

RUNNING HEAD: SBNR Identity

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**SBNR Identity: The Role of Impersonal God Representations, Individualistic Spirituality,  
and Dissimilarity with Religious Groups**

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### **Abstract**

We conducted two studies investigating the extent to which self-identification as SBNR was associated with: (H1) the development of idiosyncratic religious beliefs and exposure to religious diversity; and/or (H2) negative attitudes toward organized religion and being hurt by members of a religious group. In Study 1, SBNRs scored higher than Religious and Non-religious participants on belief in God as an impersonal cosmic force (but not as a personal being) and individualistic spirituality. Although SBNRs had positive attitudes toward religion, they were less positive than those identifying as Religious. Exposure to religious diversity and hurt by religious groups were not significant predictors of SBNR. We replicated these results in Study 2 using a multi-item measure of God representations and also found that SBNRs' attitudes toward religion were predicted by a perceived dissimilarity with religious groups over and above individualism, secular group participation, perceptions of Christianity as too structured, and liberalism.

### **Key words:**

*Spiritual but not Religious, Spirituality, God representations, Individualism, Attitudes toward Religion*

## **SBNR Identity: The Role of Impersonal God Representations, Individualistic Spirituality, and Dissimilarity with Religious Groups**

Historian Carlo Ginzburg (1992/1976) describes the plight of Menocchio who lived in the late 1500's. Menocchio was a peasant, a Catholic, a miller, a maker of cheese, and a lover of books. He imaginatively drew from all of these sources to shape a syncretic view of the cosmos whereby both the sacred and profane originated in chaos “just as cheese is made out of milk—and worms appeared in it, and these were the angels” (p. 57). Indeed, his firm belief which he often shared with others was that “God is one, and he is the world” (p. 105). This, of course, was heresy during the time of the Inquisition; and Menocchio suffered greatly for his idiosyncratic beliefs. Yet, Ginzburg surmises, Menocchio never completely abandoned the church.

In the historical account of Menocchio, we observe two basic principles: (1) people often draw upon their own intuitions, learning, and life experiences in forming idiosyncratic views of the Divine, and (2) novel ideas about the nature and attributes of God are often seen as inconsistent with the beliefs of organized religious groups and may be directly or indirectly associated with hurt or social exclusion. These principles inform the two research questions investigated in the present research. First, to what extent is self-identification as SBNR associated with the development of novel religious beliefs, perhaps following exposure to alternative religious beliefs? Second, to what extent is SBNR associated with negative attitudes toward organized religion, perhaps as a result of being hurt by a traditional religious group?

### **The Relation between Spirituality and Religion**

Spiritual but not Religious (SBNR) is a relatively new faith identity. A search of the term *Spiritual but not Religious* in Google's Ngram Viewer revealed that SBNR was first mentioned in Western literature in about 1951. Although books mentioning *spirituality* or *religion* still far exceed the number of books mentioning SBNR, the term seems to have come into greater usage

around 1985; has sharply increased, each year, since 1992; and seems to have come into prominence in about 2001 with the publication of Robert C. Fuller's book "Spiritual but not Religious: Understanding Unchurched America." The relatively recent usage of the term SBNR may partially explain why, to date, there have been only a few studies (Hastings, 2016; Saucier & Skrzypinska, 2006; Streib & Hood, 2016; Willard & Norenzayan, 2017) regarding the social and psychological factors that contribute to self-identification as SBNR.

Identifying as SBNR, *prima facie*, conveys the understanding that the referent is both *spiritual* and *not religious*. We suspect that another reason for the insufficient attention to the psychology of SBNR may be the fuzziness in the constructs *spiritual* and *religion* as discussed ahead (see also Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999; Moore, 2017). Indeed, spirituality and religion have alternately been conceptualized as being in conflict (Del Rio & White, 2012), as independent (Saucier & Skrzypinska, 2006), or as interconnected (Ammerman, 2013).

### **H1: Idiosyncratic Metaphysical Beliefs and Exposure to Religious Diversity Are Associated with SBNR Identity**

Whether or not a bifurcation of spirituality and religion is accurate or useful, there seem to be multiple dimensions and types of spirituality; thus, contributing to the lack of clarity regarding what it means to be spiritual (Helminiak, 2008; Worthington, 2012). However, when people speak of spirituality in the U.S. today, they are often referring to the personal, internalized, emotional experience of the transcendent (Hill & Pargament, 2003). Following an extensive review of the literature, Moore (2017) added to this description and concluded that spirituality might best be very broadly defined as "a personalized, subjective commitment to one's values of connection with self, others, nature, and the transcendent" (p. 23). It may seem paradoxical, but these and other researchers (e.g., Farias & Lalljee, 2008; Hanegraaff, 1996) find that people who identify as spiritual often emphasize the importance of individualism yet also

value universalism, benevolence, and connectedness with others—whether those “others” are humanity (Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, & Saunders, 1988), nature (Kamitsis & Francis, 2013), a higher self (Heelas, 1996), or the Divine. So, spirituality, *per se*, does not necessarily indicate disconnection from religious groups or the abandonment of religion. Indeed, many religious people also have high scores on measures of spirituality.

We posit, instead, that spirituality that is *not religious* involves personalized, non-traditional beliefs that are perhaps fashioned in conjunction with exposure to diverse religious and philosophical worldviews. Syncretic beliefs are not new and whole belief systems have evolved following contact with dissimilar others. The willingness to ‘think a new thought’ may be especially likely to occur in societies such as the U.S. where innovation, individualism, and uniqueness are highly valued. Indeed, the U.S. has been described as a spiritual marketplace where individuals are quite likely to change congregations, denominations, and even religious traditions over a lifetime (Roof, 1993). There is already some evidence that religious cognition has become increasingly eclectic in the West with individuals cobbling together beliefs and practices from indigenous, Abrahamic, and Eastern traditions (Houtman & Aupers, 2007; Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2009; Saroglou, 2006).

While individuals may draw upon myriad sources (like Menocchio) in shaping their cosmological and metaphysical views, we reasoned that exposure to religious diversity, in particular, may provide the raw materials for individualistic beliefs. In the present research, we focus mainly on SBNRs’ beliefs about the attributes and nature of God. Muslims are forbidden to have a visible image of God and, instead, may refer to God as the Vast, the Absolute, or the Light. The Jewish philosopher Buber (1986/1958) referred to God in abstract terms as the Eternal Thou; whereas the Jewish sage, Maimonides, described God as beyond imagination (Seltzer, 1980). Spinoza equated nature with the Divine (Nadler, 2006). In Hinduism, there are

person-like gods and goddesses but also the one ultimate reality, Brahman. As people in the West are exposed to diverse (often impersonal) concepts of God from many world religions, they may be more likely to think of the Divine as an impersonal force rather than holding traditional (i.e., Christian) views of God as a personal being. We expected to find that greater exposure to religious diversity would be associated with an increased likelihood of identifying as Spiritual but not Religious and that one characteristic of SBNRs would be belief in God as a naturalistic or mystical cosmic force rather than as a personal being (H1).

## **H2: Disengagement from Organized Groups and Being Hurt by Religion Are Associated with SBNR Identity**

Defining religion has also been the subject of much debate (McCutcheon, 1995). It is not clear what the necessary and sufficient characteristics of religion might be. For example, some scholars have argued that Buddhism and Hinduism should not be classified as religions (Balagangadhara, 1994). This muddiness in defining religion makes it difficult to know what it means when people identify as *not religious*. However, when people speak of religion today, they seem to be referring mainly to organized systems of doctrinal beliefs, formalized practices, and institutionalized communities (Hill & Pargament, 2003). For example, all scholars would probably agree that Christianity is a religion. In the present research, the majority of our SBNR participants reported having been raised as Christians indicating they may have turned away from this formal conceptualization of religion.

Whereas the trend toward embracing new religious ideas has flourished in recent years, church attendance and participation in organized religion have declined considerably (Norris & Inglehart, 2004). The trend away from organized religion has been referred to by some as detraditionalization—a movement that is also characterized, however, by a rejection of secularist rationalism (Houtman & Aupers, 2007). In other words, people who have moved away from

religious institutions often retain their metaphysical beliefs. We believe it is these individuals who identify as SBNR. However, it is not clear to what extent SBNRs have rejected religion; nor, if so, what has led SBNRs to eschew it.

