

laïcité (secularization) encouraged state surveillance in the 1980s. For me, they also subtly underline a key theme linking many of the chapters, which may appeal in Quebec's post-Catholic environment—arranging and/or breaking up heterosexual marriages is often a key to cementing charismatic leadership and to creating visions of apocalyptic and/or utopian futures.

Though this collection of essays (like most) is a bit uneven, its focus on a Catholic majority context makes it essential reading for anyone wanting to expand their understanding of new religious movements in North America. As an added bonus, it contextualizes relationships between Quebec and France, which are less frequently discussed in Anglophone scholarship on new religious movements. Students of post-1960s new religious movements will certainly want to pick it up.

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None of the Above: Nonreligious Identity in the US and Canada. By Joel Thiessen and Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme. New York University Press, 2020. 272 pages. \$89.00 cloth; \$30.00 paper; ebook available.

The accelerating growth of the demographic known as “nones”—that is, individuals claiming no religious affiliation—has become a hot topic in Religious Studies over the last decade. Among numerous examples that can be cited, books such as Linda A. Mercadante's *Belief Without Borders* (2014) and Elizabeth Drescher's *Choosing our Religion* (2016) have sought to understand the origins and nuances of this emerging worldview. Like these works, Joel Thiessen and Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme's *None of the Above* uses a combination of data from large-scale social scientific surveys and qualitative interviews for the same purpose, but with the added goal of comparing the lives of nones in the United States with those in Canada. Given that “some believe that currents in Canada may foreshadow what will happen in the United States” (2), the authors argue that such comparative research is long overdue.

Overall, the authors' findings in *None of the Above*, while very interesting, are for the most part unsurprising. Due to a variety of historical factors, including the absence of a large Evangelical subculture, the decline of religious commitment began earlier in Canada than the United States, although the numbers of nones as a percentage of each country's population has converged in the last five years. In fact, despite the differing cultural and political histories of both countries, there seem to be more similarities than differences when it comes to the rise of the nones. For example, while “the proportions of religious nones has

grown over time across every region in the United States and Canada [...], the regions with the highest and lowest proportions of religious nones have remained constant,” with the highest found in the Western United States and British Columbia, and the lowest in the American Midwest and South, and Quebec and the Maritime Provinces (179). In both countries, it is easier to be an atheist, an agnostic, or simply unconcerned with religion altogether in those regions with historically high proportions of nones, while in those with lower proportions, most nones identify as “spiritual but not religious” due perhaps to the greater religiosity of their local environment (180). In both countries, too, nones are less socially engaged, and do less charitable giving or volunteer work. Finally, the social forces driving the rise of the nones are roughly the same in both countries, especially “disaffiliation due to choice during one’s teen years” because of “weak religious socialization” (32) in an increasing number of households, or in the case of some families, “irreligious socialization,” which has led to the phenomenon of “cradle nones” (37).

On the other hand, given the more liberal bent of Canadian society in general, most Canadian nones have a greater tendency to be left leaning than their American counterparts when it comes to social issues such as same-sex marriage and the environment. Moreover, due to Canada’s longer promotion of multiculturalism, Canadian nones are less likely to become strongly polarized against a perceived religious other such as has happened with U.S. nones who tend to define themselves over against conservative Evangelicals. At the same time, Canadian nones express less tolerance for religious minorities that they perceive as exclusivist such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Mormons, and Muslims. In the end, despite these differences, the authors conclude that the data strongly suggests that the numbers of nones are destined to grow in both the United States and Canada for the foreseeable future, although given the two countries’ traditions of *laissez-faire* attitudes when it comes to religion, neither will reach European levels of secularization any time soon, especially the United States with its still vibrant, albeit shrinking, Evangelical subculture.

Perhaps the greatest strength of *None of the Above* is that it lays out a compelling case for more comparative research on waning religious belief in North America. Indeed, one of the frustrations of the book is the number of times the authors have to admit that “quality data” is lacking for certain aspects of Canadian nones (e.g. 55), and that their comparison of U.S. and Canadian datasets was hampered by a lack of uniformity in the survey instruments. In light of these challenges, one hopes that Thiessen and Wilkins-Laflamme’s work will serve as a catalyst for more research in this area and the generation of improved comparative data. *None of the Above* will be of most interest to scholars working on issues related to secularization of the United States and Canada. Given

its clearly explained methodology, useful appendices, and extensive up-to-date bibliography, it would also be a good book for graduate seminars on the sociology of religion.

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Spirituality without God: A Global History of Thought and Practice. By Peter Heehs. Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. 296 pages. £67.50 cloth; £21.59 paper; ebook available.

Peter Heehs' *Spirituality without God* seeks to demonstrate that "[t]he search for spiritual wisdom unfettered by the gods goes back thousands of years" (4) and that "it is only in the modern West that the idea of godless religion is new" (26). The motive in writing this book is frankly ideological. Heehs contends that conflicting god concepts inevitably cause theistic believers to become violent. He thus wishes to replace theistic religions with "spiritual ideas and practices that are not dependent on irreconcilable ideas about the gods" (4). By providing a global pedigree for nontheistic spirituality, Heehs evidently hopes to make godless traditions more plausible and palatable to western audiences; the more people who convert to them, he believes, the lower religious tensions will be in the world. As problematic and debatable as these goals might be, *Spirituality without God* is for the most part a fairly straightforward history of the philosophy of religion, much along the lines of Ninian Smart's *World Philosophies* (1999), but with nontheistic traditions highlighted.

Heehs' introductory chapter deals with a series of contemporary concepts and issues through which the rest of the book is refracted: the inadequacy of the English word religion when applied beyond the West; the modern dichotomy between organized religion and individualistic spirituality; the failure of western philosophical arguments for the existence of God; and the challenge of scientific materialism. Moreover, in keeping with his agenda, Heehs argues for the inherent superiority of nontheistic spiritualities, especially those that deny the reality of the supernatural in favor of something he vaguely calls "a superhuman order of being" (7). Chapter 2 traces the development of religion from Neolithic magic and polytheism through the philosophical reorientations of the Axial Age, to the rise of monotheism in Ancient Judaism. Most of the chapter focuses on the nontheistic aspects of such traditions as Jainism, Confucianism, and pre-Socratic philosophy, while the next chapter charts the development of such traditions into the Common Era. Chapter 4, "The Triumph of Theism," emphasizes the spread of devotion to personal gods in the post-Axial Age period, which led to the decline of nontheistic thinking in India, China, and the West. The core