclusion for all groups, but some argue its attempts have been superficial,

illustrated by leadership positions within the organization still being filled disproportionately by white men. In reaction to the perceived need for more equality and diversity, *Secular Woman* (Secular-Woman 2015) and *Atheism Plus* (Carrier 2013) were created by and for women and other marginalized groups within the secular community. These groups are more strategic in their push for equality than the larger American Humanist Association and more likely to criticize the larger secular movement.

In addition to the formation of explicitly feminist spaces, the increasing diversity of atheist speakers at conferences and events has also helped amplify the voices of women and people of color within the movement (Hassall and Bushfield 2014). Moreover, additional pro-feminist and interfaith leaders and approaches have arisen recently (Stedman 2012), including the former Seventh-day Adventist pastor Ryan Bell who, motivated in large part by a passion for social justice, tried what became known as “A Year without God” (Streeter 2014). Bell illustrates what could be labeled a primarily humanistic, rather than a primarily scientific, humanism (LeDrew 2012), and could signal a shift to there being more leaders in the atheist community concerned with doing right over thinking right.

In addition to developments that are already addressing the sexism problem in atheism, we have research-based suggestions that could further ameliorate the sexism problem. If women, persons of color, social scientists, and gender or STS scholars were to become as prominent in the New Atheist movement as the white, male, physical scientists, the movement would be better able to problematize the privilege and poor science used to justify sexism within their community. In addition to bringing in broader and more diverse voices into the community, New Atheism could further deal with its sexism problem by getting more feminist men involved with working for equality: previous research suggests that men are more likely to support feminism when exposed to positive portrayals of feminist men (Wiley et al. 2013) and when directly exposed to the discrimination women face (Stinson et al. 2013). Atheists are aware of the religious discrimination they face (Cragun et al. 2012), so atheist feminists may find it effective to explain the similarities between gender discrimination and religious discrimination.

As the atheism movement continues to become more diverse (Hassall and Bushfield 2014), we expect that a variety of activist approaches will continue to emerge, including more atheists who openly support social justice (Stedman 2012; Streeter 2014). We are hopeful that a combination of spaces for atheist women, atheist women speaking out about their experiences, and atheist men openly supporting feminism will reduce sexism in the atheist community in the future.

## Gender and Atheism Worldwide

So far we have focused, of necessity, primarily on issues of gender and atheism in the U.S. and the West more generally. Scholarship on atheism outside the United States has grown, but remains more limited than work focusing on the U.S. The outside-the-U.S. literature focuses primarily on atheism and gender within Europe, with fewer discussions of atheism and gender in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Beyond the United States and Europe, the literature focuses more on secularization and secularism than atheism specifically, and more on demographics than on gender processes. The distinction between the absence of religion in secular communities and the stated rejection of belief in a deity within atheism is a critical difference to note – it speaks to how we understand the lack of religion in different parts of the world. Furthermore, what we see in the literature is that gender is not considered as a lens of analysis in much of the global atheism research.

Keysar and Navarro-Rivera (2013) note that atheists are generally young, disproportionately male, educated, and likely live in Northern Europe, Japan, and current/former communist countries. Roughly seven percent of the global population identifies as non-believers. Using the 2008 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), they found that the countries with low to moderate percentages of non-believers include South Africa, Ireland, Ukraine, Japan, Uruguay, Latvia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Norway, and South Korea. Countries with a higher percentage of non-believers included France, Germany, and the Czech Republic. They noted that the gender gap in religiosity extended globally, though not universally, and also distinguished between identification as an atheist versus an agnostic. Furseth (2010) associated the gender gap in belief with women's greater involvement in family and life cycle events. Brewster (2013) examined and critiqued theories that attempted to explain the gender gap in atheism, including gender socialization and structural location theories, personality theories, and risk preference and related evolutionary theories. She outlined previous research to suggest that, rather than rejecting religion wholesale, women may be more adaptive with their religious beliefs or may challenge aspects of religious structures while remaining within the movements. Brewster (2013) contended that women's resistance to atheism may also be due to the proportion of men who identify as atheists, and, as we discussed above, the qualities of the men who have become leaders in the organized movement.