Religious disengagement is often accompanied by a corresponding civic disengagement (Jansen, 2011), suggesting that people who identify as SBNR may simply be less likely to participate in all kinds of groups. Another possibility is that whereas religious individuals tend to value authority (Schwartz & Huismans, 1995), SBNRs may be rejecting all types of authority including religious, governmental, military, and police authorities. A third possibility is that individuals who hold idiosyncratic beliefs may face increasing disapproval from members of organized religious groups, which can lead to social exclusion or emotional pain which, in turn, may be associated with negative attitudes toward religion. We hypothesized that negative attitudes toward religion, perhaps due to being emotionally hurt by members of organized religious groups, would be associated with identifying as Spiritual but not Religious (H2).

### **Overview of Studies**

Study 1 involves an initial investigation of our two hypotheses that SBNR identity represents an embrace of new ideas (i.e., in with the new) or the rejection of traditional religion (i.e., out with the old). We compare differences between the Non-religious, Religious, and SBNRs regarding views of the Divine, individualistic approach to spirituality, and exposure to religious diversity (H1) and attitudes toward authority, religious groups, and the extent to which individuals had been hurt by members of a religious groups (H2). In Study 2, we replicate the results of Study 1 using a multi-item measure of God representations. We also examine six possible correlates of less positive attitudes toward religion among SBNRs: individualistic relational style, less inclination to participate in other kinds of groups, liberalism/conservatism, perceptions of religion as being too structured, and dissimilarity with religious groups.

### **Study 1: SBNRs Characterized by Individualistic Spirituality, View of God as a Cosmic Force, and Attitudes toward Religion**

The purpose of Study 1 was to investigate the hypothesized differences between individuals who identify as Non-religious, Religious, or SBNR in regard to beliefs about the Divine, individualistic spirituality, exposure to religious diversity, attitudes toward religion, and experienced hurt by members of religious groups. In support of H1, we expected to find that SBNRs would score higher on views of God as an impersonal cosmic force (rather than a personal being), individualistic spirituality, and exposure to religious diversity relative to the Non-religious and Religious participants. Consistent with previous research on spirituality (Streib, et al., 2009; Saucier & Skrzypinska, 2006), we also expected SBNRs to score higher on openness as a personality trait relative to both the Religious and Non-religious.

We have argued that the factors affecting whether people identify as Spiritual but not Religious may represent two sides of the same coin, with one set of factors influencing the self-identification as Spiritual (H1) and yet another set of factors influencing identification as Not Religious (H2). Therefore, in Study 1, we also assessed attitudes toward authority figures and various religious groups, as well as the degree to which individuals had been hurt by members of a religious group. We expected to find that SBNRs had less positive attitudes toward authority figures and religious groups when compared with religious individuals and that they were more likely to have experienced hurt. It was not clear whether or not SBNRs would differ from the non-religious in terms of attitudes toward authority or hurt by religious groups and, therefore, we did not have formal hypotheses.

#### **Method**

**Participants.** We originally recruited 349 participants in the U.S. via a Qualtrics panel and quotas to meet our goal to survey at least 100 participants in each of three groups: Non-

religious, Religious, and SBNR. Participants were asked to self-identify with one of the three groups in a multiple choice format, as well as to choose from a list of religious affiliations. There were 149 self-identified SBNR (85 SBNR, 13 Catholics, 36 non-Catholic Christians, 8 Jews, 1 Muslim, 1 Hindu, and 5 ‘Other’). There were 100 self-identified Religious (32 Catholics, 61 non-Catholic Christians, 1 Jews, 3 Hindus, and 3 ‘Other’), and 100 self-identified Non-religious (45 Atheists, 23 Agnostics, 13 Catholics, 7 Non-Catholic Christians, 7 Jews, 1 Hindu, and 4 ‘Other’). Because we were investigating SBNRs’ rejection of religion, we took a conservative approach and excluded the 64 participants who had indicated that they were SBNR on the pre-screen but nevertheless identified with a particular religious group in terms of demographics. Our final data set consisted of 100 Religious, 100 Non-religious, and 85 SBNR and these are included in the following analyses (total  $N = 285$ ). There were 136 (47.7%) males and most participants were Euro-American (79.3%). There were 15.1% with post-graduate degrees. The average age was 45.96,  $SD = 15.30$ .

**Measures.** Participants completed the following questionnaires as part of a larger online study described as a survey of beliefs and social attitudes. The study included other measures (e.g., social motivations, positive emotions, loneliness, self-construal) not reported here.

***H1 measures.***

***God View.*** We adapted a single item measure from the National Study of Youth and Religion survey (Smith & Denton, 2003) to assess views of God as (a) a personal being and (b) an impersonal cosmic force. We asked participants to rate the extent to which they agreed with each of the following statements using a scale of 1 = *Strongly disagree* to 7 = *Strongly agree*: “God is a personal being and is involved in human affairs today” and “God is not a person but is something like a cosmic or transcendent life force.”

*Individualistic spirituality.* There are many measures of spirituality and the construct of spirituality has been difficult to define (Moore, 2017; Zinnbauer, et al., 1999). However, our interest was in the extent to which SBNRs fashion their own metaphysical beliefs. Thus, we created a new measure with five statements: “My spirituality often leads me to develop novel, inspired, creative beliefs of my own,” “My religious and spiritual beliefs are based upon my own understanding gleaned from multiple faith traditions,” “I have my own religious or spiritual beliefs that are not quite like anyone else’s,” “Every individual must seek out and find his or her own spiritual truth,” and “Spirituality is unique to every individual”. The coefficient alpha for this scale was .85.

*Religious diversity.* Exposure to religious diversity may provide the inspiration for novel beliefs about the Divine. Because we were unaware of an existing measure of exposure to religious diversity, we adapted items from Kottke’s (2011) Cultural Diversity scale and created a new 6-item measure ( $\alpha = .84$ ). Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with the following statements on a 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree* scale: “I often have contact with people from other religious groups in my environment,” “I personally know people who are members of other religious groups,” “I have often been exposed to the art, music, and artifacts of people from other religious groups,” “I am very interested in learning about other religious cultural groups,” “I have learned about other religious groups through social media,” and “I am familiar with the teachings or philosophies of many other religious groups”.

*Openness.* We assessed openness to experience using Gosling, Rentfrow, and Swann’s (2003) 10-item measure of personality with our focus on differences in Openness to Experience.

## ***H2 measures.***

*Attitudes toward religion.* We used the 12-item Attitudes toward Religion scale (Piazza & Landy, 2013;  $\alpha = .91$ ) to assess positive attitudes toward religion. Positively scored sample items

are: “One important benefit of religion is that it provides people with comfort during hard times” and “Religion makes most people better than they would be otherwise.” Negatively scored sample items are: “Modern scientific knowledge makes religion unnecessary” and “Religion only serves to increase tensions and hostility.” Participants provided ratings on a 1 to 7 scale.

*Attitudes toward specific religious groups.* As an exploratory measure, we also assessed participants’ attitudes toward specific religious groups: Christians (Catholics and Non-Catholic Christians), Atheists, SBNRs, Jews, Muslims, and Hindus.<sup>2</sup> Following Putnam and Campbell (2010), participants were instructed to rate each religious group on a 1 to 7 Likert scale in response to the following questions: “To what extent do you feel warm or cold,” “To what extent would you oppose or support a large religious building in your community,” “On the whole, how much good or bad has the group done throughout history” and “To what extent do you believe that individuals from the following religious groups can be a good citizen in our country?” The responses to the four questions constituted a composite attitude score for each reference group (e.g., cold/warm, oppose/support, bad/good, cannot/can regarding xx group). Cronbach’s alphas ranged between .79 (attitudes toward SBNRs) and .91 (attitudes toward Christians).

*Attitudes toward authority figures.* People who reject religion may reject all authority. We assessed participants’ attitudes toward seven authorities: Federal Government, Local Government, Military, Police, Churches, Charity Organizations, and Religious Institutions. Participants were instructed, “Please indicate how cold or warm you feel toward the following groups” and “Please indicate how trustworthy you believe each of the following groups are.” Participants then provide ratings from 1 = *cold/untrustworthy* to 6 = *warm/trustworthy*.

