Zehavit Gross · Lynn Davies
Al-Khansaa Diab *Editors*

Gender, Religion and Education in a Chaotic Postmodern World

Springer

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Zehavit Gross • Lynn Davies • Al-Khansaa Diab
Editors

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Chapter 1
Introduction: Challenging Patriarchy: New Advances in Researching Religious Feminism and Religious Education

Zehavit Gross

The aim of this unique book is to enhance interdisciplinary discourse on the complex interrelations between gender, religion, and education in today's world. The immense changes in terms of globalization and migration of peoples have had a profound effect on cultures and identities. Does this result in shifts in religious identities for women and men in different contexts; can such shifts be viewed as beneficial, negative, or insufficient; or does the social change take the direction of new conservatism or fundamentalism? Related to these questions is the role of education in any change.

This volume primarily explores gender through the perspective of women, although there are also analyses of masculinities and shifts in, or reassertions of, patriarchy. This book challenges assumptions about women in religion and the role of women in theology. There is often emphasis on female subordination within a religion, which raises questions of why women remain religious adherents and what can be empowering. Literature in the social sciences and humanities have expanded our understanding of women's involvement in almost every aspect of life, yet the combined religious/educational aspect is still an understudied and often under-theorized field of research. How people experience their religious identity in a new context or country is also a theme that calls for more complex treatment today. This book is meant to fill these gaps.

This book engages with the pivotal transformations that studies of gender, religion, and education have undergone in recent years. It deals with the complexity of the ties between gender, religion, and education and the internal complexity of each of those components. It shows that today we should not talk about gender, but genders; not about a religious identity, but religious identities; and not about education, but educations. The pluralization process, that is, the transition from one to many of these three concepts, does not indicate a quantitative transition but rather a qualitative-substantive change in the inner patterns and dynamics that have taken place in all three. The interconnection

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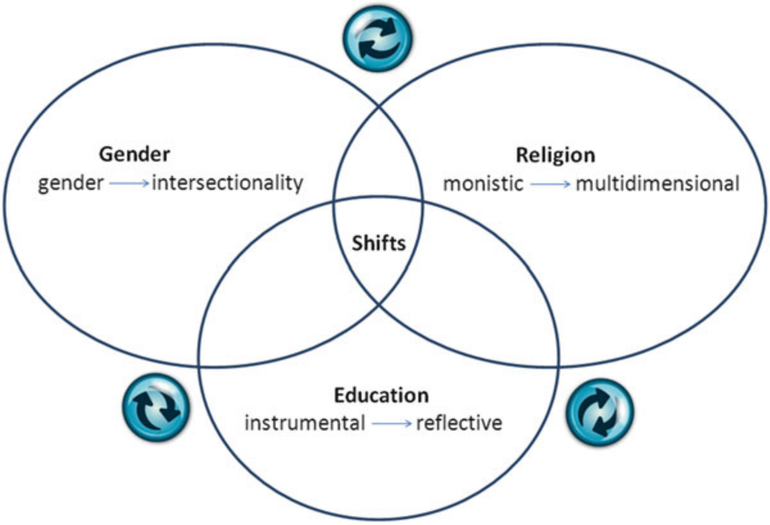
Gender
gender → intersectionality
Religion
monistic → multidimensional
Shifts
Education
instrumental → reflective

Fig. 1.1 The interrelationships between gender, religion, and education

between them creates a new idiosyncratic nature that requires a different form of research and observation than what we are accustomed to.

Gender studies have undergone a material change, from gender to intersectionality. Research into religiosity has gone through far-reaching changes from the monotheist, one-dimensional approach, to a multidimensional approach that allows us to engage with definitional-religious nuances that were not previously addressed. The sphere of pedagogy and education has also undergone a significant change, from functional structured instrumental pedagogy to reflective pedagogy. These changes are illustrated in Fig. 1.1.

The three changes can be heard in the distinctive voices of religious women who live between tradition and modernity. Most of those women, as the various sections of this book show, are not only modern women or only religious women but modern religious women coping bravely with – and within – a complex liminal reality that creates a branched and complex space which Homi Bhabha (1990) called the “third space.” Bhabha views the East as a cultural meeting-point, a space where conqueror and conquered influence and are mutually influenced, and imitate each other. This is a space where symbols and concepts are re-disciplined, a space where a complex and nonhomogeneous new reality exists, with no absolute dichotomy between conqueror and conquered.

Generally speaking, religious feminists have rarely been mentioned in the feminist literature, as perhaps religious feminism is considered an oxymoron. When Redfern and Aune (2010) asked feminists to describe their spiritual or religious views, two-thirds said they were agnostic, atheist, or had no particular spirituality (p. 160). Other studies on religiosity also found that women with feminist attitudes defined themselves as less religious (Feltey and Poloma 1991). Redfern and Aune

(2010) explain that religious women "apparently chose patriarchy over liberation" (p. 155). From this point of view, this book is an important contribution to the literature and to the interdisciplinary discourse on religious women and feminism.