Again, scholarship on atheist communities has focused largely on the United States and Europe. Cotter (2015) reconsidered atheism and non-religiosity in his study of Scottish university students, finding five "types" of atheists and

arguing for the use of archetypal categories rather than dimensions of non-religion. Although he cites both male and female participants in his discussion of the data, he did not, however, consider how gender may affect participants' attitudes and beliefs. While Catto and Eccles (2013) sought to achieve a gender balance among interviewees in their qualitative study of young atheists in Britain, they too did not address how gender may affect participants' concepts of, and relationships to, belief and belonging. In *Society Without God*, Zuckerman (2008) documented high levels of non-belief in God in Denmark and Sweden, though some cultural affiliation with religion was still evident. He addressed national gender equality measures, and noted participants' two references to gender explicitly, but did not engage in substantive gender analysis of his interviewees' experiences and ideas. Mahlamaki (2012) examined gender and atheism in Finland, and her work stands out for its demonstrable attention to gender as an analytic category. She considered various explanations for the gender gap in religiosity, including education, socialization, and gender identity and expression (i.e., masculinity and femininity).

Moving beyond the studies focused on Europe, Eller (2010) examined atheism and secularity in the Arab world, but focused largely on the history of secularism rather than atheist belief and practice. Schielke (2013) noted a linguistic and practical history of concepts of atheism in Islam, though not identical in terminological meaning to current English conceptions. Gendered aspects of non-belief in the Islamic world, however, are only discussed in relation to the marital statuses of Egyptian interviewees. Quack (2013) addressed the organized atheist movement and social activism in India, but only briefly mentioned gender in his discussion of one social activist group's emphasis on gender equality. In discussions of atheism and secularity in Japan, Roemer (2010) only notes gendered demographic differences in identifications with atheism, and Whyllly (2013) also does not substantively address gender in her discussion of Japan. Greater scholarly attention to the varieties of atheist and non-religious belief outside the United States and Western Europe, and how gender substantively factors into the dynamics of belief, identity, and group membership, is needed to expand our understandings of the realities of non-theistic belief and practice around the world.<sup>5</sup>

---

5 Although a strong, oft-cited volume on atheism and secularity around the world, Zuckerman's edited volume of *Atheism and Secularity* on global expressions does not cite gender once in its index. This is just one example of the lack of attention to gender in global literature on these topics.

## Epistemology and Knowledge

Feminist considerations of epistemology and intersectionality are critical in the study of gender and atheism. However, the relationship between feminist epistemologies and religion remains underdeveloped in the literature, including any extended consideration of religion, non-religion, and atheism in relation to one another.

Feminist methods of knowledge production, though long existent, expanded theoretically as a result of the growing feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Alternative epistemologies were developed in the 1970s and 1980s in response to perceived limitations on who could produce knowledge. Scholars such as Harding (1988, 2004), Hartsock (1988), and Smith (1990) developed standpoint theory, which challenged dominant masculinist and positivist epistemologies that treated women and other oppressed groups as the objects, not the authors, of such knowledge, and did not allow members of these groups to produce knowledge about their own identities and experiences. Through the development of Marxian thought and other liberation movements in the 1960s and 1970s, “race, ethnicity-based, anti-imperial, and Queer social justice movements routinely produce[d] standpoint themes” that situated research within the experiences of the people writing it (Harding 2004:3). The concept of standpoint itself, though in reality a collective achievement, not an identity position, has been criticized for its white, middle class origins and emphases.

