

The spirit of God

&

The holy spirit

Outline

1. Spirituality today

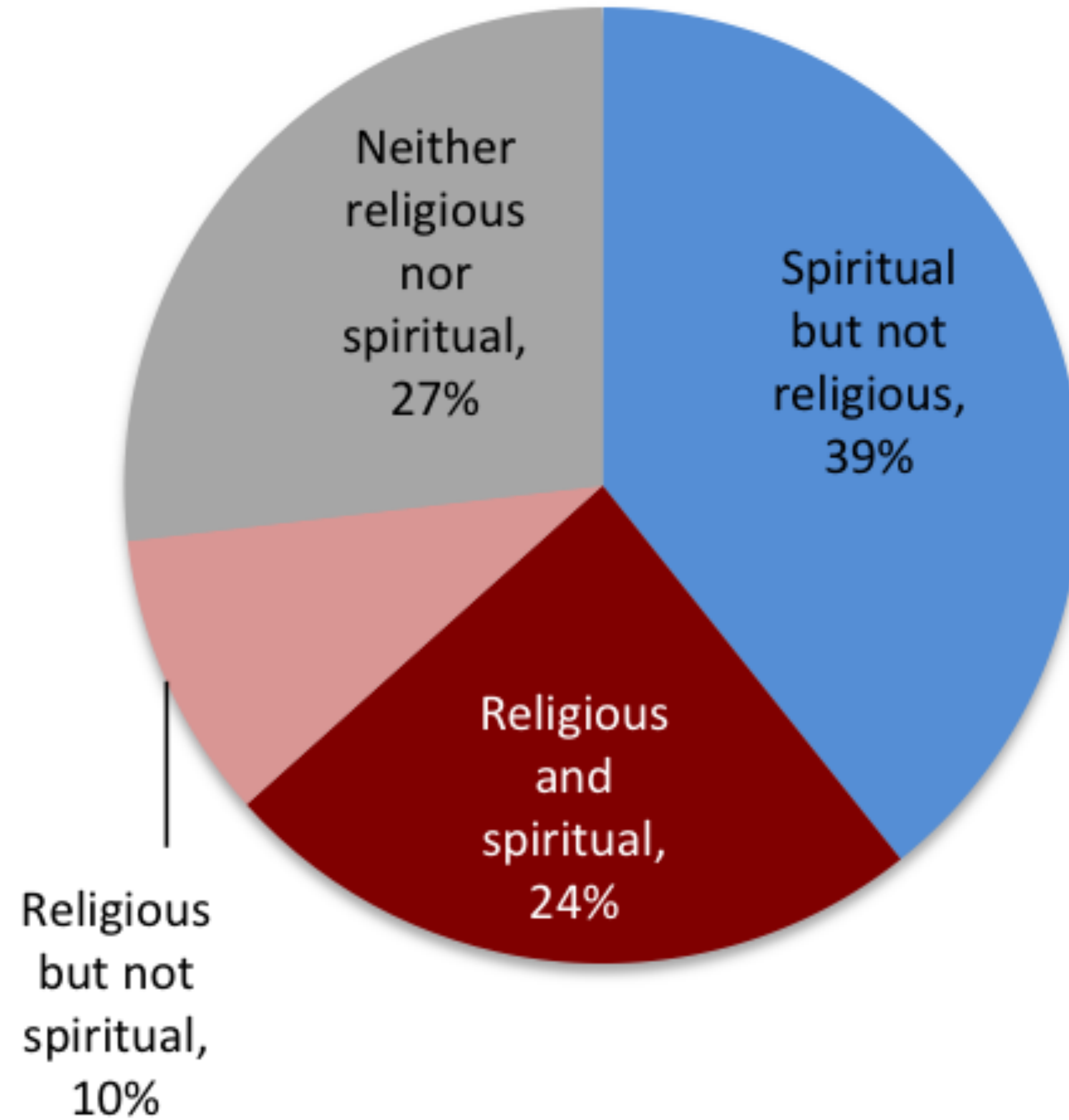
2. The spirit of God and the holy spirit