However, it should be noted that the religious cultural arena has become more welcome and open to women. According to Redfern and Aune, religious reformists are more liberal and think that "scriptures about women's and men's spiritual equality are neglected" (2010, p. 155). Women today have more access to top positions within the religious hierarchy. Women have served as rabbis in reform Jewish congregations since 1972. Since 1999, Orthodox Jewish women have been allowed to study to serve as *halakhic* consultants, a leadership position in the religious community. Since 1992, the Church of England has accepted women to serve as priests and since 2008, even as bishops – although there is continuing debate about this and resistance from some. In India and the United States, there are female Hindu gurus. And in 2005, the first Sunni Muslim woman received permission to lead a mixed group of Friday prayers (Redfern and Aune 2010, p. 159). Yet women are still excluded from top leadership positions in Roman Catholicism, Orthodox Judaism, and Islam, as they do not allow female priests, rabbis, or imams (ibid.).

Women belonging to different religions relate to the dress they are required to wear as a discursive space enabling the construction of a relationship both with the patriarchy and among themselves. Turner (1975), following Levi-Strauss (1973), views the body not only as a material organism but also as a metaphor and considers structuring the body through clothing as a practice signifying the boundary between the self and the other. He describes the body as an external surface of representations and interpretations and as an internal environment of constructions and deterministic definitions. As such, it does not result from free choice and the lack of restrictions but simultaneously constitutes a personal and social, ideological, and political act. The way in which modern religious women structure their physical visibility is, according to their testimony as presented in this book's various chapters, the product of the third intercultural space, which, as Bhabha indicates, has the potential to become a space of negotiation and dialogue, rather than only of resistance and struggle. A close reading of the chapters shows how religious women in different religions choose to dress and how their discourse structures the way they perceive and construct reality (see chapters by Katie Sanford Gaebel, Ina Ter Avest, Mary Ann Maslak, and Saeeda Shah in this book).

Foucault (1980) views society as a system based on power relationships, which shape not only the social materialities arising from it but also shape the individual. We are all objects of social power relations (regardless of gender differences) and act in compliance with discursive conventions. The body and clothing have the same social roles – relating to everyday life and to special dates and events. Religious women project messages through their clothing and correspond with the social contexts in which they operate and that they shape (see Saeeda Shah and Heidi Mirza). In all religions, the principal question facing religious women is how to transform measures intended to suppress their freedom into power with which, in Kandiyoti's (1988) phrase, they can "bargain with the patriarchy" and shape it according to their own needs but without revealing their true motives (see also Zehavit Gross in this book). Bargaining efforts are conducted in three parallel fields – gender, religion, and education. The changes that these fields have undergone, as described in this book, allow women a wider space for maneuver and control, a space they aim to conquer – without the patriarchy discovering their "plot" – and they are helped by the extraordinary wealth at their disposal in the new modern world they inhabit.

Five major revolutions have influenced the sweeping changes in the world of religious women and impacted on their education: the industrial revolution – chiefly urbanization, the national revolution, the revolution of the enlightenment, the secularization revolution, and most recently, the digital revolution and globalization. A key change that has occurred as a result of these revolutions is the changing place and power of the individual in society, which has resulted in the weakening of traditional characteristics (see also Kate Engebretson in this book). The chief question that religious women confront is how to integrate into the new structure of economic, political, and social opportunities that modernity provides, without losing the religious and cultural particularist uniqueness of each religion. In all religions, girls' education is perceived as a means for preserving or for changing society; thus, the different ways in which religious and gendered definitions are modified pose a significant challenge to the educational system (see also the chapters in this book by Michael Maher, Tansin Benn & Yousra Al Sinani, Reva Joshee & Karne Sihra, and Emma Tomalin and Caroline Starkey). In many cases, social changes that began as the outcome of urbanization, mobility, modernization, and globalization did not damage the solid conservative foundations, but the latter underwent processes of transformation, adaptation, and reinterpretation of the complex reality. This is because women seek and find ways and means to deal with their status, within and outside the patriarchal cultural system, using and recruiting it for their benefit (see also Lauren Ila Jones, Filomena Critelli, and Mary Ann Maslak in this book). Abu-Rabia-Queder and Weiner-Levy (2010) indicate that middle- and high-class women in Saudi Arabia exploit social networks to exercise their independence and power, for example, through their ability to influence their daughters' marriages.

Religious women are in fact subordinated to the system of norms and laws restricting them, but they also possess empowerment channels through which they redesign their cultural freedom by negotiation (see also in this book the chapters by Noriko Kawahashi, Kayoko Komatsu & Masako Kuroki and by Tutin Aryanti). Their ability to compete successfully depends on their awareness of the restrictions imposed on them and their willingness to fight them so as to put in place fairer social relationships (see also the chapters by Lynn Davies and Michael Apple in this book). But women must be equally aware that the price of breaking boundaries and crossing lines frequently leads to their exclusion from the societal circle. Women consequently must "bargain"; in other words, they must attempt to influence their status by collaborating with the existing social structure and finding ways acceptable to society for expressing their opposition and striving for change (see chapters by Zehavit Gross, Tamar Ross, and Khansaa Diab & Ruba Daas). Religious women therefore adopt practices of resistance that lead to social or religious change (as Ross explains in her chapter) without threatening men or affecting their own image as respectable women subordinated to male power (see Abu-Rabia-Queder and Weiner-Levy 2010 and the chapter by Naomi Weiner-Levy in this book).