Simultaneously, scholarship addressing the intersections of gender, race, and class emerged. Though it called attention to multiple intersecting forms of oppression (Collins 2000; Combahee-River-Collective 1982; Lorde 1984), the earlier literature did not substantively address religion as an interlocking category of identity and oppression. Feminist knowledge production at the intersection of identities was focused on gender, sexuality, race, and class. Following the earlier scholarship discussing these interlocking identities, intersectionality theory, introduced by Crenshaw (1991), contended that the multiple identities an individual holds act multiply and simultaneously to construct a self. Religion still was not substantively addressed in the early literature that followed Crenshaw’s formal introduction of this theory of intersecting identities. The absence of religion was also evident in West and Fenstermaker’s (1995) seminal article on “doing difference” at the intersections of race, class, and gender. Carbado (2013) argues, however, that the emergence of intersectionality from within Black feminist thought does not mean that the theory cannot or should not be extended to other identities. Furthermore, religion has not been cultivated as an analytic within the field of gender studies in the same



ways that gender, race, and class have been (Collins 2000; Scott 1986). This de-emphasis of religion has occurred for a variety of reasons within scholarship on identities, with the perception of religion as broadly patriarchal among them (Mahlamäki 2012:62). Germane to the topic of this chapter, intersectionality scholarship often focuses primarily on ascriptive identity categories, and does not often address belief identity categories, such as political identities and religious identities.

As noted briefly above, there has been a dearth of attention to the intersections of identities both within the non-religious movement and in the literature on the intersections of religion and other identities. As Miller (2013) notes, the non-religious movement in America has historically been, and continues to be, dominated by white men, despite the strong activism of women and African-Americans. More broadly, Weber (2015) argues for the importance of integrating religion within intersectional research in European feminist scholarship. Irby (2014) contends that sociologists ought to place further focus on the lens of gender to understand how religion and gender intersect as social institutions, particularly in the study of conservative religions.

Although feminist epistemologies and intersectionality literature have proliferated in the 25 years since the theory's introduction, the incorporation of religion into the analysis of multiply constituting identities is more recent. The recognition of religious identity remains a new and necessary facet of the scholarship on identities, and there is scant attention to non-religiosity and atheism in the literature on the nexus of gender and religion. Much of the intersectional literature on gender and religion focuses on the religious resurgence around the world in the past forty years, and the focus is primarily on the intersection with religion, not non-religion. Sociological research incorporating religion as intersectional identity is limited, but includes Read and Eagle (2014) on Arab American women's employment and education. Silvestri (2011) argues that scholarship must extend beyond the study of organized religious practice to the study of individual enactments of faith, drawing on her research with European Muslim women; she contends that we must study non-organized expressions of Islam and religion more broadly. The limited scholarship on religion within intersectional identity also reflects the lack of focus on non-religion and atheism as intersectional identities despite the fact that atheists can face more prejudice than people with other devalued identities, such as those based on race and sexuality (Edgell et al. 2006).

Smiet (2015) notes the complexity of the study of religion and secularism within feminist scholarship, and contends that our understanding of this relationship needs to be further developed. More attention to religion as an

intersectional identity – both in the practice of religion and in its abnegation – is needed to explore fully the possibilities and lived realities of religious and non-religious beliefs and identities.

### **An Agenda for Future Research**

Our proposed agenda for future research in the study of gender and atheism includes three main foci: demographics, methodologies, and feminist considerations. More comprehensive survey data on the make-up of the atheist community are needed, particularly in the United States. The American Secular Census focuses on this population, but the self-selection of the survey's sample means it is not representative. The growing proportion of nonreligious people in the United States means that there will be more nonreligious people in general surveys, such as the General Social Survey, but atheists still make up a relatively small portion of the religiously unaffiliated. Further nationally representative surveys are needed to more fully understand the varieties of non-belief, non-practice, and secular and atheist identifications across demographic lines. Data that allow for detailed examinations of secularists will help scholars of atheism and non-religion understand how and why the organized atheism movement operates in certain ways that may reinforce unequal beliefs and representation. Moreover, specific measures on movement participation are needed to explore the intersections of atheism, technology, and media to enhance our understanding of whether there are notable differences between atheists who only participate in the community online, those who participate in person, and those who do not believe in any god or gods but do not participate in the movement.<sup>6</sup>

Representative online panels that allow scholars to focus on a particular subsample (such as those who are nonreligious) may provide an effective way to research secularists. GfK (formerly Knowledge Networks) is one example of an online panel that could be leveraged to study a population-based representative sample of nonreligious people. Recruiting atheists through atheist groups and organizations would also be effective for recruitment, but would produce a biased selection of atheists active in the movement. An affordable,

