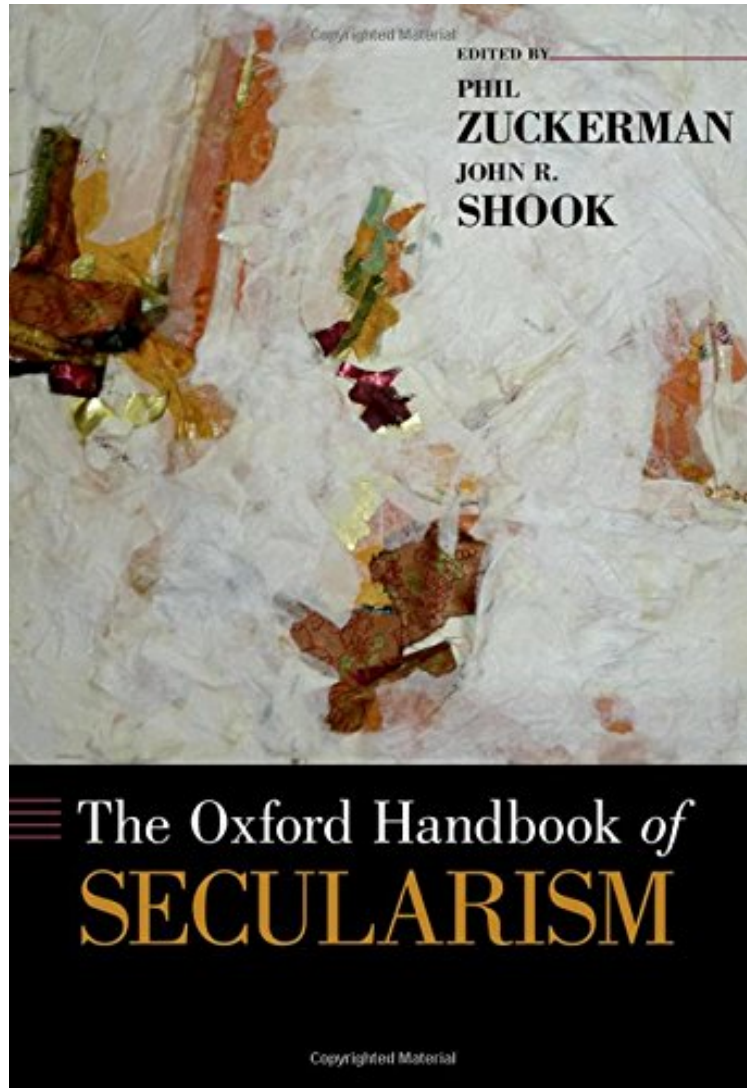


(Library ebook) The Oxford Handbook of Secularism (Oxford Handbooks)

## The Oxford Handbook of Secularism (Oxford Handbooks)

*From Oxford University Press*

*\*Download PDF | ePub | DOC | audiobook | ebooks*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#1837894 in Books 2017-01-25 Original language: English 7.20 x 2.20 x 9.90l, .0 #File Name: 0199988455792 pages | File size: 37.Mb

**From Oxford University Press : The Oxford Handbook of Secularism (Oxford Handbooks)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Oxford Handbook of Secularism (Oxford Handbooks):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. On the Secular, Secularization, and Secularism - Diversity, Overlaps, Incongruencies, and Contradictions By Clandestine Library For Further Reading This handbook contains 43 essays (~10 to 25 pages each) on various aspects and dimensions of the secular. In these pages, one will see discourse on secular, secularization, secularism as concepts in history, sociology, politics, religion, psychology, and anthropology.