One of the best examples is religious women's growing entry into higher education. Education was formerly perceived as a major means of secularization, emancipation, and social mobility and was thus limited to men. The men deliberately excluded religious women from education to prevent their development, which was considered as jeopardizing the social order. Women perceive education as a means to personal development and to economic, intellectual, and social independence. Studies show that many traditional and religious societies are now allowing religious women to study in institutions of higher education, after women were able to demonstrate to men how learning is likely to advance men. Orthodox Jewish women have gained access to higher education by arguing that they can obtain a better livelihood for their families, which allows their husbands to study Torah in a yeshiva and fulfill the destiny of religious scholars who devote their entire lives to studying the Torah. Religious Muslim women embark on higher education to achieve national goals.

It is not coincidental that the complexity in the interrelationships between gender, religion, and education is situated within a chaotic postmodern arena. Postmodernism denotes that everything that exists, especially knowledge, is defined as a designated entity or reality and is socially and culturally constructed and subject to change. The absence of stability is inherent in the definition of postmodernity, which ignores and denies absolute truth and sanctifies only the subjective interpretation of each individual. Sharp binary classifications, such as woman vs. man, religious vs. secular, traditional vs. modern pedagogy, are irrelevant, as new dimensions are formulated and fluidity becomes the main category to describe the constructive/deconstructive processes and transformations of social hierarchies and orders within each of those constructs.

Recent Changes in Research on Religious Women

There is a discernible and material difference between research conducted on religious women in the past and in more recent studies, and this is reflected in this book as well. For the most part, early studies that investigated religious women yielded results that were patently one-dimensional, essentialist, and chauvinist. For example, for many years, studies found that women were more religious than men – a finding that became an almost indisputable fact. In 2002, Beit-Hallahmi published an article, based on a meta-analysis of numerous research studies conducted over the past century, which attempted to explain this finding (Beit-Hallahmi 2002). In his opinion, women are more religious than men for three reasons: (1) women possess more basic traits that are related to religion – they are more emotional, less educated, and have a passive personality. Beit-Hallahmi argues that since religious women are typified by these attributes, this creates an opportunity for a theoretical and applied mutual affinity between the fundamental qualities that characterize women and religiosity. (2) The status of women is inferior to that of men, and they are oppressed by them. Research has shown that most people of lower social status tend to find psychological consolation for their inferiority in religion. In a circular manner, thus, women are more religious than men since they find refuge and salvation in religion, which in turn justifies their inferiority. (3) Religious education is more successful among girls than boys because of the basic trait of conformity that characterizes girls. Girls tend to accept and internalize religious education, develop less opposition toward it than do boys, and reproduce the patterns of religious socialization that they undergo.

From the perspective of feminist research, there is no doubt that these research results reflect an essentialist philosophical perception, which holds that women and men have substantively different character and nature. There are, therefore, traits that characterize men and others that typify women. Feminist theory disputes this approach and argues that, apart from physical and biological differences, different sexual roles and the ability to give birth, all the differences between men and women – in thinking, feeling, and behavior – are acquired during the socialization process, to fill different roles in society. They constitute a major source of fostering stereotypes and prejudice.

These research findings exemplify and express the empirical realization of the theoretical term coined by West and Zimmerman “doing gender,” that is, maintaining that the differences between the sexes is substantively as natural as breathing. “Doing gender” is composed of nonnatural differences between the sexes that are presented as natural differences (West and Zimmerman 1987). Role division occurs because society uses the differences to allocate responsibilities to different components of the population. In order to advance society, people are appointed to specific roles following sorting by gender and age. This is how individuals learn what is expected of them, through learning, imitation, and coercion: they react in the manner expected of them and preserve the gendered order (Lorber 1994).

The division is so powerful, to the extent that it generates physical and mental changes in the biological evolution of the group (Lorber 1994) and in the entire social structure (Starr Sered 2000). That is why comprehensive reference to the gender perspective is not limited to the basic level of “man” and “woman” but includes all existential categories that play a role in structuring gender (Ferree et al. 2000).

Although society designs gender in a range of social situations (West and Zimmerman 1987), research has tried to examine how the individual brings it to expression in practice, since the way in which the individual behaves in those situations is what reinforces or weakens the gender definition (Lorber 1994). Over the past few years, however, a visible change has occurred in research on religious women, and the rigid position of “doing gender” is also displaying a new approach, chiefly focused on challenging the existing order. In the new approach, many studies now engage with the ways in which women soften and reshape the boundaries of their cultural freedom (Abu-Rabia-Queder and Weiner-Levy 2010). Kandiyoti’s (1988) term “bargaining with patriarchy” relates to women’s ability to cope with the constraints of patriarchal society, while generating profits. Different forms of patriarchy present women with distinct “rules of the game” and call for different strategies to maximize security and optimize life options with varying potential for active or passive resistance in the face of oppression. Religious women are applying strategies of dynamic behavior within the numerous power structures that they face (the state, patriarchy, family, education, and identity).

Sharabi (1988) argues that in recent years, there have been no changes in the infrastructures of the patriarchal order in religious society – on the contrary, they have become rooted and shored up in modern forms. This is the context in which the concept of neo-patriarchalism developed (Moghadam 1993), that is, a modern patriarchalism that is taking shape between traditionalism and modernity. In the most general sense, one can define a patriarchy as institutionalized male dominance (Sa’ar 2006). Apart from this, researchers try to reveal the components of oppression concealed behind the social arrangements that aspire to efficiency and objectivity and behind scientific rationality and technologies. Their hope is to enlist emancipatory awareness and engender opposition to oppression.