*Hurt.* One reason why people may have a negative view of religion is because they have been hurt by members of a religious congregation. We asked participants to rate the extent to

which they had been hurt by (1) one or more members of an organized group and (2) one or more members of a religious group, 1 = *None*, 2 = *Little*, 3 = *Some*, and 4 = *A Lot*.

Participants were also asked in which religious tradition they were raised as a child. All items in the various questionnaires were randomized and presented in randomized blocks; and all the blocks were randomized to guard against ordering effects.

## Results

**H1.** To investigate mean differences in the scores on the variables related to H1, we conducted a multivariate between-group ANOVA with three groups (Non-religious, Religious, and SBNR). The multivariate  $F$  was significant,  $F(10, 556) = 18.76, p < .001$ , Wilks Lambda = .56,  $\eta^2 = .25$ . There were significant differences on four of the five variables at the univariate level, all  $p$ 's  $< .001$ . Group differences in Openness were not significant,  $p = .38$ . The correlations between the variables are shown in Table 1 and the estimated marginal means and standard errors for each group, on each of the variables, are shown in the upper half of Table 3.

Bonferroni adjusted pairwise comparisons showed that, as expected, SBNRs were significantly higher than both Non-religious and Religious (nearly all of whom were Christian) in belief in God as a Cosmic Force and Individualistic Spirituality,  $p$ 's  $< .001$ . In contrast, but as expected, the Religious were significantly higher than SBNRs,  $p < .001$ , and the Non-religious,  $p = .006$ , in belief in a Personal God. Finally, and as expected, SBNRs,  $p < .001$ , and the Religious,  $p = .01$ , were both higher than Non-religious in Exposure to Religious Diversity.

**H2.** We conducted a Principal Components Analysis using Direct Oblimin rotation and Kaiser Normalization to determine the factor structure of the items pertaining to attitudes toward authority. We found there were three factors explaining 77.79% of the variance: trust and warmth toward (1) Church Organizations, Eigenvalue = 7.35; (2) Government, Eigenvalue =

2.21; and (3) Military/Police, Eigenvalue = 1.33. Therefore, we created average scores for the items pertaining to these three types of authority.

Table 2 provides the overall means, standard deviations, and correlations between the variables related to attitudes toward authorities, religion, and extent of hurt by religion. To investigate differences between the three groups (Non-religious, Religious, and SBNR) regarding attitudes toward the various groups, we conducted a multivariate between-group ANOVA. We found significant differences among the groups,  $F(20, 546) = 14.18, p < .001$ , Wilks Lambda = .43,  $\eta^2 = .34$ .

At the univariate level, there were significant differences in attitudes towards the military/police, church organizations, religion in general, Christians, Jews, SBNRs, and Atheists, all  $p$ 's  $< .001$ . There were also significant differences toward Muslims,  $p = .043$ . Differences between the three groups in attitudes toward the government and Hindus were not significant.

Bonferroni adjusted pairwise comparisons showed that SBNRs had significantly lower scores compared with Religious on positive attitudes toward the Military, Church Organizations, Religion in general, and Christians specifically, all  $p$ 's  $< .001$ , providing support for H2 (see lower half of Table 3). SBNRs also had less positive attitudes toward Jews,  $p = .040$ , and more positive attitudes toward Atheists,  $p < .001$ , relative to the Religious. SBNRs differed from the Non-religious with SBNRs having more positive attitudes toward religion in general,  $p = .020$ , and specifically toward their own group (SBNR),  $p < .001$ , and Muslims,  $p = .037$ .

Next, we conducted a multivariate ANOVA, to investigate differences between the three groups in the extent to which they had been hurt by organized groups. There was a significant difference across the three groups, Wilks Lambda = .97,  $F(4, 562) = 2.43, p = .047, \eta^2 = .017$ . Bonferroni adjusted pairwise comparisons showed that SBNRs reported significantly more hurt by groups (but not religious groups) relative to the Non-religious,  $p = .029$  (see Table 3).

**Characteristics of SBNR.** Multinomial Logistic regression was conducted to assess the independent contribution of the variables in predicting identification as Religious vs. SBNR, Non-religious vs. SBNR, and Religious vs. Non-religious. We considered only the variables for which we had made formal hypotheses and for which scores differed significantly for SBNRs in the previous analyses. The five predictors were: belief in a Personal God, belief in a Cosmic Force, Individualistic Spirituality, Exposure to Religious Diversity, and Positive Attitudes toward Religion. Farias, Claridge, and Lalljee (2005) have shown that females are more likely to identify as New Age. Therefore, we also included gender (female = 0) in the three models.

The full model predicting identification as Religious vs. SBNR was statistically significant,  $X^2(6, N = 185) = 102.03, p < .001$ , with estimates of  $R^2$  ranging from 42% (Cox and Snell) to 57% (Nagelkerke), and correctly classified 86.0% and 78.8% of the Religious and SBNR cases, respectively. The model predicting identification as Non-religious vs. SBNR was also statistically significant,  $X^2(6, N = 183) = 82.07, p < .001$ , with estimates of  $R^2$  ranging from 36% (Cox and Snell) to 48% (Nagelkerke), and correctly classified 82.7% and 72.9% of the Non-religious and SBNR cases, respectively.

As shown in Table 4, identification of SBNR rather than Religious was associated with less belief in a personal God, less positive attitudes toward religion, and an individualistic approach to spirituality. Identification of SBNR rather than Non-religious was also associated with individualistic spirituality. In addition, belief in a cosmic God was a positive predictor of SBNR rather than identifying as Non-Religious. Belief in a personal God, exposure to religious diversity, and positive attitudes toward religion were positive predictors of identifying as Religious rather than Non-religious.

**Religion as a Child.** Although we had not made a prediction regarding rates of conversion or deconversion, a chi square test for independence revealed there were significant

differences, across the three groups, in terms of their childhood experiences with religion,  $\chi^2(6) = 69.01, p < .001$ . We found that 91.0% of the Religious had been raised in a formal religion (e.g., Catholicism); 66.0% of the Non-religious had been raised in a formal religion and 31.0% had been raised with no religion. Among the SBNRs, 64.3% had been raised in a formal religion, 19.0% had been raised SBNR, and 15.5% of the SBNRs had been raised with no religion, suggesting that SBNR may not always constitute a rejection of one's religious heritage but may, instead, involve the adoption of spiritual beliefs without formal training (see Mercadante, 2014).

*Post hoc analyses.* One unexpected outcome in Study 1 was that 64 participants who identified as SBNR (rather than Religious) on the pre-screen identified, instead, with a particular religious tradition at the end of the study—a group we refer to as Religious SBNR. Additionally, 32 participants who identified as Non-religious (rather than Religious) on the pre-screen identified, instead, with a particular religious group at the end of the study—a group we refer to as Non-practicing. Consequently, it is possible to classify participants as five (rather than three) religious types: True SBNR ( $n = 85$ ), Religious ( $n = 100$ ), Religious SBNR ( $n = 64$ ), Non-believing (Atheist/Agnostic Non-religious;  $n = 68$ ), and Non-practicing (Non-religious who identify with a particular religious group;  $n = 32$ ).

We used a multivariate between-group ANOVA to examine differences across the five groups with a focus on comparing True SBNR with Religious SBNR. We present the results for key variables here: belief in God as a Cosmic Force, belief in a Personal God, Individualistic Spirituality, and Positive Attitudes toward Religion. Differences across the five groups were significant at both the multivariate,  $F(16, 1042) = 17.73$ , Wilks Lambda = .48,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .17$ , and the univariate levels, all  $p$ 's  $\leq .001$ , (Personal God,  $\eta^2 = .29$ ; Cosmic God,  $\eta^2 = .11$ ; Individualistic Spirituality,  $\eta^2 = .13$ ; Positive Attitudes Towards Religion,  $\eta^2 = .34$ ). The estimated marginal means and standard errors, for each religious group are shown in Figure 2.