2015 Angus Reid Institute Poll

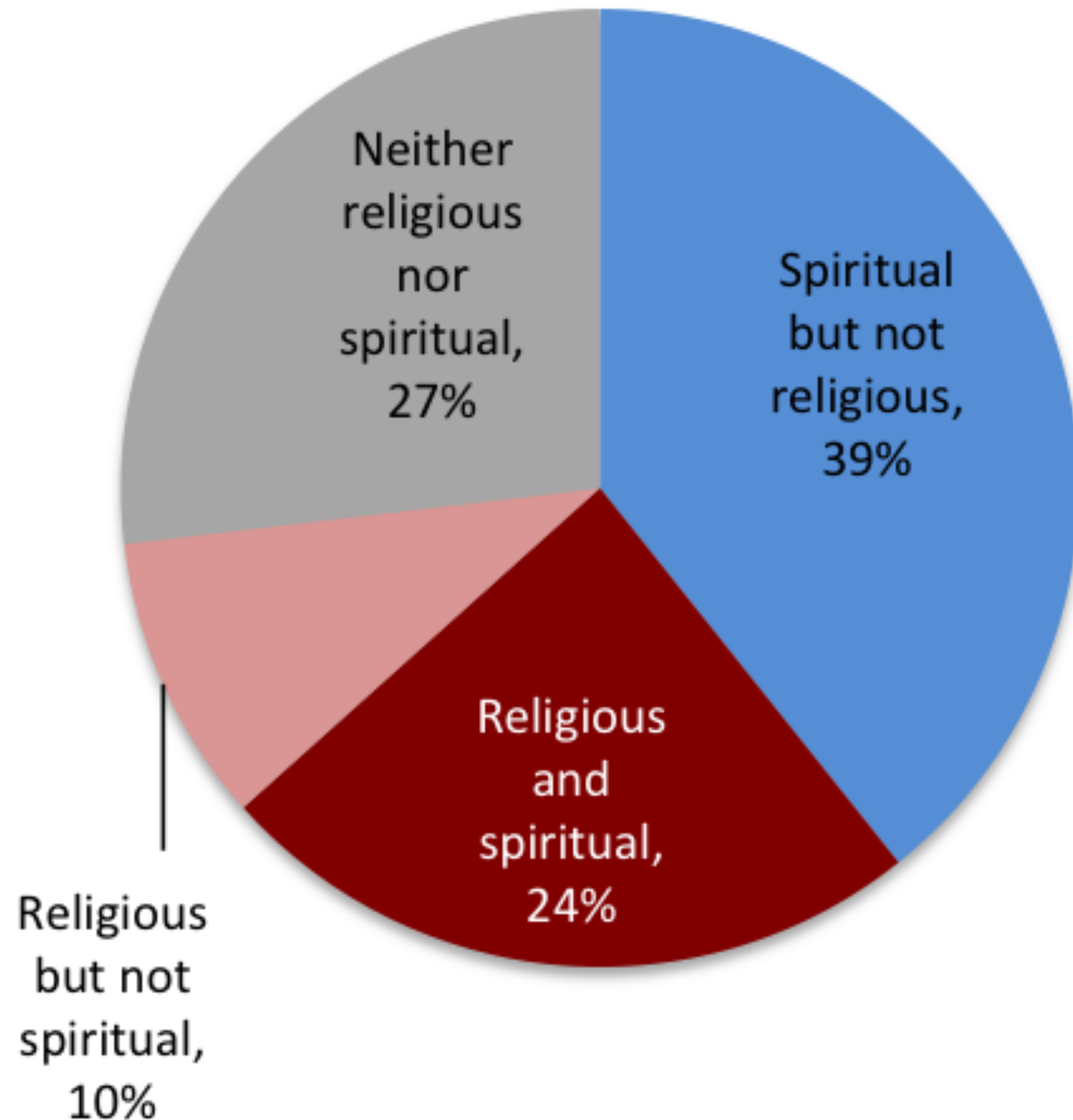
Do you see yourself as:

- Religious and spiritual
- Religious but not spiritual
- Spiritual but not religious
- Neither spiritual nor religious

Do you see yourself as:



Do you see yourself as:



“How does this [finding] line up against overall orientation towards religion? Certainly, there is alignment, but it is far from precise and underlines the observation that **increasing secularization is occurring against a backdrop of persistent spirituality.**”

(Ecclesiastes 3:9–11 ESV)

“What gain has the worker from his toil? I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has **put eternity into man’s heart**, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.”