---

6 The secular community is a loosely connected group of atheists who attend conferences, events, and meetings while also engage in activism through writing, television, debates, and politics. There are still many atheists who are not meaningfully connected to the larger community, but we do not know much about their opinions of the movement and why they are not involved.

though not representative, option for studying the nonreligious is Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), which commonly produces samples in which half the respondents identify as religiously unaffiliated. MTurk is a crowd-sourcing website that has become popular among social scientists for recruiting experiment participants. The site allows researchers to connect with individuals who are interested in completing short research tasks and tends to capture more demographically diverse samples compared to the traditional university-based lab setting.

One of the authors (Schnabel) has recently conducted experimental research on gender and atheism using MTurk. Preliminary analyses for a project still in development suggest that someone described as Christian in a vignette is viewed as more feminine and less masculine, and someone described as an atheist is viewed as more masculine and less feminine. Being an atheist, therefore, may be less socially risky for men than for women because being more masculine and less feminine is encouraged in men and discouraged in women.

Greater attention to research methodologies and methodological concerns is also critical for the study of gender and atheism. As we have noted, the uneven demographic distribution of both non-believers and the organized atheist movement has been well established in previous research. Atheism's gender bias, however, is not only found within atheist communities, but also among those who research them. In an analysis of scholarly articles and books published on atheism in the field of sociology, we found that there is approximately a 2:1 ratio of men to women with respect to authorship, and an even greater disparity between men and women regarding number of publications. In short, not only are there more men researching atheism in sociology, but they are also publishing more often and none have focused their work primarily on atheism and gender. Although scholarship focusing on atheism and gender may substantively address the inequality and bias found within the movement across researcher demographics, diverse representations of scholarly viewpoints and orientations would undoubtedly expand our understanding of the complex relationship between gender and atheism. Additionally, the study of gender and atheism requires more extensive qualitative research on the atheist movement and the broader community of non-believers that is attentive to gender, inequality, and bias. Further consideration of selection biases and attention to this methodological question may help to explain why research has shown that atheists are more pro-feminist despite the evident sexism within the organized movement.

Future research on gender and atheism will also benefit from greater attention to feminist considerations. Research on gender and atheism should address the lack of attention to gender in the extant literature on atheism and

non-belief. Much of the international literature in particular does not address gender specifically or substantively. Scholarship should also examine gender beyond demographics in order to address fully the inequality and biases within the organized atheist movement (and within the research on the topic). Concurrently, sociological researchers in these areas should pay greater attention to varieties of (non)religion and (non)belief, as well as to gender, not just as variables but as significant theoretical analytics. Epistemological considerations for future scholarship on gender and atheism include addressing historical exclusions from the creation of knowledge, including women and people of color, and addressing historical and contemporary emphases on scientism, logic, and masculinism, both within research and within the organized atheist movement. These considerations will focus future scholarship on the difficult question of why the absence of hierarchical, essentialist religious structures does not necessarily open up a space for greater gender equality or eliminate the presence of sexism, bias, and inequality.

### Conclusion

This synthesis of the literature and agenda for future research highlighted paradoxes and contradictions in the relationship between gender and atheism. Religion has been influenced by a patriarchal history, but so has the secular community. Atheism is in some ways better for women and has become more diverse over time, but is still male-dominated. Just as religion is not inherently and universally sexist or egalitarian, neither is atheism. A simple lack of religion will not automatically produce equality; instead, intentional action is needed to address inequalities. Some atheists, and a few atheist groups, identify as feminists and are working toward gender egalitarianism, but many of the most prominent atheist leaders continue to promote arguably sexist assumptions justified through contested science. The relationship between gender and atheism is complex, and, as we have shown, often paradoxical and contradictory. We have only begun to scratch the surface of this important topic and are hopeful that future research will greatly expand what we know about gender and atheism.

### References

- AHA. 2015. "American Humanist Association." *American Humanist Association*. Retrieved June 23, 2015 (<http://americanhumanist.org/AHA>).