Comparing True SBNR and Religious SBNR, we found that True SBNR were significantly more likely to have a view of God as a cosmic force,  $p = .006$ , rather than as a personal being,  $p = .024$ . Moreover, True SBNR were more likely than Religious SBNR to take an individualistic approach to spirituality,  $p = .002$ . Differences were not significant between the two groups in terms of attitudes toward religion; interestingly, in terms of H2, both True SBNRs and Religious SBNRs had positive attitudes toward religion as indicated by means greater than 3 ( $EMM = 4.31$  and  $4.70$ , respectively)—although they had less positive attitudes than the Religious ( $EMM = 5.53$ ). True SBNR and Religious SBNR also both differed from the Religious in that the Religious were much more likely to view the Divine as a personal being. These results highlight the complexity of religious identification, and add further support to H1 that idiosyncratic views of God and individualistic spirituality appear to play a central role in identifying as SBNR in addition to less positive attitudes toward religion. Finally, as can be seen in Figure 2, unbelief in a *personal* God seems to be the key variable that distinguishes between True SBNRs and Religious SBNRs and, further, between Religious SBNRs and the Religious.

## Discussion

In Study 1, we found partial support for H1. Specifically, we found that SBNRs are more likely to have been exposed to religious diversity in comparison with the Non-religious. However, when we partialled out the shared variance among the H1 variables, we found that the key characteristic of SBNRs is that they take an individualistic approach to spirituality—having novel, idiosyncratic beliefs which may or may not have been gleaned from their exposure to multiple faith traditions<sup>2</sup>. In this same vein, we found that SBNRs typically report less belief in God as a personal being as compared to the (mainly Christian) Religious and, instead, represent the Divine as more like a cosmic force, although cosmic force was not a significant predictor in the multinomial regression model. Given that all religious traditions allow for both personified

and abstract conceptualizations of the Divine, in Study 2, we sought to further investigate God representations among the Religious, SBNR, and Non-religious, using a multi-item measure.

In partial support of H2, we found that SBNRs had less positive attitudes toward religion when compared with the Religious (although, as a group, SBNR attitudes were actually somewhat positive, with a group mean of 4.31 on a 1 to 6 Likert scale). We had predicted that having idiosyncratic religious views might eventually lead to correction by religious leaders and/or social exclusion by members of the religious group accompanied by hurt and negative attitudes toward religion. However, SBNRs did not report significantly more hurt than either the Religious or the Non-religious. Thus, in Study 2, we sought to explore other possible sources of SBNRs' relatively less positive attitudes toward religion.

### **Study 2: God Representations, Individualistic Spirituality, and Dissimilarity with Religious Groups Characterize SBNR Identity**

The goal of Study 2 was twofold. First, we sought to better understand differences in beliefs about the Divine as a personal being vs. a cosmic force by using an expanded, multi-item measure to assess representations of God as an authoritarian and benevolent personal being and as ineffable or as a mystical cosmic force (Silverman, Johnson, & Cohen, 2016). We expected to find that SBNRs score higher than the Religious or Non-religious on the mystical dimension.

Second, we wanted to identify predictors of the less positive attitudes toward religion among SBNRs. In previous work, Farias and his colleagues (Farias & Lalljee, 2008; Farias, et al., 2005) found that New Agers in the UK were individualistic in their relational style. SBNRs in the US may be similar to UK New Agers suggesting that one possible explanation for SBNRs' less positive attitudes toward religion may be individualism—and this would comport with our finding that SBNRs take an individualistic approach to spiritual beliefs. In another study, Houtman and Mascini (2002) found that radical individualism can be associated with *moral*

individualism, a key factor in the decline of religiosity in the Netherlands. We reasoned that because SBNRs may prefer to do things their own way, their less positive attitudes toward religion may also reflect liberalism (Hirsh, Walberg, & Peterson, 2013) and/or a perception that religion is too restrictive or structured. It is also possible that religious groups simply seem psychologically dissimilar and even irrelevant, especially given SBNRs' individualistic approach to spirituality and unique metaphysical beliefs. Therefore, to better understand SBNRs' less positive attitudes toward religion, we assessed five possible negative predictors of Positive Attitudes toward Religion: (1) individualistic relational style, (2) disengagement from organized groups, (3) liberalism, (4) perceptions of religious groups (e.g. Christian groups) as too structured, and (5) perceived dissimilarity with religious groups.

## Method

**Participants.** Participants were 313 MTurk workers in the U.S. As a pre-screen question, participants were asked to identify with one of three groups in a multiple choice format: Non-religious, Religious, and SBNR. We used quotas to meet our goal of surveying equal numbers of participants in each of the three groups.

At the end of the study, all participants indicated their religious affiliation from the longer list used in Study 1. As in Study 1, there were some inconsistencies between the pre-screen and the demographic religious identities. There were 130 self-identified SBNR (67 True SBNR, 18 Catholics, 20 non-Catholic Christians, 5 Atheists, 19 Agnostics, and 1 Buddhist). There were 90 self-identified Religious (24 Catholics, 59 non-Catholic Christians, 1 Jew, 4 Muslims, and 2 Buddhists), and 93 self-identified Non-religious (2 SBNR, 60 Atheists, 28 Agnostics, 2 Catholics, and 1 Jew). Again, because we were investigating SBNRs' rejection of religion, we took a conservative approach and excluded the 39 participants who had indicated that they were SBNR on the pre-screen but nevertheless identified with a particular religious group in terms of

demographics. We also excluded the five Atheists from the SBNR sample because we were interested in SBNRs' representations of God as a personal being vs. a cosmic force which presumes some degree of belief in God, a Higher Power, or Divine Life Force.

In the final sample, there were 93 Non-religious, 90 Religious, and 86 SBNR. There were 131 males and 138 females, and the mean age was 36.18 ( $SD = 11.43$ ). The majority were Euro-American (74.3%) and 13% had post-graduate or professional degrees.

**Measures.** Participants completed a larger online survey including the following measures as well as exploratory measures of general spirituality, spiritual practices, and attitudes toward specific religious groups not reported here.

***H1 measures.***

*God representations.* We assessed variability in beliefs about the nature of God using a multi-dimensional God representations scale (Silverman, et al., 2016). Participants are asked to rate how well each of 20 words describes God, a Higher Power, or Divine Life Force based upon their own personal experiences and beliefs. Participants provided Likert-scale ratings from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree* regarding each of the following items pertaining to God: strict, punishing, wrathful, stern, commanding (Authoritarian God;  $\alpha = .94$ ); forgiving, merciful, compassionate, gracious, tolerant (Benevolent God;  $\alpha = .98$ ); nature, the universe, energy, consciousness, cosmic (Mystical God;  $\alpha = .92$ ); and unknown, unimaginable, unknowable, incomprehensible, inconceivable (Ineffable God;  $\alpha = .91$ ).

*Individualistic spirituality.* We used the 5-item measure of individualistic spirituality from Study 1, with statements rated on a 1 to 7 Likert scale ( $\alpha = .86$ ).

*Exposure to religious diversity.* We used the 6-item measure of exposure to religious diversity from Study 1 rated on a 1 to 7 Likert scale ( $\alpha = .80$ ).

**H2 measures.**

*Attitudes toward religion.* As in Study 1, we used Piazza and Landy's (2013) 12-item scale to assess Positive Attitudes toward Religion ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

*Measures of individualism.*

Individualistic relational style. We adapted the Relational, Individual, and Collective self-aspects scale (RIC; Kashima & Hardie, 2000) to assess an individualistic relational style. The RIC consists of ten multiple choice questions with three options per question designed to assess the focus of participants' interpersonal relations as relational, individualistic, or collectivistic. We administered all 30 items. However, because we were primarily interested in responses to the ten individualistic items, we used Likert scale ratings of 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree* (rather than multiple choice) for all 30 items. Sample items are: "The most satisfying activity for me is doing something for myself" and "When faced with an important personal decision to make, I ask myself what I really want to do most." The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the individualistic scale was .79.

Group membership. Participants were instructed, "People often belong to organized groups (e.g., sports teams, political groups, music groups, Bible study groups, etc.) How many organized groups are you a participating member of?" Answer choices were: *None* (coded 1), *1 group* (coded 2), *2-3 groups* (coded 3), and *4 or more groups* (coded 4).