(Spencer, M., 2012, What is spirituality? A personal exploration)

“Spirituality involves the recognition of a feeling or sense or belief that there is something greater than myself, something more to being human than sensory experience, and that the greater whole of which we are part is cosmic or divine in nature”

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spiritual (adj.)

c. 1300, "of or concerning the spirit, immaterial" (especially in religious aspects), also "of or concerning the church," from Old French *spirituel*, *esperituel* (12c.) or directly from a Medieval Latin ecclesiastical use of Latin *spiritualis* "pertaining to spirit; of or pertaining to breath, breathing, wind, or air," from *spiritus* "of breathing; of the spirit"



Original Articles

“Spiritual but not religious”: Cognition, schizotypy, and conversion in alternative beliefs

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 2 February 2017

Revised 11 May 2017

Accepted 13 May 2017

Keywords:

Spiritual but not religious

Religion

Cognitive biases

Schizotypy

Conversion

ABSTRACT

The spiritual but not religious (SBNR) are a growing population in secularizing societies. Yet, we know little about the underlying psychology of this group or their belief profile. Based on an individual difference approach, we address this knowledge gap by comparing SBNR with religious and non-religious participants. In a sample of Americans ($n = 1013$), we find that the SBNR differ from non-religious and religious participants in a number of ways. SBNR participants are more likely to hold paranormal beliefs and to have an experiential relationship to the supernatural (e.g. have mystical experiences and feelings of universal connectedness), but are similar to religious participants in their profile of cognitive biases. SBNR participants score higher on measures of schizotypy than the religious or non-religious. Reported conversions from one group (religious, SBNR, or non-religious) to another since childhood corresponds with predictable differences in cognitive biases, with dualism predicting conversion to religion and schizotypy predicting conversion to SBNR.

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1. Introduction

In many parts of the secularizing world, such as Northern Europe and the West coast of the United States and Canada, traditional organized religion is giving way to yoga studios, spiritual retreats, and healing crystals. “Spirituality without religion” is resonating with a growing populace as seen in best selling books by gurus and writers such as Deepak Chopra, Eckhart Tolle, and Paolo Coelho. Despite its growing popularity, little is known about the cognitive profile of this demographic group and the movement away from traditional religious beliefs into this new type of spirituality. What are the distinguishing features that set this growing group apart from traditional religion on one hand, and nonreligious populations on the other?

The spiritual but not religious are a growing proportion of the population in North America, Northern Europe, and elsewhere where secularization is spreading (Bender, 2010, 2012; Fuller, 2001; Roof, 1993). According to a Newsweek Poll, 30% of Americans identified as ‘spiritual but not religious’ in 2009, up from 24% in 2005 (Newsweek, 2009). A newspaper poll of Canadians found that among those who claimed to be atheist and agnostics,

27% still claimed to be ‘spiritual’ (Todd, 2014), highlighting the porousness of these self-described labels. Related to this is the growth of so-called “religious nones” or “unchurched” in North America (Twenge, Exline, Grubbs, Sastry, & Campbell, 2015). This group is typified by individuals who often report believing in God but do not affiliate with any religious tradition or attend religious services (Fuller, 2001). As of 2016, 79% of people in the USA reported believing in God (this number is 89% when ‘universal spirit’ is included with God), but only 54% claim to be a member of a church or other religious institution, and only 35% claim to attend a service every week or almost every week (Gallup poll, 2016). The SBNR phenomenon is also found in many parts of Europe, where opinion polls show consistently low (and declining) rates of religiosity, but considerable rates of alternative supernatural beliefs (Voas, 2008). This growing class of believers that do not consider themselves affiliated with an organized religious group has garnered much media attention and public discussion over the last few years (e.g. BBC, 2014; Davis, 2014; de Castella, 2013; Oppenheimer, 2014). It has also attracted some sociological attention (e.g. Bender, 2010, 2012; Fuller, 2001; Roof, 1993, 1999). However, we know relatively little about this social movement from within psychology and the cognitive science of religion.