One will discover that secular is incredibly diverse and that it is by no means a negative concept about, or relating, to religion. Certainly it is not anti-religion either. It is much more than that. The text shows that there are many overlaps between secular and religion and that both have incognuencies and contradictions as one goes from one culture to another - both concepts are neither monolithic, universal, or with rigid boundaries. What is especially interesting is that some essays document the recent invention of both religion and secular meaning that both concepts are very recent and not available in the ancient, medieval or pre-modern world as we understand it today. Keeping in mind that the term Secularism is barely from the 19th century, not before, and that Christians commonly used of the word secular in the medieval period, one will find that secular is very fluid and that religions and even religious people are quite secular (e.g. the American government is secular and yet most of American are religious by many measures or that globally many people who identify as no religion, still have many religious beliefs). The only quibble is that many essays do waste ink of defining secular repeatedly and giving similar little histories of the concept. Here is a summary of the contents - see Comments for the rest of the essays.

### Introduction: The Study of Secularism

We did not burden any contributor with defining the secular or secularism for the whole volume, nor did we impose any definitions upon contributors, leaving authors to explain key terms from their own perspective and use them for their own purposes. While one can find numerous formulations, articulations, and examples of ideas that could be fairly classified with secularism amidst the assertions of various ancient Indian, Greek, Chinese, and Roman philosophers (Lame 1996; Hecht 2003), the term itself came into its own in the mid-nineteenth century in England. It was the English schoolteacher, lecturer, writer, editor, and founder of the British Secular Union, George Jacob Holyoake (1817-1906), who brought secularism into wide usage in 1851. The word had appeared in print before then, but Holyoake connected it to an affirmative ethical and civic agenda. Those earlier appearances of secularism retained the term's indication of a contrast with churchly or spiritual matters, or even a degradation to worldly and materialistic ways. For example, in 1829 the word secularism appeared in a book authored by Noel Thomas Ellison, a fellow and tutor at Balliol College, Oxford. His book *Protestant Errors and Roman Catholic Truths* (1829) sought the reunion of these two Christian denominations, but each would have to admit its faults; the question is raised whether the Church of England is vulnerable to the charge of secularism and worldly-mindedness (204-205) raised against it. The next notable instance of the use of secularism is in the pages of *The Quarterly Review* of December 1842, where an article catalogues anti-Catholic criticisms, such as its pretensions to exclusive spirituality, and its gross and materializing secularism and similar disparagements (Anon. 1842: 239). As for Holyoake, his story about his own first use of 'secularism' placed it in his magazine, *The Reasoner*. In his book *The Origin and Nature of Secularism* (1896), Holyoake says that the