*Measures of moral individualism.*

Liberalism/Conservatism. Following Frimer, et al. (2014), we assessed liberalism/conservatism with a single item: "How would you rate your political leanings?" Participants were given choices ranging from 1 = *Extremely liberal* to 7 = *Extremely conservative*.

Religious group structure. We assessed perceptions of the extent to which Christian religious groups were structured using an adaptation of Denson, Lickel, Curtis, Stenstrom, & Ames' (2006) measure of group entitativity. Participants are asked to rate their agreement with

eight statements, on a scale of 1 to 7, including: “The people in this group have formal rules and social norms” and “Members of this group share similar beliefs and knowledge.” We added two items including “Members of this group expect conformity” and “The rules and social norms of this group are very restrictive”. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .76.

Dissimilarity with Religious Groups. We were unaware of an existing measure of perceived dissimilarity with religious groups. Therefore, we created a new five-item measure with the following items rated on a scale from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*: “I don’t really fit in with any particular religious group,” “Religious sermons don’t really resonate with my own beliefs,” “Most religions are too restrictive in terms of rules and regulations,” “Most religions are too focused on conformity,” and “Most religions are too dogmatic in their beliefs” ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

## Results

**H1.** A multivariate between-group ANOVA revealed significant differences between the three groups (Non-religious, Religious, and SBNR) for the variables related to H1: four God representations, Individualistic Spirituality, and Exposure to Religious Diversity,  $F(12, 522) = 30.82, p < .001$ , Wilks Lambda = .34,  $\eta^2 = .42$ . Except for exposure to religious diversity, all group differences were significant at the univariate level, all  $p$ ’s  $< .001$ . The estimated marginal means and standard errors for each group, on each of the variables, are shown in the upper half of Table 5.

Bonferroni adjusted pairwise comparisons showed that, as expected, SBNRs were significantly higher than both Non-religious and Religious in belief in God as a Mystical cosmic force. Replicating the results of Study 1, we found that SBNRs were also higher than the Religious and Non-religious in Individualistic Spirituality,  $p$ ’s  $< .001$ .

**H2.** Replicating the results of Study 1, an ANOVA revealed significant differences in Positive Attitudes toward Religion among the three religious types (Religious, Non-religious, and SBNR),  $F(2, 266) = 128.75, p < .001, \eta^2 = .49$ . Following a Bonferroni correction, we found that the Religious had more positive attitudes toward religion than SBNRs and the Non-religious, all  $p$ 's  $< .001$ . Additionally, SBNRs had more positive attitudes toward religion than the Non-religious,  $p < .001$ .

To better understand SBNR attitudes toward religion, we conducted separate hierarchical multiple regression analyses for (a) the Religious participants; (b) the Non-religious; and (c) the SBNR participants. In each model, we regressed Positive Attitudes toward Religion on sex and age (entered at Step 1), the two Individualistic Relational Style variables (entered at Step 2), and the three Moral Individualism variables (entered at Step 3). The models explained between 14% and 42%, of the variance, respectively, in positive attitudes toward religion. As shown in Table 6, we found that the perceived dissimilarity with religious groups was a significant (negative) predictor of Positive Attitudes toward Religion for all three religious types.

**Characteristics of SBNR identity.** Multinomial Logistic Regression was conducted to assess the relative ability of various God representations, Individualistic Spirituality, Positive Attitudes toward Religion, and perceived Dissimilarity with religious groups in predicting identification as SBNR versus Religious, SBNR versus Non-religious, and Religious versus Non-religious, after controlling for gender differences (female coded '0').

The full model predicting being SBNR versus Religious was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(9, N = 176) = 155.60, p < .001$ , with estimates of  $R^2$  ranging from 59% (Cox and Snell) to 78% (Nagelkerke), and correctly classified 90.0% and 91.9% of the cases, respectively. The full model predicting being SBNR versus Non-religious was also statistically significant,

$X^2(9, N = 179) = 128.99, p < .001$ , with estimates of  $R^2$  ranging from 51% (Cox and Snell) to 68% (Nagelkerke), and correctly classified 88.2% and 90.7% of the cases, respectively.

Although we had not made a prediction regarding Religious versus Non-religious, we found that the full model comparing the two groups was statistically significant,  $X^2(9, N = 183) = 204.79, p < .001$ , with estimates of  $R^2$  ranging from 67% (Cox and Snell) to 90% (Nagelkerke), and correctly classified 95.7% and 93.4% of the cases, respectively.

Regarding SBNR versus Religious (see Table 7), SBNR identity was positively associated with belief in God as mystical (i.e., nature, energy, cosmic, consciousness, universe),  $p = .020$ , and the perception of dissimilarity with religious groups (i.e., too many social expectations, irrelevance, and not fitting in),  $p < .001$ . In contrast, personified views of God as authoritarian,  $p = .010$ , or benevolent,  $p < .001$ , were negatively associated with SBNR versus Religious identity. Although the difference between the two groups was significant, Individualistic Spirituality was not a significant predictor of SBNR versus Religious in the regression model,  $p = .465$ . Ineffable God representations, Positive Attitudes toward Religion, and Conservatism were also non-significant.

Regarding SBNR versus Non-religious, SBNR identity was positively associated with Mystical God Representations,  $p = .001$ , and Individualistic Spirituality,  $p < .001$ , and negatively with Religious Dissimilarity,  $p = .008$ . Authoritarian, Benevolent, and Ineffable God representations, Positive Attitudes toward Religion, and Conservatism were all non-significant.

Regarding Religious versus Non-religious, Religious identity was positively predicted by Authoritarian and Benevolent God Representations, Positive Attitudes toward Religion, and negatively predicted by Religious Dissimilarity. Mystical and Ineffable God Representations, Individualistic Spirituality, and Conservatism were non-significant.

**Religion as a Child.** Finally, to investigate the relation between childhood religion and membership in the three groups, we conducted a chi square test for independence. We found a significant relationship,  $\chi^2(18) = 45.29, p < .001$ . Consistent with the results of Study 1, we found that 97.8% of the Religious had been raised religious. However, among the SBNRs, only 74.4% had been raised in a formal religion, with 7.0% raised SBNR and 18.6% raised with no religion at all. This suggests, again, that SBNR may not always constitute a rejection of religion but sometimes involves the adoption of a spiritual identity later in life.

## Discussion

SBNRs may be fleeing buildings but not beliefs. Replicating the results of Study 1, we found that SBNRs were more likely than either the Religious or Non-religious to believe in a mystical cosmic force and less likely than the Religious to ascribe authoritarian attributes to God. Also in support of H1, SBNRs were more likely than the Religious or Non-religious to say they had novel and individualistic spiritual beliefs which had been gleaned from multiple faith traditions. However, contrary to our predictions, SBNRs did not differ from the Religious or Non-religious in their exposure to religious diversity.

In terms of H2 and consistent with the results of Study 1, we found that SBNRs had somewhat less positive attitudes toward religion compared with the Religious; however, in Study 2, differences between the two groups were not significant. Moreover, SBNRs had significantly more positive attitudes toward religion relative to the Non-religious. Less than positive attitudes toward religion were mainly associated in all three groups by a perceived dissimilarity with religious groups (e.g., not fitting in, too many social expectations, irrelevance).

In a regression framework, including both H1 and H2 variables, we found that Mystical God representations and perceived dissimilarity with—but not negative attitudes toward—

religion were significant and positive predictors of identifying as SBNR rather than as either Religious or Non-religious.

### **General Discussion**

The recent increase in the prevalence of the Spiritual but not Religious (SBNR) identity, coupled with the muddiness of the terms *spiritual* and *religion*, seem to have resulted in a paucity of empirical research regarding the psychology of SBNR. There has been a fair amount of research regarding New Age beliefs (e.g., Farias & Lalljee, 2008; Heelas, 1996; Houtman & Aupers, 2007; Huss, 2014), and the category *SBNR* has been included more frequently in recent studies (e.g., investigating gratitude [Kraus, Desmond, & Palmer, 2015] and psychosocial outcomes among emerging adults [Nadal, Hardy, & Barry, 2016]). However, there have been only a handful of studies specifically investigating SBNR as a religious/spiritual identity (e.g., Hastings, 2016; Saucier & Skrzypinska, 2006; Schnell, 2012; Willard & Norenzayan, 2017). In the present research, we addressed this gap by investigating the extent to which SBNR represents the integration of novel religious beliefs associated with exposure to religious diversity (H1) and/or negative attitudes toward religion and hurt or rejection by religious groups (H2).