- Allport, Gordon W. and J. Michael Ross. 1967. "Personal Religious Orientation and Prejudice." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 5(4):432–43.
- American-Secular-Census. 2013. "Women's Experiences in Secular Groups Can Be Uniquely Divergent from Men's." *Secular Census*. Retrieved June 23, 2015 (<http://www.secularcensus.us/analysis/2013-01-23>).
- Armentor-Cota, Janet. 2010. "Online Gendered Interactions: Exploring Divergent Perspectives." *Global Journal of Human-Social Science Research* 10(3):2–12.
- Barney, Glaser and Anselm Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson.
- Blickenstaff, Clark. 2005. "Women and Science Careers: Leaky Pipeline or Gender Filter?" *Gender and Education* 17(4):369–86.
- Brewster, Melanie Elyse. 2013. "Atheism, Gender, and Sexuality." Pp. 511–24 in *The Oxford Handbook of Atheism*, edited by Stephen Bullivant and Michael Ruse. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Carbado, Devon. 2013. "Colorblind Intersectionality." *Signs* 38(4):811–45.
- Carrier, Richard. 2013. "Atheism... Plus What?" *Essays in the Philosophy of Humanism* 21(1):105–13.
- Catto, Rebecca and Janet Eccles. 2013. "(Dis)Believing and Belonging: Investigating the Narratives of Young British Atheists." *Temenos* 49(1):37–63.
- Charmaz, Kathy. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cimino, Richard and Christopher Smith. 2011. "The New Atheism and the Formation of the Imagined Secularist Community." *Journal of Media and Religion* 10(1):24–38.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- Combahee-River-Collective. 1982. "Combahee River Collective." in *But some of us are brave*, edited by Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith. Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press.
- Cotter, Christopher R. 2015. "Without God yet Not Without Nuance: A Qualitative Study of Atheism and Non-Religion Among Scottish University Students." Pp. 171–93 in *Atheist Identities-Spaces and Social Contexts*, edited by L.G. Beaman and S. Tomlins. New York: Springer.
- Cragun, Ryan. 2015. "Who Are the 'New Atheists?'" Pp. 195–211 in *Atheist Identities-Spaces and Social Contexts*, edited by L.G. Beaman and S. Tomlins. New York: Springer.
- Cragun, Ryan T., Barry Kosmin, Ariela Keysar, Joseph H. Hammer, and Michael Nielsen. 2012. "On the Receiving End: Discrimination toward the Non-Religious in the United States." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 27(1):105–27.
- Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1991. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43(6):1241–99.
- Dawkins, Richard. 1976. *The Selfish Gene*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Dawkins, Richard. 2006. *The God Delusion*. London: Bantam.
- Edgell, Penny, Joseph Gerteis, and Douglas Hartmann. 2006. "Atheists As 'Other': Moral Boundaries and Cultural Membership in American Society." *American Sociological Review* 71(2):211–34.
- Eller, Jack David. 2010. "Atheism and Secularity in the Arab World." Pp. 113–38 in *Atheism and Secularity, Volume 2*, edited by Phil Zuckerman. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.
- Fazzino, Lori. 2014. "Leaving the Church Behind: Applying a Deconversion Perspective to Evangelical Exit Narratives." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 29(2):249–66.
- Fazzino, Lori, Michael Ian Borer, and Mohammed Abdel Haq. 2014. "The New Moral Entrepreneurs: Atheist Activism as Scripted and Performed Political Deviance." Pp. 168–91 in *The Death and Resurrection of Deviance*, edited by Michael Dellwing, Joseph A. Kotarba, and Nathan W. Pino. London: Palgrave.
- Figert, Anne. 1996. "Science Constructs PMS." in *Women and the Ownership of PMS: The Structuring of a Psychiatric Disorder*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Foucault, Michel. 1990. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume 1*. New York: Vintage.
- Furseth, Inger. 2010. "Atheism, Secularity, and Gender." Pp. 209–27 in *Atheism and Secularity*, edited by Phil Zuckerman. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.
- Futrell, Robert and Pete Simi. 2004. "Free Spaces, Collective Identity, and the Persistence of White Power Activism." *Social Problems* 51(1):16–42.
- Hamlin, Kimberly. 2014. *From Eve to Evolution: Darwin, Science, and Women's Rights in the Gilded Age*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hammer, Joseph, Ryan Cragun, Karen Hwang, and Jesse Smith. 2012. "Forms, Frequency, and Correlates of Perceived Anti-Atheist Discrimination." *Secularism & Nonreligion* 1(1):43–67.
- Harding, Sandra. 1988. "Introduction: Is There a Feminist Method?" Pp. 1–14 in *Feminism and Methodology*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Harding, Sandra. 2004. "Introduction: Standpoint Theory as a Site of Political, Philosophic, and Scientific Debate." Pp. 1–16 in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Harris, Sam. 2006. *Letter to a Christian Nation*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Harris, Sam. 2014. "I'm Not the Sexist Pig You're Looking For." *samharris.org*. Retrieved June 23, 2015 (<http://www.samharris.org/blog/item/im-not-the-sexist-pig-youre-looking-for>).
- Hartsock, Nancy. 1988. "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism." Pp. 157–80 in *Feminism and Methodology*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Hassall, Christopher and Ian Bushfield. 2014. "Increasing Diversity in Emerging Non-Religious Communities." *Secularism & Nonreligion* 3(7):1–9.