issue dated 10 December 1851 was where he first mentions the word secularism. His memory, or his scanning of back issues, had failed him. In fact, his first use in print of secularism was in an earlier issue of *The Reasoner* dated 25 June 1851 where Holyoake says that he prefers secularism as a better label for the worldview he advocates instead of atheism.' This occurs in his reply to a letter to the editor by a certain Edward Search the pseudonym of an ally in radical politics, W. H. Ashurst, who used Edward Search to insert useful letters for stimulating Holyoake's wise responses. Edward had written to ask for a label to Holyoake's stance besides atheist and suggests secularist instead. Holyoake's reply agrees that secularist seems applicable, and then he says, Secularism is peculiarly the work we have always had in hand, which is larger than Atheism, and includes it. Holyoake adds that his coming lectures about the Martineau and Atkinson Letters will enlarge on these terms. By May 1851 Holyoake had not yet published those lectures, but in an issue from that month he gave his answer to the question of whether Harriet Martineau was an atheist: she was not. Holyoake seemed determined to enlist Martineau in his own secularist ranks, pointing out how she nowhere denied God's existence. The *Letters On the Laws of Man's Nature and Development* by Harriet Martineau and Henry George Atkinson had appeared in that year, scandalizing the literary world. Both writers stated views that evidently sympathized with materialism and unbelief in the course of criticizing religion thoroughly. Martineau was already known for her alliance with Auguste Comte, the advocate of irreligious positivism and materialism in France; she published a translation of Comte's *Positive Philosophy* in 1853. Readers, then and now, would be understandably confused at this point if secularism includes atheism, as Holyoake had said, why would it be important to distance those affirming atheism from secularism? Who are secularists, if not atheists? The partial overlap between secularity and atheism allows each to influence the other, but that degree of commonality also opens opportunities for each to attempt to manipulate the other (see Blankholm's chapter in this volume). Explorations into atheism and secularity can never be exhaustive, but they are highly suggestive (Antony 2007; Zuckerman 2010; Levine 2011; Bullivant and Ruse 2013). The type of freethought proceeding all the way to skepticism about God's existence (Martin 2007; Shook 2010) has had a powerful effect on the course of social history and politics, far out of proportion to the limited numbers of people avowing unbelief or atheism (Harrington 1985; Taylor 2007; Turner 2011; Watson 2014). The vernacular word atheist goes back to the early 1500s and secular was visible soon after, but locating incidences of the word secularist before the 1840s is very difficult. Rare appearances at least indicate that the word had some small degree of common usage. It appears as early as 1799 in a novel titled *Battleridge: An Historical Tale, Founded on Facts* (London, 1799), in which one of the characters exclaims, I am no secularist in renouncing all temptation to assist greedy and unworthy protagonists (54). By the 1840s, the word occasionally appears in print as a synonym for materialist and the like, in the