We found that whereas religious individuals are often likely to identify as spiritual, SBNRs take an individualistic approach to spirituality and are likely to represent the Divine as an impersonal cosmic force rather than as a personal being. Contrary to H1, we did not find significant differences in exposure to religious diversity among SBNRs relative to either the Religious or the Non-Religious. Yet, we did find that belief in a cosmic force, individualistic spirituality, and exposure to religious diversity were all highly correlated. It is possible that exposure to religious diversity—whether sought intentionally or as a consequence of living in an increasingly global society—may provide the raw materials for idiosyncretic beliefs about the divine, but mainly for those who are predisposed to fashion their own metaphysical beliefs.

Holding non-traditional beliefs can lead to hurtful disapproval and even social exclusion from an individual's religious group. However, contrary to our expectations, the SBNRs in our studies had not necessarily been hurt by religious group members. Indeed, SBNRs as a group had somewhat positive attitudes toward religion—less than the Religious but significantly more positive than the Non-religious (Study 1). Moreover, SBNRs' attitudes seem to be associated with simply “not fitting in” or perceptions of religious groups as being irrelevant rather than being too structured. This comports with SBNRs' strong preference for seeking out and finding their own unique blend of spiritual truths (Saroglou, 2006). We can speculate that SBNRs may simply be satisfied to be on their own spiritual journey without wishing to be part of a religious group.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

This research is limited in that our religious participants were nearly all Christians. Additionally, our samples were drawn entirely from U.S. participant pools (Qualtrics panels and MTurk). Thus, more research is needed to ascertain the prevalence of identification as SBNR in other religious and national cultures. Whether or not SBNR identity is mainly a U.S. or post-Christian phenomenon the results presented here suggest several directions for future research.

**Conversion and deconversion.** In both studies, we found that 30-40% of SBNRs still retained some degree of religious identity. In their review of the literature on deconversion in Germany and the U.S., Streib, Hood, Keller, Csoff, & Silver (2009) describe two prototypical experiences related to deconversion: the *pursuit of autonomy* and *debarred from paradise*. In the *pursuit of autonomy* type of deconversion, individuals may or may not abandon organized religion but, instead, may simply develop a personalized and individualistic faith perspective. In contrast, the *debarred from paradise* type is theorized to be characterized by emotional hurt or anger caused by members of a religious group. In many ways, our hypothesis regarding idiosyncratic religious beliefs (H1) reflects the *pursuit of autonomy* type and may explain why so

many of the participants in our sample identified as both SBNR and with a particular religious group. Our hypothesis regarding hurt by and negative attitudes toward religion (H2) seems to better reflect the *debarred from paradise* type of deconversion. However, we did not find strong support for this hypothesis among the SBNRs in our studies. Instead, negative attitudes toward religion were mainly characteristic of the Non-religious. We conclude that, despite what the SBNR label conveys, there may be several varieties of SBNR: (1) SBNRs who are individualistic but who have also retained a religious identity (i.e., religious SBNRs), and (2) SBNRs who hold idiosyncratic views and who have become disenchanted with and disinterested in—and yet not entirely negative towards—organized religion.

Of interest, however, 25-35% of the participants in our two studies had not been raised religious at all. Thus, there seems to be a third potentially important type of SBNR who have developed their own sense of spirituality apart from any religious upbringing. A better understanding of this type of SBNR may provide insights regarding the naturalness of religious and spiritual ideas as has been suggested by some theorists (e.g., Boyer, 2001).

**Developmental trajectories.** Along these same lines, longitudinal studies are needed to investigate whether SBNR is an endpoint on a person's life journey or, instead, a pathway to becoming simply *not religious*. It is unclear how stable the SBNR identity might be—even during the course of an online study. For example, many participants in both studies presented here reported being SBNR in the pre-screen but a different religious/spiritual identity at the end of the study. This may be due to providing fake answers on the pre-screen in order to qualify (Chandler & Paolacci, 2017). However, it may be that as people think more deeply about their religious and spiritual beliefs as they proceed through a survey, or when given a longer menu of demographic choices, or when they attend services to appease those in their community or family, individuals' religious and spiritual identities shift or become more (or less) precise.

**Defining spirituality.** Understanding what it means to be spiritual and not religious necessarily involves conceptual clarity regarding what we mean by *spiritual* and *religious*. Given the complexity of spirituality as a psychological construct, we believe more research is needed to investigate multi-dimensional measurement models of spirituality as a social psychological construct (Duriez, Soenens, & Hutsebaut, 2005; Helminiak, 2008; Roof, 1993). For example, the Network of Spiritual Progressives very broadly defines spirituality as any part of life that cannot be fully known through empirical study; however, they acknowledge that this approach covers many otherwise unrelated domains including love, kindness, generosity, awe and wonder, art, ethics, and music. Others have focused research on particular types of spirituality such as Humanistic spirituality (Elkins, et al., 1988) or Self spirituality (Hanegraaff, 1996; Heelas, 1996) which may or may not overlap in terms of beliefs, experiences, moral priorities, social attitudes and behaviors. Worthington (2012) has also identified different targets (e.g., God, nature) as being central to our understanding of spirituality. Future research should investigate the psychological precursors of these different forms of spirituality.

**Well-being.** Regardless of positive or negative attitudes toward religion—or how spirituality is defined—researchers often find that organized religion can be good. For example, religiosity has been associated with lower mortality (McCullough, Hoyt, Larson, Koenig, & Thoresen, 2000), increased volunteerism even for the benefit of religious outgroups (Okun, O'Rourke, Keller, Johnson, & Enders, 2014), and social support (Krause, 2006). Religion often affords opportunities for individuals to solidify social commitments through rituals and to support one another in working toward common moral ground. More research is needed to understand whether SBNRs may forego these benefits in certain religious cultures (Gebauer, et al., 2017) or whether they might eventually establish their own practices and social networks associated with positive health outcomes and well-being (Hastings, 2015).

## Conclusion

Like Menocchio, the Italian miller, people are often exposed to or seek out a variety of novel cosmologies, scriptural texts, philosophies, values, and life experiences; and some, but not all, integrate this new information into existing knowledge structures to create personalized, often idiosyncratic, religious and spiritual beliefs. Such beliefs may then perhaps lead to a perceived dissimilarity with relatively restrictive, dogmatic religious groups where SBNRs, apparently, often feel they simply do not fit in.

## Note

1. We also assessed attitudes toward Buddhists, Pagans, and Native American Traditionalists. The results are not reported here due to space considerations but, generally, SBNRs reported relatively positive attitudes toward these groups.
2. We appreciate a reviewer's query regarding the association between our novel measure of Individualistic Spirituality (IS) and Quest. Conceptually, the items in our IS measure were designed to assess an openness to seeking one's own version of spiritual truth, whereas the Quest items refer to spiritual seeking but also to doubts and uncertainty about one's beliefs. Although we did not assess Quest in the present research, in two previous unpublished studies we have found that Quest and the IS are moderately correlated,  $r(456) = .496$  and  $r(341) = .426$ . When the data were subjected to logistic regression analyses investigating the ability of Quest, IS, and Mystical God representations to predict SBNR identity, IS was the only significant predictor in both studies,  $p$ 's < .001, suggesting that Individualistic Spirituality contributes uniquely to an SBNR identity over and above Quest.

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Table 1. Overall Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for H1 Variables in Study 1

Variables	Personal God	Cosmic Force	Indiv Spirituality	Exp Rel Diversity	Openness
Mean	3.64	4.06	4.67	4.53	3.59
Standard Deviation	2.14	1.94	1.31	1.39	0.86
God Representation					
Personal God	--				
Cosmic Force	-.01	--			
Indiv Spirituality	.02	.45 <sup>***</sup>	--		
Exp Rel Diversity	.06	.20 <sup>***</sup>	.40 <sup>***</sup>	--	
Openness	-.06	.03	.09	.18 <sup>**</sup>	--

Notes: Exp Rel Diversity = Exposure to Religious Diversity; Indiv Spirituality = Individualistic Spirituality; <sup>\*\*\*</sup>  $p \leq .001$ , <sup>\*\*</sup>  $p \leq .01$ , <sup>\*</sup>  $p \leq .05$ ;  $N = 285$ .