- Hastings, Orestes P. and D. Michael Lindsay. 2013. "Rethinking Religious Gender Differences: The Case of Elite Women." *Sociology of Religion* 74(4):1–25.
- Hitchens, Christopher. 2007. *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*. New York: Twelve Books.
- Hunsberger, Bruce and Bruce Altemeyer. 2006. *Atheists: A Groundbreaking Study of America's Nonbelievers*. New York: Prometheus Books.
- Irby, Courtney Ann. 2014. "Moving Beyond Agency: A Review of Gender and Intimate Relationships in Conservative Religions." *Sociology Compass* 8(11):1269–80.
- Jordan-Young, Rebecca and Raffaella Rumiati. 2012. "Hardwired for Sexism? Approaches to Sex/Gender in Neuroscience." *Neuroethics* 5(3):305–15.
- Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. 1977. "Some Effects of Proportions on Group Life: Skewed Sex Ratios and Responses to Token Women." *American Journal of Sociology* 82(5): 965–90.
- Kettell, Steven. 2013. "Faithless : The Politics of New Atheism."
- Keysar, Ariela and Juhem Navarro-Rivera. 2013. "A World of Atheism: Global Demographics." Pp. 553–86 in *The Oxford Handbook of Atheism*, edited by Stephen Bullivant and Michael Ruse. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kirk, Stuart and Herb Kutchins. 1992. "Psychiatrists Construct Homosexuality." in *The Selling of DSM: The Rhetoric of Science and Psychiatry*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.
- LeDrew, Stephen. 2012. "The Evolution of Atheism: Scientific and Humanistic Approaches." *History of the Human Sciences* 25(3):70–87.
- LeDrew, Stephen. 2013a. "Discovering Atheism: Heterogeneity in Trajectories to Atheist Identity and Activism." *Sociology of Religion* 74(4):431–53.
- LeDrew, Stephen. 2013b. "Reply: Toward a Critical Sociology of Atheism: Identity, Politics, Ideology." *Sociology of Religion* 74(4):464–70.
- Lee, Adam. 2014. "Richard Dawkins Has Lost It: Ignorant Sexism Gives Atheists a Bad Name." *The Guardian*. Retrieved June 23, 2015 (<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/18/richard-dawkins-sexist-atheists-bad-name>).
- Lorde, Audre. 1984. *Sister Outsider*. New York: Ten Speed Press.
- Luckmann, Thomas. 1967. *The Invisible Religion: The Problem of Religion in Modern Society*. New York: Macmillan.
- Mahlamäki, Tiina. 2012. "Religion and Atheism from a Gender Perspective." *Approaching Religion* 2(1):58–65.
- Mikołajczak, Małgorzata and Janina Pietrzak. 2014. "Ambivalent Sexism and Religion: Connected Through Values." *Sex Roles* 70(9–10):387–99.
- Miller, Alan S. and John P. Hoffmann. 1995. "Risk and Religion: An Explanation of Gender Differences in Religiosity." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 34(1):63–75.
- Miller, Alan S. and Rodney Stark. 2002. "Gender and Religiousness: Can Socialization Explanations Be Saved?" *American Journal of Sociology* 107(6):1399–1423.