Women resisted oppression and demanded far-reaching changes and the opening up of new opportunities in education, employment, and political participation. It transpired, however, that these trajectories could not change religious women’s status or lead traditional religious societies toward modernization. Even if they did undergo modernization processes, these were not accompanied by a deep process of cultural modernization. Women engaged in attempts to decode, hone, and highlight the boundaries of the permissible and prohibited in terms of religion and the religious education they received. The ways with which women could cope with patriarchalism, the values of tradition and religion, and the boundaries of the permissible depend on the multiple contexts within which women live. One can identify religious women who are struggling for education, employment, and political participation, trying to break down cultural and other barriers, and are crystallizing combat strategies in the attempt to maintain the core values of society and religion. In turn, the new spaces opening up to women through education and employment are creating fresh challenges. Some women are empowered by these innovations and grow toward new horizons and innovation, while for other women, innovation causes unbearable stress and loss.

In order to better understand the complexity of this issue, the shifts that have occurred in disciplinary terms in the areas of gender, religion, and education are described below.

From Gender to Intersectionality

The feminist revolution created a clear distinction between an individual’s sexual identity, that is, the given and ostensibly fixed biological identity, according to which a person can be either male or female and an individual’s gender, which refers to femininity or masculinity as a cultural-social product. While sex is a biological category that indicates physiological differences between women and men, gender is a political-social category that addresses the influences of culture and the environment and how they construct inequality, discrimination, and oppression.

The question of the periodization of the feminist revolution is still largely unexplored in the literature (Shepard and Walker 2009), yet there is agreement that the feminist revolution experienced three distinct waves. The first wave, termed liberal feminism, focused principally on achieving equality between women and men and engaged chiefly with discrimination against women. The second wave, radical feminism, focused on exposing the sources and construction of women's oppression. The third wave was grounded in postcolonialist and poststructural theories and attacked the second wave for having defined the concept of "gender" universally, with a focus on the experience of middle- and upper-class white women but failed to allow for the experience of black women. Black women found themselves confronting an existential definitional dilemma – were they oppressed because they were women or because they were black? Thus, the notion of intersectionality was created to tackle the question of integrating the two categories. The transition from gender to intersectionality reflects a qualitative shift – from a discussion of a single category to a more complex discussion of several categories – and the internal links generated between them, chiefly between gender and class. This complex perspective makes it possible to contain women's experiences that had previously been excluded, since there was no language that could accommodate them.

In the religious arena, religious feminism engaged with canonic religious texts. Initially, a struggle was waged to allow women to study canonic religious texts that were the exclusive domain of men. In the next stage, religious-feminist discourse changed form and became radical: among others, this included a systematic attempt to debate the religious origins of female oppression and how religious tools could be applied to deal with it. Alongside that trend, a fledgling religious literature started developing, which attempted to cope with the challenge of radical feminism in a religious context (see in this book the chapter by Tamar Ross). Throughout history, the culture's canonic texts were written by men and for men. The allegedly "objective" religious truth that was put forward in religious literature represented the male perspective and the life experience of the men who shaped the text, the history, and the collective memory of the public arena: this had a profound impact on the political and legal sphere. Radical religious feminism, therefore, tried to disclose those oppressive sources and particularly their modes of operation.

It is now possible to identify in the literature the first signs of coping with an intersectional nature that discusses the complex dual identity of women who are both religious and feminists and women with triple marginality – women, religious, and black (or non-Western) (see the chapters by Terence Lovat, Ibtihal Samarayi & Belinda Green and also by Naomi Wiener-Levy in this book). Throughout this book, we can see that the majority of religious women – in all religions – attempt to escape the cycle of patriarchal discourse and to seek a more liberal feminist discourse. Some even dare to try and participate in radical feminist discourse. Those participating in either pattern of discourse – liberal and radical – experience a similar need to fight, to participate passively or actively in the struggle for more egalitarian thinking, and for women's participation in the religious world. This enables them to extricate themselves, their environment, and their cultural religious context from essentialist patterns of thinking toward constructivist thinking patterns that will allow women to construct a distinctive voice within and outside of the structure of the various religious establishments to which they belong. The religious education systems, in which religious women are educated in different countries, sometimes break and sometimes advance these processes, but it is interesting to observe that the emancipation processes that religious women experience worldwide – in spite of the differences between them – are structurally similar.

From a Monistic Approach to Religion to a Pluralistic Approach

In research in the past, individuals were identified, or identified themselves, as either religious or secular. This vague definition stems from the fact that studies of religiosity and secularity (Ben Meir and Kedem 1979; Levy et al. 2004) related primarily to the religious-behavioral component when placing subjects along the religious-secular scale. For the most part, they examined behavioral-ritual elements and accordingly attached social labels to individuals who customarily manifested the relevant overt public behaviors (Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle 1997), even though such behaviors often did not reflect their subjective, self-defined internal feelings regarding their religiosity or secularity. Religious and secular definitions were thus dichotomous and diffusive and could not reflect the complex realities of life. There was a gap between the public and the subjective definition of the individual.