context of referring to deviations from orthodox thinking. Holyoake was thoroughly familiar with materialism, having advocated that worldview from his early days as a freethinker. As his reminiscences in *The Origin and Nature of Secularism* state, his 1843 prospectus advertising his newspaper *The Movement* declared that Materialism will be advanced as the only sound basis of rational thought and practice (1896: 46). In regards to practice, Holyoake was quite clear about his civic values. The first issue of *The Reasoner* in 1846 announced that it shall be Communistic in Social Economy, Utilitarian in Morals, Republican in Politics, and Anti-Theological in Religion. Issues of *The Reasoner* from 1852 onwards associate secularism with those agendas. (2-3); Holyoake had always repudiated the term atheist because it carried the negative connotation of abandoning morality along with religion, and it offered no affirmative social agenda besides a combative stance against religion. Holyoake's allegiance to rationalism prevented him from knowing whether God exists, a stance he later called agnosticism following Thomas Henry Huxley, lending little incentive to argue for atheism or disparage humble religiosity. By guiding his version of secularism away from unanswerable religious questions and unnecessary atheist proselytizing, he constructed a nontheist alternative to the strategy of aggressive atheism. That combative strategy was already taken up by self-proclaimed atheist and leading organizer Charles Bradlaugh (1833-1891), causing a significant rift dividing the British secularist movement (Royle 1974; Mullen 1987). Holyoake never deviated from his original plan for secularism. The third edition of his *Principles of Secularism* stated that secularism is the study of promoting human welfare by material means; measuring human welfare by the utilitarian rule, and making the service of others a duty of life (1871: 11). In that year the *Articles of Secular Belief*, endorsed by the London Secular Council but substantially composed by Holyoake, appeared in *The Reasoner*. His 1896 book *The Origin and Nature of Secularism* stated similar principles: Secularism is a code of duty pertaining to this life, founded on considerations purely human, and intended mainly for those who find theology indefinite or inadequate, unreliable or unbelievable. Its essential principles are three: (1) The improvement of this life by material means. (2) That science is the available Providence of man. (3) That it is good to do good. Whether there be other good or not, the good of the present life is good, and it is good to seek that good. (41) In the hands of Holyoake, secularism was a worldly approach to life, and life's opportunities and challenges, unencumbered by anything religious. Despite his continual efforts, however, it remained entangled with materialism and egoism on the one side and atheism and anticlericalism on the other. Those entanglements were not going to be papered over, by Holyoake or anyone else; they were built into the way that Christendom had defined secular. The origin of the word secular is Latin: *saeculum* typically meant a fixed period of time, an age, one hundred years or so (Feeney 2008: 145). The *saeculum* was not defined in contrast to any sacred concerns, and had a freestanding usage in Latin. In Christian Latin of medieval times, *saeculum* was a useful term for distinguishing this temporal age of the world from the eternal realm of God. This term was borrowed by the Romance languages and easily entered Middle English. Basically, something secular has more to do with worldly affairs rather than with religious affairs. Secular princes exercised their civil authority (piously, the people hoped), while secular monks provided their priestly services among the people (reverently, the church hierarchy hoped). (4-5); as time went by secular kept the association of temporal or worldliness but it also became used as a contrast to religion, and in doing so, it was and still is difficult to define since it is a multidimensional concept and is used on many contexts from politics to theistic beliefs to law; A considerable amount of definitional disparity is evident. More and more leading scholars are publishing a book with secularism in the title, but unless its author is leading a particular secular approach, it seems harder to find a clear definition of the term within those books' pages (see, e.g., Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2008; Calhoun et al. 2011). The lack of consensus over the meaning or purpose of secularism should no longer be any surprise, given its multiform history and multipurpose potential. Most words, terms, and labels that seek to capture something that is simultaneously social, philosophical, legal, demographic, historical, and cultural are typically difficult to adequately define. After all, consider how difficult it is to define family, religion, environmentalism, art, or fundamentalism in a way satisfactory to all interested parties. (6); growth in interest on the nonreligious; more atheists/agnostics than believers in Netherlands; 6 foundational secular concepts: the secular, social secularity, secularization, personal secularity, secular living, secularism; seculars and secularities are diverse; Any kind of secularism offers a characteristic view with a point that makes sense in its proper context, but no formulaic method to advancing secularism should be abstractly sought in advance. As some chapters expressly warn, secularism is distinct from secularization. Secularization can occur in the course of human history without any explicit or organized efforts to justify or advance it. Secularization does not require lots of secular people, any work of secularists, or the public promotion of secularism, because secular dimensions to social institutions and cultural practices can emerge and develop from the ordinary activities of people in large groups, even large religious groups. Over long periods of time, religious societies have developed vast secular dimensions, such as educational, economic, or political institutions, in the absence of any deliberate attempt to promote secularly or secularization, simply because modified social conditions turned out to arouse and develop those secular features. Governments refraining from requiring a single religion or promoting any religion, for example, emerged occasionally in the course of civilizations and empires, without any political secularists involved at all. It is actually an unusual feature of modern Western civilization and its inheritance from the Greco-Roman civilization that intellectuals have formulated secular justifications for governments and established somewhat secular governments. Although