- Miller, Ashley F. 2013. "The Non-Religious Patriarchy: Why Losing Religion Has Not Meant Losing White Male Dominance." *CrossCurrents* 63(2):211–26.
- Pew. 2015. *America's Changing Religious Landscape*. Washington, D.C.
- Pigliucci, Massimo. 2013. "New Atheism and the Scientific Turn in the Atheism Movement." *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 37(1):142–53.
- Pollitt, Katha. 2011. "Regarding Christopher." *The Nation*. Retrieved June 23, 2015 (<http://www.thenation.com/blog/165222/regarding-christopher#>).
- Purdie-Vaughns, Valerie and Richard P. Eibach. 2008. "Intersectional Invisibility: The Distinctive Advantages and Disadvantages of Multiple Subordinate-Group Identities." *Sex Roles* 59(5–6):377–91.
- Quack, Johannes. 2013. "India." Pp. 651–64 in *The Oxford Handbook of Atheism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ray, Darrel W. 2009. *The God Virus: How Religion Infects Our Lives and Culture*. London: IPC Press.
- Read, Jen'nan Ghazal and David Eagle. 2014. "Intersectionality and Identity: An Exploration of Arab American Women." Pp. 75–96 in *Religion and Inequality in America: Research and Theory on Religion's Role in Stratification*, edited by Lisa A. Keister and Darren E. Sherkat. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ridgeway, Cecilia L. 2011. *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ridgeway, Cecilia L. and Shelley J. Correll. 2004. "Unpacking the Gender System: A Theoretical Perspective on Gender Beliefs and Social Relations." *Gender & Society* 18(4):510–31.
- Risman, Barbara J. 2004. "Gender as a Social Structure: Theory Wrestling with Activism." *Gender & Society* 18(4):429–50.
- Roemer, Michael K. 2010. "Atheism and Secularity in Modern Japan." Pp. 23–44 in *Atheism and Secularity, Volume 2*, edited by Phil Zuckerman. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.
- Rokeach, Milton. 1960. *The Open and Closed Mind: Investigations into the Nature of Belief Systems and Personality Systems*. New York: Basic Books.
- Roth, Louise Marie and Jeffrey C. Kroll. 2007. "Risky Business: Assessing Risk Preference Explanations for Gender Differences in Religiosity." *American Sociological Review* 72(2):205–20.
- Schielke, Samuli. 2013. "The Islamic World." Pp. 638–50 in *The Oxford Handbook of Atheism*, edited by Stephen Bullivant and Michael Ruse. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schnabel, Landon. 2015. "Gender Differences and Similarities: How Religious Are American Women and Men?" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 54(3):616–622.
- Schnabel, Landon. 2016. "Gender and Homosexuality Attitudes across American Religious Groups from the 1970s to 2014: Similarity, Distinction, and Adaptation." *Social Science Research* 55(1):31–47.