Many researchers have investigated religious orientation, dimensions, and motivation. Glock and Stark (1965) identified five dimensions of religiosity: experiential, ritualistic, ideological, intellectual, and consequential. Following that typology, Lenski (1961) identified four different ways in which religiosity might be expressed: associational, communal, doctrinal, and devotional. Cornwall et al. (1986) identify six dimensions of religiosity based on the understanding that religious behavior has at least three components: knowing (cognition in the mind), feeling (affect to the spirit), and doing (behavior of the body). Other researchers investigated the motivational aspect of the religiousness of the individual. Adorno et al. (1950) distinguished between external and internal religiosity. Wilson (1960) developed a questionnaire to measure the extrinsic mode of religiosity, and Feagin (1964) constructed the intrinsic scale of religiosity. The Religious Orientation Scale was constructed in 1967 by Allport and Ross (1967), who distinguish between the intrinsic religious person who lives his religiosity and the extrinsic individual who uses it. Wulff (1997) claims that in a secularized sociocultural context, religion can be positioned in a two-dimensional space: the vertical axis that indicates the degree to which objects of religious interest are granted participation in a transcendent reality and the horizontal axis which specifies whether religion is interpreted literally or symbolically. Wulff argues that these two dimensions define four quadrants: literal affirmation, literal disaffirmation, reductive interpretation, and restorative interpretation

(1997, pp. 634–635). All these measures attempted to explore religiosity beyond church attendance. Whereas the phenomenological aspect was covered by these early scales, the state of mind of the religious person, namely, how the individual constructs his identity, was lacking. The methodology lagged far behind the reality, which is much more complex and diverse. The instruments were unidimensional and simplistic and could not describe the complex holistic reality.

In recent years, new measurements have been constructed that incorporate cognitive, behavioral, and social dimensions (Chumbler 1996; Ellison 1991; Ellison et al. 1989. However, following the zeitgeist of multiple and fluid modernity, privatization, and individuation, there is still a need for a more multidimensional measurement (Gross 2011; Tirri and Quinn 2010) that includes subjective and individual dimensions to identify the complex situation of human beings in the modern era and thus enlarge on the scholarship of religiosity and secularity. It seems that the main question that was lacking in the research was not the nature of religiosity or how religious a person is but rather how a person's religiosity is constructed. Religiosity is constructed from multiple constituents; identifying these constituents can help to define both religiosity and secularism. Gross (2012) suggested a theoretical typology with eight new definitions of religiosity and secularity (e.g., conceptual religiosity, inherited religiosity, etc.) that might better explain how people construct their religiousness. The definitions show that the concepts "religious" and "secular" are too comprehensive to fully describe the complexity of an individual's self- and public definition in a modern, pluralistic world.

From an Instrumental to a Reflective Approach to Education

Educational endeavors reflect a specific educational paradigm. John Dewey (1938) distinguished between the traditional educational paradigm and what he termed the progressive paradigm – a fundamental condition for creating a democratic society. He held that modern education is characterized by the paedocentric approach, with students and their needs at the center, in comparison with traditional education that focuses on learning contents and on teachers. Teaching in the latter approach is face-to-face, and teachers are considered the chief source of knowledge: it is their function to transmit knowledge (as opposed to the modern approach where teachers generate knowledge in their students). Traditional teaching inculcates fixed contents determined by the educational authority, while the modern approach is integrative, changing to match circumstances and needs. Traditional teaching methods are detached from the contexts of local and international communities. In the modern paradigm, teaching is adapted individually to students' needs and typified by localization and globalization that take into account local and international needs.

Varying descriptions of the teacher's role derive from different epistemological paradigms and approaches to the transmission of knowledge. Pedagogical literature distinguishes between instrumental teachers, who consider their principal function to be the transmission of knowledge (Keiny 1993, 1998), and reflective teachers, who examine knowledge critically and inquisitively, thereby conceptualizing practical knowledge and transforming it into theories of action (Schon 1987, 1988;

Zeichner 1994). Accordingly, two major teaching modes can found in religious education: instrumental and reflective. Reflection deals primarily with meaning-making based on experience (Dewey 1933). Meaning-making is also one of the essences of religious education (Tirri et al. 2006).

Religious education relates to systematic instruction concerning a specific faith(s) or practices that are categorized as religious. It encompasses a multitude of concepts, institutional settings, and national heritages. Religious education can relate to education *into* religion, education *about* religion, or education *from* religion (Schreiner 2002, p 86). Education *into* religion brings the pupil into one specific faith tradition. In education *about* religion, the pupil learns what religion stands for to believers of a particular faith. In education *from* religion, pupils are expected to consider different answers to major moral and religious questions in order to develop their own views. This distinction actually highlights the dominant strategies of religious education.

Religious education (in terms of education into a religion) prepares individuals to be aware of God at all times, to believe in God's existence, to sense God's sublime presence, and to act in accordance with divine commandments and imperatives (Gross 2010). According to the instrumental approach, the school curriculum is a finished product that includes a structured collection of educational activities. It is the teacher's task to develop a variety of teaching methods and skills with the objective of elevating the quantity and quality of the religious product (i.e., the extent of religious observance among students) and their "religious consumption" (after Willis 2003, who coined the term "cultural consumption"). Teachers who employ the instrumental approach function according to the basic assumption that the corpus of religious knowledge they are charged with imparting to their students is objective, structured, and organized. Consequently, the learning process involves the passive reception of messages, and the teacher's role is the systematic transmission of the requisite knowledge.