secularism involves the advocacy for and advancement of secularization in some form or another, secularism is not reducible to a judgment that nonbelief is growing, secularization is expanding, 'secularization follows modernization, secularization follows science, or secularization is inevitable. Religion's admirers can admit some validity to such judgments, if genuinely confirmable, without feeling that they are thereby endorsing secularism. And secularism can be vibrant where nonbelief and secularization is declining, no modernization or science is around, or even where religiosity's expansion seems inevitable. Secularism may (unjustly) gain comfort from sociological or political predictions, but disappointed predictions cannot touch secularism's point. Because secularists agree in their secularity but do not necessarily agree about why religion should be avoided or about specific agendas for resisting religion, the phenomenon of polysecularity has to be recognized. As some chapters explore in more detail, the emergence of secularity in the form of open opposition to religion lacks a uniform manifestation. Across human history and cultures, there have been many phases and modes of secularism operating in resistance to religious ideas and institutions. Historians of narrow scope assume that secularism and modernism are twins born of the same western European mother, but intellectual resistance to religion was not an uncommon struggle across the ancient world and the history of Eastern thought. Six major modes of modern secularism stand out to our Western eyes: political secularism, economic secularism, educational secularism, ethical secularism, scientific secularism, and religious criticism. (11); overview of the contents Part One: Identifying the Secular, Secularity, Secularization, and Secularism 1. Identifying (with) the Secular Conceptual history and genealogies of secular from early Christian times to modern times (from culture to theology to sociology); secularism as a third option between religious and aggressive atheism/antitheism; secularization thesis - that religion would decline with modernity - has two main criticisms: 1) it is empirically false since religion has never vanished or has transformed via privatization and 2) the Eurocentric assumption that societies develop to modernity in a one-way or linear fashion is outdated and false since numerous modernities have vibrant religiosities; secularization thesis is now modified to minor social changes where religion is losing influence; secularization often is used to imply some loss of religious influence in something or to talk about something separate from religion or something other than religion 2. Religious/Non-Religious Demography and Religion vs Science: A Global Perspective The meaning of secularism varies by culture and context - The concept is inextricably linked to language in culture. Surveys in some countries find self-described atheists affirming belief in God, a foreign concept to most Westerners. Because there is no shared understanding of the terms secular and secularism, there is no unambiguous way to measure the size or demographics of the world's secular population This is a knotty problem. The approach of this chapter is to allow people to identify themselves using their personal definitions of secularism, religiosity, and atheism. To accomplish standardization, the main data source for this chapter is the World Values Survey (WVS; 2014), Wave 6, which collected information from 2010 to 2014 in more than 50 countries around the world, including the two most populous, China and India, and interviewed over 85,000 adult respondents. The survey represents approximately two-thirds of the world's adult population. The largest missing nations are Indonesia and Bangladesh. The data were weighted by each country's population size as well as by the internal national distribution of key demographic variables of survey respondents. (40); from the WVS self-identifications (if China is included): 53% are religious, 33% are nonreligious, and 11% are atheists; from the WVS self-identifications (if China is not included): 71% are religious, 22% are nonreligious, and 4.2% are atheists; in Hong Kong 55% identify as atheist while only 25% identify as nonreligious; In most countries around the globe, an atheist would be considered as someone who is not religious (Keysar 2015). This is not the case in Hong Kong, with a majority (55 percent) of atheists and a minority (25 percent) who define themselves as not religious. In fact, Hong Kong stands out globally with its majority of adults who identify as atheists. They are followed by South Korea, with 30 percent of adults declaring themselves as atheists, and China, with 28 percent atheists, according to the WVS in 2010-2014 (Fig. 2.2). The share of atheists is far smaller than the share of not religious in most countries. In South Korea, Slovenia, and Poland, the two groups are similar in size. China and Taiwan are interesting cases with the share of atheists almost half of the share of the not religious segment (28 percent versus 59 percent in China and 18 percent versus 37 percent in Taiwan, respectively). The meanings of an atheist and not a religious person vary by culture and by country. (41); from WVS, women are more religious than men and more men identify as atheists than women; people in highly developed nations (which usually have more atheists and nonreligious) which are only a few countries, have higher schooling compared to less developed countries (which have less atheists and nonreligious) - thus on the WVS education level and religiosity are negatively correlated since the poorer countries drive the trend; On the role of science and technology in making the world a better place, we focus on the two extreme points of views: Is the world is a lot better off' or a lot worse off' because of science and technology? All groups tilt toward approval of science and technology. (48) - similar #s in terms of those who agree with a lot better off: 18% religious person, 19% nonreligious person, 23% atheist; the religious, nonreligious and atheists similarly disagree with the statement We depend too much on science and not enough on faith; level of education was the strongest factor in terms of correlating with supporting science and in terms of religion - The contextual variable, measured by the country's major religion, serves as a proxy for the cultural environment. It is found to be the most important determinant of adults' support of science versus religion. In other words, where one is an atheist matters as much as whether one is an atheist. Countries with both Nones and