“We found that in a broad and diverse sample drawn from the American population, SBNR participants appear similar to religious participants on cognitive tendencies known to contribute to supernatural belief, and differ from the non-religious on these same tendencies. However, SBNRs differ from the conventionally religious in that they are more prone to paranormal beliefs, are more likely to have an experiential relationship to the supernatural, and see themselves more connected to the universe as a whole. Though SBNR participants see themselves to be ‘nonreligious’, they endorse alternative supernatural beliefs that are also driven by some of the same cognitive biases that underpin more conventional religious beliefs.”

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ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Cognition

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/COGNIT

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“There were some interesting demographic differences. Compared to both religious and non-religious participants, the SBNR tended to be older. The SBNR were also more likely to be female than non-religious participants and made a higher income on average than religious participants. This tendency of the SBNR to be older female has been noted elsewhere (Roof, 1999). The tendency of the SBNR to earn a higher income than the religious may suggest that one of the differences between these groups is material security. Previous research has suggested that religiosity is a way of coping with existential and material insecurity (see Norris & Inglehart, 2004). Perhaps spiritual belief without the stronger institutional and community aspects of religion is a type of supernatural belief that arises in more secure environments.”

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(Deuteronomy 8:11–14 ESV)

“**Take care lest you forget the LORD your God** by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up, **and you forget the LORD your God**, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery ...”

(1 Timothy 6:17–19 ESV)

“As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, **nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God**, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.”

(Spencer, M., 2012, What is spirituality? A personal exploration)

“The debate about the status of spiritual beliefs such as the existence of God, the meaning of life, the absolute existence of moral laws, and many more such, typically appears to reach an impasse between mature spiritual seekers and the sceptics. To the spiritual person the sceptic appears like a blind man trying to say something about sight when it is absent in himself, and the spiritual person appears to the sceptic as a vulnerable person motivated by emotional needs to find some delusional area of comfort or support. For a believer there is no need to prove in any rational way that God exists as **his existence is self-evident in his creation**. For others, while the evident order within the universe at macro- and micro- levels is sufficient to demonstrate that there is an intelligence at work much greater than the human mind, this does not justify naming it as God. Since neither side can understand the other, the debate will no doubt continue indefinitely.”

(Romans 1:18–20 ESV)

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. **For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.** So they are without excuse.”

(Hebrews 11:1–2 ESV)

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation.”

(Exodus 33:20 ESV)

“But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.”

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“But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.”

(1 John 4:12 ESV)

“No one has ever seen God ...”

(John 18:37–38 ESV)

“Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” Pilate said to him, “What is truth?””

(Old Testament Word Study Dictionary)

ruach A feminine noun meaning spirit, wind, breath.

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ruach A feminine noun meaning spirit, wind, breath.

(New Testament Word Study Dictionary)

Pneuma neut. noun from pneō (4154), to breathe.

(Genesis 2:7 ESV)

“...then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.”

(Genesis 6:3 ESV)

“Then the LORD said, “My **Spirit** shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.””

(Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 ESV)

“The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.”

(Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 ESV)

“The end of the matter; all has been heard. **Fear God** and **keep his commandments**, for this is the whole duty of man. For **God will bring every deed into judgment**, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.”

Threefold foundation of the purpose afforded us by God's spirit

- **The authority of God**
- **The commandments of God**
- **The judgement of God**

(2 Peter 1:19–21 ESV)

“And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but **men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**”

(Psalm 51:11 ESV)

“**Cast me not away from your presence,** and take not **your**
Holy Spirit from me.”

(2 Samuel 23:1–2 ESV)

“Now these are the last words of David: The oracle of David, the son of Jesse, the oracle of the man who was raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel: **“The Spirit of the LORD speaks by me; his word is on my tongue.”**”

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(Isaiah 63:10–11 ESV)

“But they rebelled and **grieved his Holy Spirit**; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them. Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people. Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who **put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit ...**”

(Matthew 1:20 ESV)

“But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for **that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.**”

(John 1:14–15 ESV)

“And **the Word became flesh and dwelt among us**, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”)”

(Hebrews 1:1–2 ESV)

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days **he has spoken to us by his Son**, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.”

(Romans 8:26–27 ESV)

“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the **Spirit himself** intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the **Spirit intercedes for the saints** according to the will of God.”

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(Romans 8:34 ESV)

“Who is to condemn? **Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.**”

(John 3:5–6 ESV)

“Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God**. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

(Romans 8:29 ESV)

“For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be **conformed to the image of his Son**, in order that he might be the **firstborn among many brothers.**”