The reflective approach, in contrast, maintains that the religious education curriculum is neither fixed nor predictable but is part of a dynamic process of interaction between the learner and knowledge. It perceives the goal of teaching as the structuring of religious socialization to yield proactive learners whose religious commitment is part of their personal structuring and the result of the internalization of religious knowledge. Such knowledge emerges and evolves as a result of interaction with the environment and constitutes an integral part of cognition (see Rogoff 2003). Accordingly, the learning process entails the active structuring of religious knowledge and its implications on religious praxis. The teacher's role is to foster students' development as independent learners who structure and "own" their religious knowledge in keeping with their individual intellectual tendencies, diverse motivations and styles of learning, and other personal traits (Gutierrez and Rogoff 2003). Reflective teachers learn to respond to students' differential learning needs, account for the variance in their individual points of entry into the learning process, and design teaching methods to supply anchors and mediation that ensure their progress (McEntee et al. 2003).

In doctrinal religious education, teaching is primarily based on the traditional, instrumental approach. Recently, however, with the growing influence of the progressive approach and particularly the impact of the critical stream in education, there is a stronger tendency to implement reflective approaches rather than instrumental ones because they are considered more effective for empowering the religious dimension and religious thinking among students, both psychologically and didactically. They are also capable of providing responses when dealing with religiosity in a complex multidimensional world where there are no simple answers. Teachers are beginning to consider the reflective approach, hoping to apply more critical methods. The growth of multi-faith, non-doctrinal religious education in many plural countries has also been influential. Ter Avest's chapter shows the impact of multireligious education in a diverse society but also reveals how this impact may be different for males and females. Ziebertz (2005) suggests three models of religious education that are relevant to the discussion : the *mono-religious model* that claims that there is one true religion on earth whose basic truths were adopted and internalized by other religions without their being aware of it. It recognizes the existence of other monistic religions, asserting that each must maintain constant interaction with the others for a specific purpose. Unlike mono-religiosity, whose key objective is attainment of the authentic ultimate "religious truth" of the "one true faith," the *multireligious approach* aims at obtaining cultural information about believers' religious experiences, emotions, and behavior for the purposes of comparison or contrast, seeking a better understanding of the factors motivating those who either attract or repel others. Multireligiosity does not classify religions hierarchically but rather relates to them "objectively" as equal, assessing each on its own merits. The *interreligious model* advocates a change in perspective wherein religious education recognizes the existence of other distinct religions that differ from one another. Believers are enjoined to understand their own respective religions according to their own perspective, as well as that of the other religions (Ziebertz 2006). Proponents of this approach not only seek to improve understanding, tolerance, and respect for other religions but also aspire towards reflection and self-criticism of their own faith. This approach argues that the way to real salvation can be achieved through dialogue between religions.

The most important challenge to religious education is the need to cope with a diverse world and to enhance intercultural dialogue so as to develop democratic citizenship. There is a critical need to understand about the ways that religion is an integral dimension of the social, historical, and political experience. Ignorance in this area significantly hinders students' ability to function as engaged, informed, and responsible citizens of a democracy.

Transformations in Research on Gender, Religion, and Education

The transformations in the study of gender, religion, and education, cited above and reflected throughout this book, have yielded a more differential approach and greater openness to nuances and shades, contrasting with the monolithic and dichotomous perceptions that characterized research in the past. In contrast to quantitative studies with a positivist nature, a surge has begun that strongly promotes studies with a qualitative, constructivist nature. This allows the disclosure of the unique and one-off, which lacks statistical significance but is capable of representing a widespread complex phenomenon (see the chapter by Tamar Rapaport) that cannot be encompassed by standard quantitative tools, standard deviations, and means.

The differential approach allows boundaries to be crossed legitimately. Addressing the boundaries of religion in the feminist context yields three possible strategies: maintaining the boundaries, uprooting them, or pushing them out. Each strategy contains subcategories, since boundaries can be maintained to a large or a small extent, and there are also intermediate levels. The chief goal of doctrinal religious education is to keep the boundaries intact. Radical feminism can often shift the boundaries through which women were excluded or removed from society and religion; consequently, in many countries, religious feminists are trying to widen and soften the boundaries. The widening process includes theological criticism and reinterpretation. Criticism is made either explicitly or implicitly, in a "hard" or "soft" manner. At a later stage, these ontological and epistemological processes are translated and interpreted in practice within the educational field. To be a religious woman and a feminist means living in constant tension between the hierarchy and equality, between tradition and innovation, between autonomy and heteronomy, and between essentialism and constructivism. This complex and unique liminality implies being an integral part of both those complex worlds yet simultaneously not belonging to any of them but rather to the interfaces and hyphens that link them. This book unveils that complexity and the distinctiveness and virtues of the interfaces.

The other new part of the intricacy is the focus on males, masculinity, and religion, with nuanced accounts showing that religion is not just about simple patriarchal continuity but positions men also in complex ways. The idea of masculinity in the literature is synonymous with crisis. Atkinson (2011) argues that "the institutional sources of men's social control have been fractured materially by ongoing structural and cultural change" (p. 5) and that "the splintering and redistribution of masculine control across institutional landscapes is generally believed to be the cause of the masculinity crisis" (p.6). The processes of deconstructing men and masculinities are a major phenomenon of this era which has far-reaching implications. This book reveals different aspects of spirituality for boys (see Kath Engebretson in this volume) as well as another form of intersectionality which relates to sexuality and the interface between religion and homophobia (see Michael Maher in his volume). Embodied intersectionality (as explained by Heidi Mirza in this volume) does not only relate to women.