Christians Sweden, for example show the strongest support for science. In these countries adults exhibit higher odds of supporting science (odds ratio = 1.73) versus the reference group, which is countries comprising only Nones as the majority. The odds of supporting science are lower in Muslim majority countries (odds ratio = 0.61) and in Buddhist/Hindu majority countries (such as India) (odds ratio = 0.45). In the case of the Swedens of the world, we may be seeing the effect of an unmeasured variable, namely national income. Countries with both Christians and Nones tend to be richer and more technologically advanced than countries comprising only Nones. (52); A second finding is how much one single nation China skews the demographics of secularism. Excluding China, 71 percent of the WVS sample identifies as religious. With China the ratio drops to 53 percent. The lesson is that one cannot discuss global patterns in religion and secularism without specifying whether the data include or exclude China. (53)3.

Secularization and its Consequences

Compilation of secularization paradigm (summarized in Figure 3.1) has components that have affected secularization in an unintentional fashion such as: monotheism centralizing thought and allowing for rationalization and separation of ethics, protestant ethic affecting work and capital gain, individualism, structural differentiation, social differentiation, privatization, social and cultural diversity, etc; retarding factors of secularization; Britain as an example of secularity; removal of space for religion in Britain has resulted in low knowledge of religious beliefs in the population - The consequence of these features is that the common stock of religious knowledge is extremely low. Most British people have no idea at all about even the most basic Christian ideas. That organized religion is now alien to most people in largely secular societies is reinforced by the fact that most of the remaining carriers of religion are themselves literally alien. (67)4.

The Imagined War between Secularism and Religion

Religious militants and activists feel threatened by secularism; some perceive a war between secularism and religion; three ways to think of secularism (the last two are recent in human history): separation of church and state (like Matthew 22:21 about giving to Caesar what pertains to Caesar and giving to God what pertains to God), removal of religious elements from public life, people whose identities and values have nothing to do with religion; Before the rise of the European Enlightenment, religion (in the sense of religious history, ideas, and symbols) was seamlessly a part of the larger culture of societies in Europe and in most regions around the world. In each of these locales typically there would be only one culture, one morality, and one set of public virtues; religious ideas and traditions were part of them. Thus ideas - even the most novel and transformative ideas - would be expressed in religious terms or from a basis in religious history, ethics, and theology. Hence the nineteenth-century economist Adam Smith was trained as a theologian as well as a moral philosopher. The biologist Charles Darwin also had a background in theology. As the historian of religion Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1963) pointed out, the very term religion was seldom used in the pre-Enlightenment era since there was nothing to contrast it with. Prior to the common usage of the word religion to demarcate a separate sphere of activity and ideas, terms such as tradition, faith, and belief were used instead. It was not that religion did not exist, in our sense of that term: there were churches, ritual, doctrines, and such. But they were seamlessly part of culture; there was no concept of a separate worldview that needed a name. There was no need for the word religion. Enlightenment thinking provided a different way of viewing the situation. The public life of societies was essentially one that was untouched by the beliefs, traditions, rituals, and clerical power associated with religious institutions. A whole new concept was created - our notion of religion - which was what one could do privately, on ones day off. It was the flip side of that other way of being in the world, the Enlightenment notion of rational society, which we have come to think of as secularism. These were thought to demarcate two spheres of being. When people were in public life, voting and arguing and creating rules for society, they were secular. When they were at home or in church, they could turn to religion - or choose not to. It was something private and personal. As the nineteenth-century rationalist and psychologist of religion William James once put it, religion was something that humans do in their solitude ([1902] 1982: 31). (76); civil religion and secular religion such as deism in the formation of governments like the US; In many parts of the world the terms secular and secularism have a sinister connotation. As we observed earlier in this chapter, the idea of a dichotomy between religion and secularism is a fairly new invention, a legacy of the eighteenth-century European Enlightenment. The words secularism and religion as two ways of thinking about social reality were crafted from terms used for clerical roles in the Middle Ages: secular clergy (from *secularis*, worldly) were those who worked in the world as parish priests, and religious clergy (from *religare*, to bind) were those who took vows of discipline that confined them to monasteries. This made sense in English and other European languages. But in other parts of the world finding terms for secular- and for religion, for that matter - proved difficult. In my own experience doing field work in India, I floundered to find a term that was equivalent to the English term religion, often ending up with the word the Christian missionaries used, *dharma*, which is better translated as natural law or moral order. There was no simple term for religion. The term secular is even more difficult to translate. In the Sanskrit-based languages of north India, sometimes the term *adharma* was used, but that really means the absence of law or moral order, something akin to anarchy. Other terms also relate to the absence of religion in the sense of moral order. In Arabic, secularism is sometimes translated as *ilmaniya*, which means scientific thinking, and sometimes as *almaniya*, meaning worldliness. But since worldliness can also mean crass materialism, the term in Arabic, as in Hindi, has a negative connotation. Moreover, the cultures of South Asia and the Middle East are ones where religious images and ideas are so firmly a part of the public culture that it is unthinkable that one could