- Schnabel, Landon. Forthcoming. "Religion and Gender Equality Worldwide: A Country-Level Analysis." *Social Indicators Research* In Press.
- Scott, Joan W. 1986. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." *The American Historical Review* 91(5):1053–75.
- Secular-Woman. 2015. "About Secular Woman." *Secular Woman*. Retrieved June 23, 2015 (<http://www.secularwoman.org/about/>).
- Seidman, Steven. 2010. *The Social Construction of Sexuality*. 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Silvera, Christopher F., Thomas J. Coleman III, Ralph W. Hood Jr., and Jenny M. Holcombe. 2014. "The Six Types of Nonbelief: A Qualitative and Quantitative Study of Type and Narrative." *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 17(10):990–1001.
- Silvestri, Sara. 2011. "Faith Intersections and Muslim Women in the European Microcosm: Notes towards the Study of Non-Organized Islam." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34(7):1230–47.
- Smiet, Katrine. 2015. "Post/secular Truths: Sojourner Truth and the Intersections of Gender, Race and Religion." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 22(1):7–21.
- Smith, Dorothy. 1990. *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.
- Smith, Christopher and Richard Cimino. 2012. "Atheisms Unbound: The Role of the New Media in the Formation of a Secularist Identity." *Secularism and Nonreligion* 1:17–31.
- Stark, Rodney. 2002. "Physiology and Faith: Addressing the 'Universal' Gender Difference in Religious Commitment." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41(3):495–507.
- Stedman, Chris. 2012. *Faithist: How an Atheist Found Common Ground with the Religious*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Stinson, Rebecca D., Kathleen M. Goodman, Charles Bermingham, and Saba R. Ali. 2013. "Do Atheism and Feminism Go Hand-in-Hand? A Qualitative Investigation of Atheist Men's Perspectives about Gender Equality." *Secularism and Nonreligion* 2(1):39–60.
- Streeter, Kurt. 2014. "Ex-Seventh-Day Adventist Pastor Takes a Yearlong Timeout from God." *LA Times*. Retrieved June 23, 2015 (<http://www.latimes.com/local/great-reads/la-me-ci-year-without-god-20141222-story.html#page=1>).
- Swim, Janet K., Kathryn J. Aikin, Wayne S. Hall, and Barbara A. Hunter. 1995. "Sexism and Racism: Old-Fashioned and Modern Prejudices." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 68(2):199–214.
- Trzebiatowska, Marta and Steve Bruce. 2012. *Why Are Women More Religious Than Men?* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- De Vaus, David and Ian McAllister. 1987. "Gender Differences in Religion: A Test of the Structural Location Theory." *American Sociological Review* 52(4):472–81.

- Watson, Rebecca. 2011a. "About Mythbusters, Robot Eyes, Feminism, and Jokes." *Skep-chick Blog*. Retrieved June 23, 2015 (<http://skepchick.org/2011/06/about-mythbusters-robot-eyes-feminism-and-jokes/>).
- Watson, Rebecca. 2011b. "The Privilege Delusion." *Skepchick Blog*. Retrieved June 23, 2015 (<http://skepchick.org/2011/07/the-privilege-delusion/>).
- Watson, Rebecca. 2012. "It Stands to Reason, Sceptics Can Be Sexist Too." *Slate*. Retrieved June 23, 2015 ([http://www.slate.com/articles/double\\_x/doublex/2012/10/sexism\\_in\\_the\\_skeptic\\_community\\_i\\_spoke\\_out\\_then\\_came\\_the\\_rape\\_threats.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/double_x/doublex/2012/10/sexism_in_the_skeptic_community_i_spoke_out_then_came_the_rape_threats.html)).
- Welde, Kris De and Sandra Laursen. 2011. "The Glass Obstacle Course: Informal and Formal Barriers for Women Ph. D. Students in STEM Fields." *International Journal of Gender, Science and Technology* 3(3):571–95.
- West, Candace and Sarah Fenstermaker. 1995. "Doing Difference." *Gender & Society* 9(1):8–37.
- Whyly, Sarah. 2013. "Japan." Pp. 665–82 in *The Oxford Handbook of Atheism*, edited by Stephen Bullivant and Michael Ruse. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wiley, Shaun, Ruhi Srinivasan, Elizabeth Finke, Joseph Firnhaber, and Alyssa Shilinsky. 2013. "Positive Portrayals of Feminist Men Increase Men's Solidarity with Feminists and Collective Action Intentions." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 37(1):61–71.
- Zuckerman, Phil. 2007. "Atheism: Contemporary Numbers and Patterns." Pp. 47–65 in *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*, edited by M. Martin. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Zuckerman, Phil. 2008. *Society without God: What the Least Religious Nations Can Tell Us About Contentment*. New York: NYU Press.