This introduction – and this book – details new advances in analyzing religious feminism, religious women, and religious education but all set within an interdisciplinary and even wider framework of gender relations in a globalized and increasingly interconnected world.

The Scope of This Book

This book has contributions from fifteen different countries: Australia, Cambodia, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Oman, The Netherlands, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Thailand, Turkey, and the UK and the USA, together with general and comparative accounts. A cross-cultural lens appears from a number of chapters revealing the perspectives of diaspora women and men from a range of origins. A multi-perspectival frame is evident also when the contrasts appear between different perspectives of women within one country – for example, Palestinian Arab, Jewish, Druze, or Bedouin women in Israel. There is a considerable emphasis on Islam but also Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity. The editors are Jewish, atheist, and Muslim, and while they would not claim any representativeness of their position, they have generated a critical dialogue around the papers and their selection.

These contributions have been structured into five sections. There are of course huge overlaps across these sections, but the aim is to identify some major contemporary themes in this field and provide examples of work within them.

The first section *The Contested Role of Education, Religion and Gender* contains examples across the major religions of some of the challenges and debates that are currently taking place about the complex role of education in maintaining or challenging gender relations and gendered identities in society, as embodied or embedded in religion. Education, whether formal or informal, is seen to act both as a traditional form of "socialization" into gendered roles while acting to provide opportunities to escape these, modify them, or use them to one's own advantage.

The second section *Religious Education and the Study of Religion* looks specifically at how religion is taught, who owns religious education or the study of theology, and how this impacts on gender relations and on women. This is not just religion as a curriculum subject but the learning about religion that occurs in a range of contexts. Chapters examine the gendering of religious education but also how the study of religion can reveal gendered aspects. There is also discussion of how education within a religious tradition can act as transformation for women as well as appearing to constrain futures.

The third section *Migration and Identity* collects together accounts of women who occupy various sorts of ethnic or religious minority status in a country, temporarily or permanently, and how they forge their religious and diaspora identities around their educational as well as cultural experiences. Themes throughout the chapters relate to dislocation, accommodation, and contradiction, particularly with regard to how women are "seen" in different contexts.

The fourth section *Sexuality, Masculinity, the Body and Gendered Space* brings together very different accounts of how embodiment works in different contexts, that is, how religions construct ideal types of projected masculinity and femininity but how individuals negotiate these in complex ways. It contains unique accounts of male spirituality but also looks at connections between religion, sexuality, and homophobia as played out in educational contexts. Display and gaze are crucial concepts in examining arenas such as Muslim women in sport, as well as questions of visibility and invisibility that relate to veiling.

The final section *Rights, Equality, Secularism* returns to some of the tensions of the first section but uses a rights perspective to look at gender and religion. This includes how a secular, rights-based approach in educational as well as organizational contexts can cut across religion and gender to provide spaces for agency and empowerment. The *Conclusion* attempts to bring together patterns and discontinuities in the collection, looking first at each of the three spheres separately and then extracting eight key domains of analysis which permeate the collection: narratives, patriarchy, national contexts, globalization, social movements, rights, identity, and agency.

Contributors were not asked to write in an identical format but were asked to address the central questions of the possible "two faces" of education: on the one hand, whether education is liberatory, and if so, whether it liberates *through* religion or *from* religion, or conversely, whether education acts to reproduce any gendered religious oppression and inequality. Many of the chapters will demonstrate that it can do all of these simultaneously, depending on the agency of participants and on the political context, as well as on how religion is appropriated by different power interests. The other important contribution of this book is the range of theoretical frameworks which are employed. This book contains much original work and research, with a number of qualitative studies revealing the lives, experiences, and narratives of women and men. There are also documentary, textual, and discourse analysis and study of image. Analyses of the body and of gendered space also reflect new ways of approaching gender and learning. The context of education and learning covers schools, higher education, nonformal education, religious institutions, adult literacy, curriculum, and textbooks. Important aspects of the contemporary globalized analysis are the intersection of culture and religion, as well as nation and religion, and which of these actually conditions behavior and positioning. Questions of sexuality, honor, the body, and gaze, for example, are given new treatments. This entails considerations of feminist discourses from within and outside religions, the role of media and religious TV, the patriarchal interpretations of sacred texts and images of God, and the gendering of religious studies and religious education textbooks.

Overall, just in these few contributions, this book reveals a great complexity and often contradiction in modern negotiations of religion by girls and boys, women and men, and a range of possibilities for change. We cannot claim to represent the whole field at all, and are very well aware of other inputs that could have been made, but hope that the volume will provide a theoretical and practical resource for those making explorations in this field, as well as generate more discussion and research.

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Part I

The Contested Role of Education, Religion and Gender

Chapter 2
Gender, Religion, and the Work of Homeschooling

Michael W. Apple

Introduction

In *Educating the "Right" Way* (Apple 2006; see also Apple et al. 2003), I spend a good deal of time examining the ways in which the complicated forces of neoliberalism and neoconservatism are altering the terrain on which education operates both internally and globally. One of the key sets of actors that are currently supporting parts of the neoliberal and neoconservative agendas (the plural is important here) in the United States and increasingly in Latin America and elsewhere are what I have called "authoritarian populists." In that book I spent a good deal of time detailing the world as seen through the eyes of "authoritarian populists," those who want "the people" to decide policies and practices in the state and civil society but who also have a particular and very conservative vision of which groups actually count as "real people." In the United States in particular, authoritarian populist movement are largely constituted by conservative groups of religious fundamentalists and evangelicals whose voices in the debates over social and educational policies are now increasingly powerful.