have any form of cultural expression without them. It is likely for this reason that the notion of secularism in India is one of equality, public support for all religions, rather than an opposition to religious culture and an attempt to replace it as one finds in France or in Ataturk's Turkey. Since the translated versions of the word secularism have negative connotations in South Asia and the Middle East, the establishment of new nationalisms in those regions on the basis of the secular notion of the nation-state was thought to be problematic. It is not surprising that, when the going got rough and secular authorities were seen as ineffective or corrupt, criticism would be leveled at the secular basis for this authority. It is also understandable that there would be a rise of new religious politics that provided a religious rather than a secular legitimization for political power. Most religious traditions provide the historical resources for thinking of religion in political terms. The Davidic kingship in ancient Israel, the papal power in Christian history, and the caliphs that ruled over Muslim empires are all testimony to the close interaction between religious and worldly power in the histories of the West. This is also true of Eastern traditions (78-79); secularism is seen as an American/European concept, not a universal one, and globalization has transmitted these western concepts (secularism and religion) to other regions<sup>5</sup>. Political Secularism Religion-Secular binary in politics such as church and state or ecclesiastical and civil authority and its history<sup>6</sup>. Political Secularism and Democracy in Theory and Practice Political secularism is an ideology that says that religion and state must be separate for democracy to flourish; I demonstrate that most democracies do not follow policies toward religion that can be considered consistent with any conception of political secularism. (103) Part Two: Secular Governments<sup>7</sup>. Anglo-American Secular Government A history<sup>8</sup>. Secularism in France A history<sup>9</sup>. Secularism in Turkey A history<sup>10</sup>. Secularization in Israel A history; Israelis by self identification: 47.9% secular, 32.7% traditional, 10.1 % religious, 9.4% ultra-Orthodox; 80% of Jewish Israelis believe in God<sup>11</sup>. Secularism, State Neutrality, and Islam A history Review Cont'd in Comments....

As recent headlines reveal, conflicts and debates around the world increasingly involve secularism. National borders and traditional religions cannot keep people in tidy boxes as political struggles, doctrinal divergences, and demographic trends are sweeping across regions and entire continents. And secularity is increasing in society, with a growing number of people in many regions having no religious affiliation or lacking interest in religion. Simultaneously, there is a resurgence of religious participation in the politics of many countries. How might these diverse phenomena be better understood? Long-reigning theories about the pace of secularization and ideal church-state relations are under invigorated scrutiny by scholars studying secularism with new questions, better data, and fresh perspectives. The Oxford Handbook of Secularism offers a wide-ranging and in-depth examination of this global conversation, bringing together the views of an international collection of prominent experts in their respective fields. This is the essential volume for comprehending the core issues and methodological approaches to the demographics and sociology of secularity; the history and variety of political secularisms; the comparison of constitutional secularisms across many countries from America to Asia; the key problems now convulsing church-state relations; the intersections of liberalism, multiculturalism, and religion; the latest psychological research into secular lives and lifestyles; and the naturalistic and humanistic worldviews available to nonreligious people.

"A worthy and hefty survey of attitudes to and issues concerning secularism in many of its varied forms an excellent resource for scholars and students."--Reading Religion About the Author Phil Zuckerman is Professor of Sociology and Secular Studies at Pitzer College. He edited the two-volume work *Atheism and Secularity* and has authored several books, including *Faith No More* and *Living the Secular Life*. John R. Shook has worked for the Center for Inquiry and the American Humanist Association. He is Research Associate in Philosophy, and Instructor of Science Education, at the University at Buffalo. He is the author of *The God Debates*.