Table 2. Overall Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for H2 Variables in Study 1

Variables	Military/ Police <sup>1</sup>	Govt <sup>1</sup>	Churches <sup>1</sup>	Religion <sup>2</sup>	Hurt by Religion <sup>3</sup>
Mean	3.17	2.08	2.97	4.56	1.58
Standard Deviation	1.62	1.34	1.58	1.25	.82
Positive attitudes toward:					
Military/Police	--				
Government	.46 <sup>***</sup>	--			
Church/Charity	.63 <sup>***</sup>	.42 <sup>***</sup>	--		
Religion	.39 <sup>***</sup>	-.01	.59 <sup>***</sup>	--	
Hurt by Religion	-.23 <sup>***</sup>	-.07	-.23 <sup>***</sup>	-.20 <sup>***</sup>	--

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Ratings are on a scale of 1 = *negative attitudes* to 6 = *positive attitudes*; <sup>2</sup> Ratings are on a scale of 1 = *negative attitudes* to 7 = *positive attitudes*; <sup>3</sup> Ratings are on a scale of 1 to 4; <sup>\*\*\*</sup>  $p \leq .001$ , <sup>\*\*</sup>  $p \leq .01$ , <sup>\*</sup>  $p \leq .05$ ;  $N = 285$

Table 3. Estimated Marginal Means, Standard Errors, and Differences by Religious Group, for H1 and H2 Variables in Study 1.

Variables	Non-religious		Religious		SBNR	
	<i>EMM</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>EMM</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>EMM</i>	<i>SE</i>
<b>H1</b>						
Personal God	2.43 <sup>a c</sup>	.19	<b>5.16</b> <sup>b c</sup>	.18	3.26 <sup>a b</sup>	.20
Cosmic Force	3.41 <sup>a</sup>	.19	3.86 <sup>b</sup>	.18	<b>5.06</b> <sup>a b</sup>	.20
Indiv Spirituality	2.23 <sup>a</sup>	.13	4.57 <sup>b</sup>	.12	<b>5.38</b> <sup>a b</sup>	.14
Exp Rel Diversity	4.08 <sup>a c</sup>	.13	4.65 <sup>c</sup>	.13	<b>4.92</b> <sup>a</sup>	.14
Openness	3.50	.09	3.61	.09	3.67	.09
<b>H2</b>						
<i>Positive Attitudes Toward</i>						
Military/Police <sup>1</sup>	<b>2.80</b> <sup>c</sup>	.16	3.71 <sup>b c</sup>	.12	2.97 <sup>b</sup>	.17
Government <sup>1</sup>	2.11	.13	2.17	.11	1.94	.15
Church Organizations <sup>1</sup>	<b>2.20</b> <sup>c</sup>	.14	4.00 <sup>b c</sup>	.11	2.66 <sup>b</sup>	.15
Religion <sup>2</sup>	<b>3.79</b> <sup>a c</sup>	.10	5.53 <sup>b c</sup>	.08	4.31 <sup>a b</sup>	.11
Christians	<b>4.14</b> <sup>c</sup>	.10	5.45 <sup>b c</sup>	.08	4.40 <sup>b</sup>	.11
Jews	<b>4.33</b> <sup>c</sup>	.10	4.96 <sup>b c</sup>	.08	4.57 <sup>b</sup>	.11
Muslims	<b>3.66</b> <sup>a</sup>	.12	3.83	.09	4.10 <sup>a</sup>	.13
SBNRs	<b>4.51</b> <sup>a</sup>	.10	4.84 <sup>b</sup>	.08	5.31 <sup>a b</sup>	.11
Hindus	4.15	.11	4.42	.08	4.45	.12
Atheists	4.62 <sup>c</sup>	.11	<b>3.50</b> <sup>b c</sup>	.09	4.26 <sup>b</sup>	.12
Hurt by Groups <sup>3</sup>	1.42 <sup>a</sup>	.09	1.57	.09	<b>1.75</b> <sup>a</sup>	.09
Hurt by Religion <sup>3</sup>	1.50	.09	1.49	.09	1.73	.10

Notes: Significant differences are indicated by: <sup>a</sup>Non-religious vs. SBNR; <sup>b</sup>Religious vs. SBNR; <sup>c</sup>Non-religious vs. Religious. <sup>1</sup>Ratings are on a scale of 1-6; <sup>2</sup>Ratings are on a scale of 1 to 7; <sup>3</sup>Ratings are on a scale of 1-4. Highest means (H1) and lowest means (H2) among the three groups are indicated in bold. Indiv Spirituality = Individualistic Spirituality; Exp Rel Diversity = Exposure to Religious Diversity.

Table 4. *Multinomial Logistic Regression of Six Variables Predicting the Likelihood of Identifying as Religious, Non-religious, or SBNR in Study 1*

Predictor	<i>B</i>	S.E.	Wald	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Odds	95% C.I.	
							Lower	Upper
SBNR vs. Religious (coded 0)								
Male	-1.20	.42	8.28	1	.004	.30	.13	.68
<i>H1</i>								
Personal God	-.44	.11	15.45	1	.000	.64	.52	.80
Cosmic God	.21	.12	3.04	1	.081	1.24	.97	1.57
Indiv Spirituality	.47	.23	4.12	1	.042	1.61	1.02	2.54
Exp Rel Diversity	-.05	.20	.07	1	.797	.95	.63	1.42
<i>H2</i>								
Pos Att Religion	-1.19	.23	25.85	1	.000	.30	.19	.68
SBNR vs. Non-religious (coded 0)								
Male	-.65	.38	2.89	1	.089	.52	.24	1.10
<i>H1</i>								
Personal God	.24	.12	3.60	1	.058	1.27	.99	1.61
Cosmic God	.49	.14	13.00	1	.000	1.63	1.25	2.13
Indiv Spirituality	.83	.22	14.25	1	.000	2.30	1.49	3.54
Exp Rel Diversity	.15	.15	.92	1	.337	1.16	.86	1.56
<i>H2</i>								
Pos Att Religion	.23	.22	1.10	1	.294	1.26	.24	1.95
Religious vs. Non-religious (coded 0)								
Male	.51	.45	1.27	1	.260	1.66	1.34	4.05
<i>H1</i>								
Personal God	.52	.12	19.93	1	.000	1.68	.74	2.11
Cosmic God	-.04	.14	.08	1	.778	.96	.74	1.25
Indiv Spirituality	.10	.21	.24	1	.626	1.11	1.03	1.66
Exp Rel Diversity	.37	.17	4.56	1	.033	1.45	2.41	2.03
<i>H2</i>								
Pos Att Religion	1.36	.24	31.07	1	.000	3.88	.69	6.25

Notes: Exp Rel Diversity = Exposure to Religious Diversity; Indiv Spirituality = Individualistic Spirituality; Pos Att Religion = Positive Attitudes Toward Religion.

Table 5. Estimated Marginal Means, Standard Errors, and Differences by Religious Group, for H1 and H2 Variables in Study 2.