Yet, the forces of authoritarian populism are not only growing in the United States. They are increasingly visible with the growth of conservative religious movements within—and across—many nations, North and South, East and West. They are present within multiple religions—in parts of Islam, in the Hindutva movement in India, in Judaism, and very powerfully in considerable segments of the conservative evangelical Christian movements in the United States which I shall focus upon here.

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In *Educating the "Right" Way*, I critically analyzed the ways in which they construct themselves as the "new oppressed," as people whose identities and cultures are ignored by or attacked in schools and the media. The secularity of the state is seen by these groups as imposing a world view that is totally out of touch with the deep religious commitments that guide the lives of such conservative populist populations. In the process, authoritarian populists have taken on subaltern identities and have (very selectively) reappropriated the discourses and practices of figures in the United States such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to lay claim to the fact that they are the last truly dispossessed groups.

In this chapter, I examine the ways in which the claim to subaltern status has led to a partial withdrawal from state-run institutions and to a practice of schooling that is meant to equip the children of authoritarian populist parents both with an armor to defend what these groups believe is their threatened culture and with a set of skills and values that will change the world so that it reflects the conservative religious commitments that are so central to their lives. I shall focus on the ways in which new technologies such as the Internet have become essential resources in what authoritarian populists see as a counter-hegemonic struggle against secular humanism and a world that no longer "listens to God's word" (Apple 2006). In fact, it is becoming increasingly clear that new technologies such as the Internet actually enable the formation and growth of such religious movements and enhance their ability to challenge secularity.

Much of my discussion will center around the place of gender in these movements since conservative women are key actors here and have multiple identities within them—simultaneously able to claim subaltern status based on the history of dominant gender regimes and having dominant status given their positioning in relationship to other oppressed groups.

Technology and Social Movement Resources

In order to set the stage for my analysis, I need to say a number of things about the role of new technologies in global movements and about their place socially. There has been an explosion of analyses of the Internet, whether in education, cultural studies, sociology, the social studies of technology and science, and elsewhere. Much of this material has been of considerable interest and has led to a good deal of discussion of the use, benefits, history, and status of such technologies (see, e.g., Bromley and Apple 1998; Cuban 2001; Godwin 2003; Hakken 1999; Jordan 1999). However, much of this debate is carried on with limited reference to the contexts in which the Internet is actually used; or the context is mentioned as an issue but remains relatively unexamined. As one of the more perceptive writers on the social uses and benefits of the Internet has said, "We can only understand the impact of the Internet on modern culture if we see that symbolic content and online interaction are embedded in social and historical contexts of various kinds" (Slevin 2000, p. ix). As Manuel Castells reminds us, rather than having a unitary meaning and use, the new communications networks that are being created “are made of many cultures, many values, many projects, that cross through the minds and inform the strategies of the various participants” (Castells 1996:1999).

New technologies have both been stimulated by and have themselves stimulated three overlapping dynamics: the intensification of globalization, the de-traditionalizing of society, and the intensification of social reflexivity (Slevin 2000: 5). In the process, technologies such as the Web have provided the basis for new forms of solidarity as groups of people seek to deal with the transformations brought about by these dynamics. Yet, the search for such forms of solidarity that would restore or defend “tradition” and authority can itself lead to the production of new forms of social *disintegration* at one and the same time (Slevin 2000: 5–6).

In this chapter, I examine a growing instance of this paradoxical process of solidarity and disintegration. By focusing on the social uses of the Internet by a new but increasingly powerful group of educational activists—conservative Christian homeschoolers—I want to contribute both to our understanding of how populist conservative movements grow and support themselves ideologically and to the complex ways in which technological resources can serve a multitude of social agendas. I argue that only by placing these technologies back into the social and ideological context of their use by *specific* communities (and by specific people within these communities) can we understand the meaning and function of new technologies in society and in education. In order to accomplish this, I also focus on the labor of homeschooling, on how it is organized, on new definitions of legitimate knowledge, and on how all this has been partly transformed by the ways in which technological markets are being created.

Homeschooling and Sites of Danger

The connections between conservative evangelical forms and technologies are not new by any means. Elsewhere, I and others have written about the creative use of electronic ministries both nationally and internationally by the authoritarian populist religious right (see, e.g., Apple 2006). Technological resources such as television and radio have been employed to expand the influence of conservative religious impulses and to make “the word of God” available to believers and “those who are yet to believe” alike.[1] While understanding the increasing range and impact of such efforts is crucial, here, I am less interested in such things. I want to point to more mundane but growing uses of technologies such as the Internet in supporting evangelical efforts that are closer to home. And I do mean “home” literally.

Homeschooling is growing rapidly. But it is not simply the result of additive forces. It is not simply an atomistic phenomenon in which, one by one, isolated parents decide to reject organized public schools and teach their children at home. Homeschooling is a *social movement*. It is a collective project, one with a history and a set of organizational and material supports (Stevens 2001: 4).