Variables	Non-religious		Religious		SBNR	
	<i>EMM</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>EMM</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>EMM</i>	<i>SE</i>
<b>H1</b>						
God Representations						
Authoritarian	3.16 <sup>c</sup>	0.18	<b>3.92</b> <sup>b c</sup>	0.18	2.86 <sup>b</sup>	0.18
Benevolent	2.99 <sup>a c</sup>	0.15	<b>6.27</b> <sup>b c</sup>	0.15	4.84 <sup>a b</sup>	0.15
Mystical	3.62 <sup>a c</sup>	0.15	5.19 <sup>b c</sup>	0.15	<b>5.73</b> <sup>a b</sup>	0.16
Ineffable	<b>4.64</b> <sup>c</sup>	0.18	3.26 <sup>b c</sup>	0.18	4.44 <sup>b</sup>	0.19
Indiv Spirituality	3.92 <sup>a c</sup>	0.14	4.69 <sup>b c</sup>	0.14	<b>5.71</b> <sup>a b</sup>	0.14
Exp Rel Diversity	4.77	0.13	5.08	0.13	5.02	0.13
<b>H2</b>						
Pos Attitudes Rel	3.38 <sup>a c</sup>	0.11	<b>5.82</b> <sup>c</sup>	0.11	4.49 <sup>a</sup>	0.11
Individual Rel	4.24	0.05	4.23	0.05	4.36	0.05
# of Groups	1.82 <sup>c</sup>	0.09	<b>2.18</b> <sup>c</sup>	0.09	1.69	0.10
Rel Structured	5.41	0.08	5.25	0.08	5.55	0.08
Rel Dissimilarity	<b>5.99</b> <sup>a c</sup>	0.12	3.00 <sup>c</sup>	0.13	5.37 <sup>a</sup>	0.13
Conservatism	2.59 <sup>a c</sup>	0.16	<b>4.36</b> <sup>c</sup>	0.17	3.20 <sup>a</sup>	0.17

Notes: Significant differences are indicated by: <sup>a</sup>Non-religious vs. SBNR; <sup>b</sup>Religious vs. SBNR; <sup>c</sup>Non-religious vs. Religious. Highest means among the three groups are indicated in bold. Indiv Spirituality = Individualistic Spirituality; Exp Rel Diversity = Exposure to Religious Diversity; Pos Attitudes Rel = Positive Attitudes toward Religion; Individual Rel = Individualist Relational Style; Rel Structured = Christian Religious Groups are very structured; Rel Dissimilarity = Dissimilarity with Religious Groups.

Table 6. *Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Positive Attitudes Toward Religion from Individualistic Relational Style Variables (Step 2) and Moral Individualism Variables (Step 3) for Non-religious, Religious, and SBNRs, Controlling for Sex and Age*

Predictor	Non-religious <i>n</i> = 93		Religious <i>n</i> = 90		SBNR <i>n</i> = 86	
	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$
Step 1	.04		.11**		.00	
Female		-.03		.24**		-.01
Age		-.09		.12		-.02
Step 2	.03		.01		.02	
Individualism		.15		.12		.13
# groups		.06		-.02		.11
Step 3	.23***		.30***		.12*	
Conservatism		.31***		-.00		.08
Religion too structured		-.07		.04		-.13
Religious dissimilarity		-.41***		-.56***		-.29**
Total $R^2$	.30***		.42***		.14*	

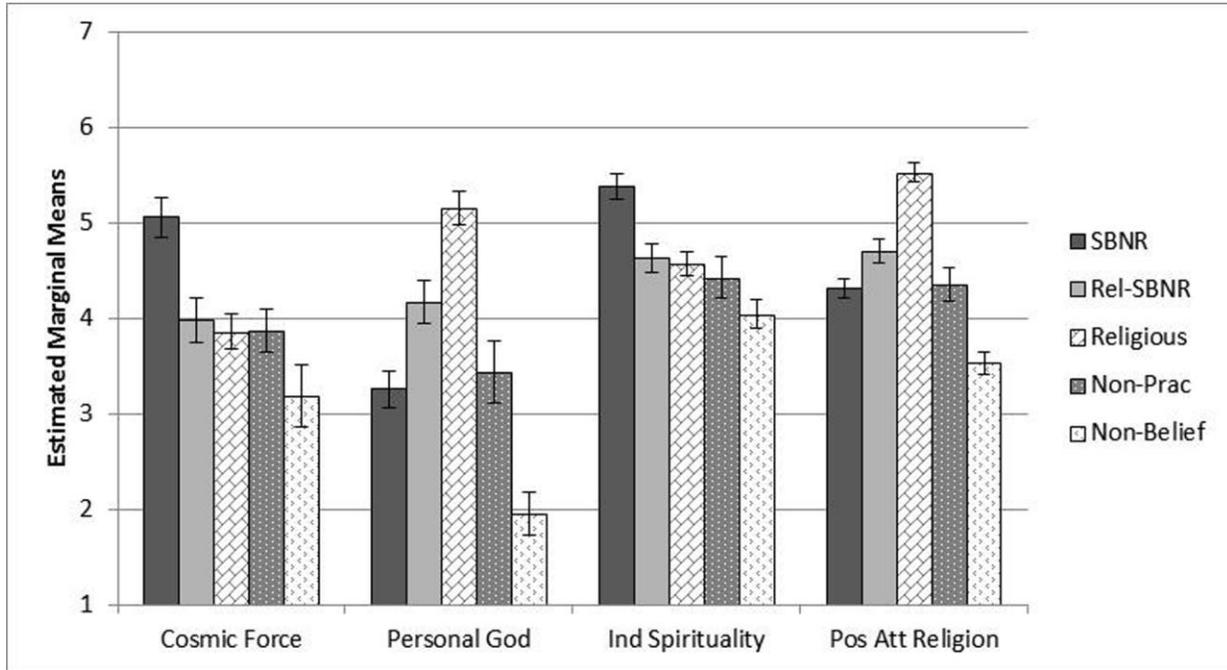
\*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ .

Table 7. *Multinomial Logistic Regression Predicting the Likelihood of Identifying as SBNR vs. Religious, SBNR vs. Non-Religious, or Religious vs. Non-religious in Study 2*

Predictor	B	S.E.	Wald	df	p	Odds	95% C.I.	
							Lower	Upper
<i>SBNR vs. Religious (coded 0)</i>								
Male	-1.16	.66	3.07	1	.080	.31	.09	1.15
God Representation				1				
Authoritarian	-.54	.21	6.62	1	.010	.59	.39	.88
Benevolent	-1.58	.41	14.56	1	.000	.21	.09	.46
Mystical	1.04	.45	5.42	1	.020	2.84	1.18	6.84
Ineffable	.16	.19	.72	1	.396	1.17	.81	1.69
Indiv Spirituality	.26	.35	.53	1	.465	1.30	.65	2.59
Pos Att Religion	-.56	.37	2.28	1	.131	.57	.28	1.18
Rel Dissimilarity	.92	.27	11.80	1	.001	2.50	1.48	4.22
Conservative	-.18	.19	.90	1	.342	.84	.58	1.21
<i>SBNR vs. Non-religious (coded 0)</i>								
Male	-.08	.49	.03	1	.871	.92	.36	2.40
God Representation				1				
Authoritarian	-.25	.17	2.29	1	.130	.78	.56	1.08
Benevolent	-.04	.19	.05	1	.828	.96	.65	1.40
Mystical	.83	.24	11.45	1	.001	2.28	1.42	3.68
Ineffable	-.21	.19	1.21	1	.272	.81	.56	1.18
Indiv Spirituality	1.02	.25	16.98	1	.000	2.79	1.71	4.54
Pos Att Religion	.27	.27	1.02	1	.313	1.31	.78	2.21
Rel Dissimilarity	-.74	.28	6.98	1	.008	.48	.28	.83
Conservative	.11	.17	.39	1	.534	1.11	.79	1.57
<i>Religious vs. Non-religious (coded 0)</i>								
Male	.03	.93	.00	1	.976	1.03	.17	6.39
God Representation								
Authoritarian	.73	.33	4.89	1	.027	2.07	1.09	3.94
Benevolent	1.21	.48	6.37	1	.012	3.37	1.31	8.65
Mystical	-.09	.55	.03	1	.874	.92	.31	2.69
Ineffable	-.42	.35	1.38	1	.240	.66	.33	1.32
Indiv Spirituality	.66	.40	2.77	1	.096	1.94	.89	4.23
Pos Att Religion	1.11	.56	3.93	1	.047	3.04	1.01	9.09
Rel Dissimilarity	-.92	.36	6.73	1	.010	.40	.20	.80
Conservative	.06	.28	.04	1	.842	1.06	.61	1.84

Notes: Indiv Spirituality = Individualistic Spirituality; Pos Att Religion = Positive Attitudes Toward Religion; Rel Dissimilarity = Dissimilarity with Religious Groups.

Figure 1. *Estimated Marginal Means and Standard Errors, by Religious Type, for Belief in a Cosmic Force, Belief in a Personal God, Individualistic Spirituality, and Positive Attitudes Toward Religion in Study 1.*



Notes: Ind Spirituality = Individualistic Spirituality; Pos Att Religion = Positive Attitudes Toward Religion.