



SPIRITUAL BUT NOT RELIGIOUS

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There is a growing proportion of the western world who identify as spiritual but not religious (SBNR). **What do people mean by this term? What is spirituality without religion?** In study 1, we propose that people use 'spiritual' to describe the mentalistic intuitions associated with supernatural beliefs. We tested this by looking at the relationship of peoples self reported of spiritual and religious to cognitive biases theorized to be associated with supernatural belief. We find the these biases are associated with spirituality after controlling for religiosity, but are no longer associated with religiosity after controlling for spirituality. In study 2 we compare how people where raised with how they are now. We find that beliefs persist in similar patterns from childhood even when current beliefs are controlled for. We also find that our cognitive biases can predict who has moved from one group to another since childhood.

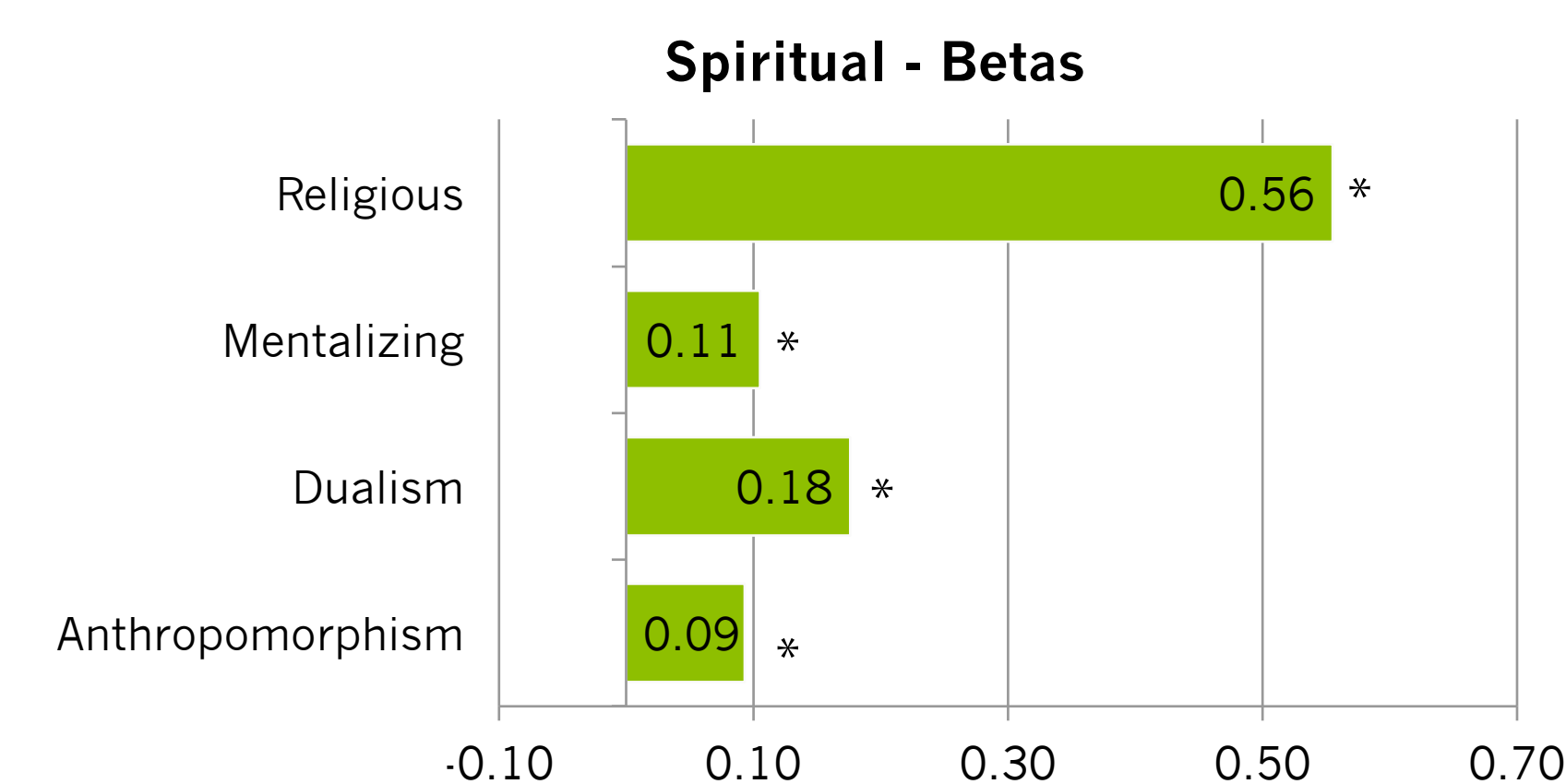
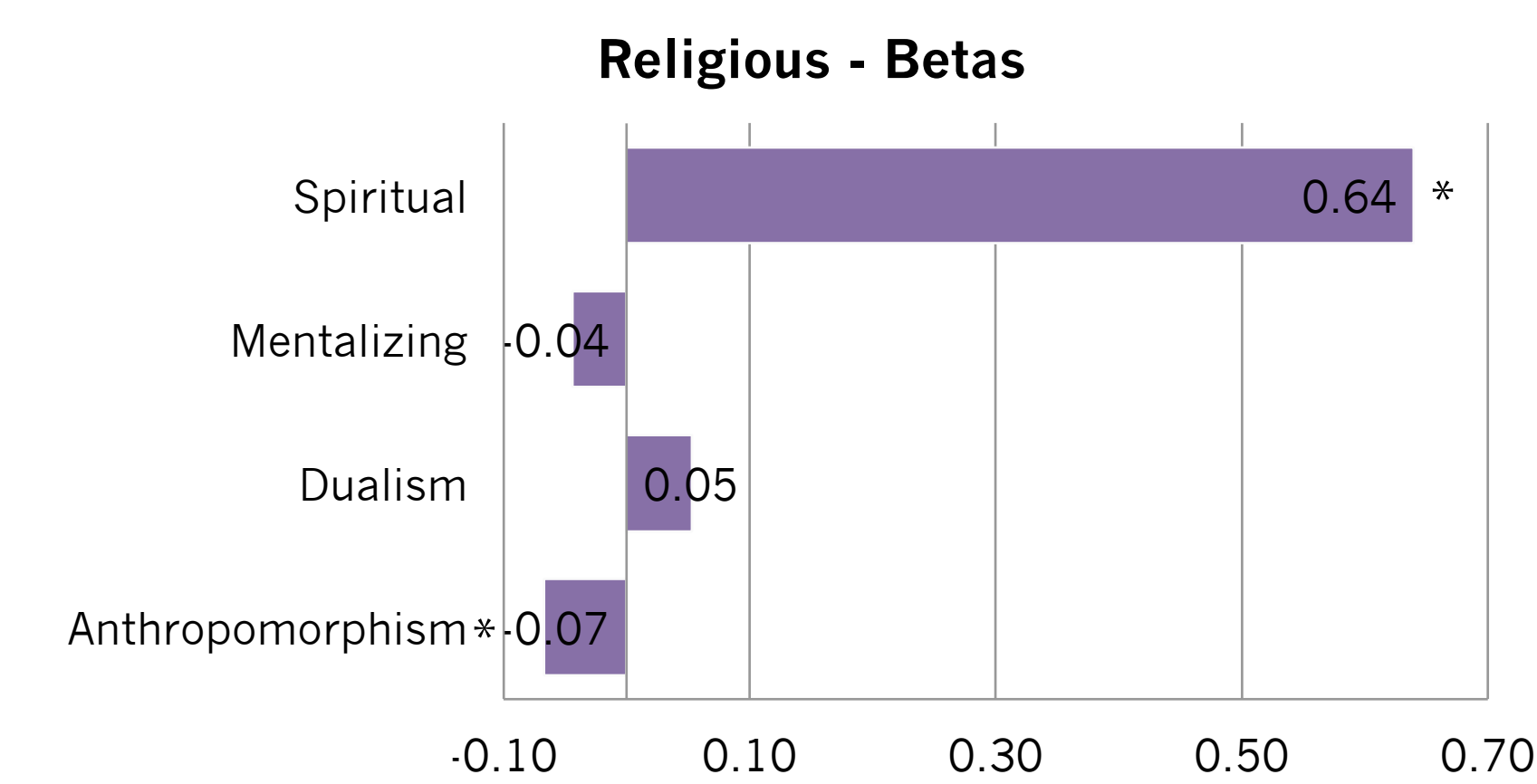


In study 2, we wanted to see if current experiences of the supernatural where affected by how people where raised. We gave people the choice of three categories (religious, spiritual but not religious, and not religious) and asked them to categorize how they were raised and what they are now. We compared our measures using contrasts (religious and SBNR > not religious; religious > SBNR). Stars represent significance after controlling for current association (for 'raised') or how you where raised for (for 'now').

Study 1

Participants: 917 people (66.4% female) collect on Amazons Mechanical Turk.

In study we wanted to see how different cognitive biases related to participants rating of spirituality and religiosity independently of one another. We found that all three cognitive biases were significantly and positively related to spiritual ratings after controlling for religious ratings. This was not the case for religious ratings after controlling for spiritual ratings. The only relationship that remained significant was a negative relationship to anthropomorphism. Other controls: age and gender. From this we can conclude that when participants refer to themselves as spiritual it is, at least in part, describing their mentalist intuitions about the world.



Measures

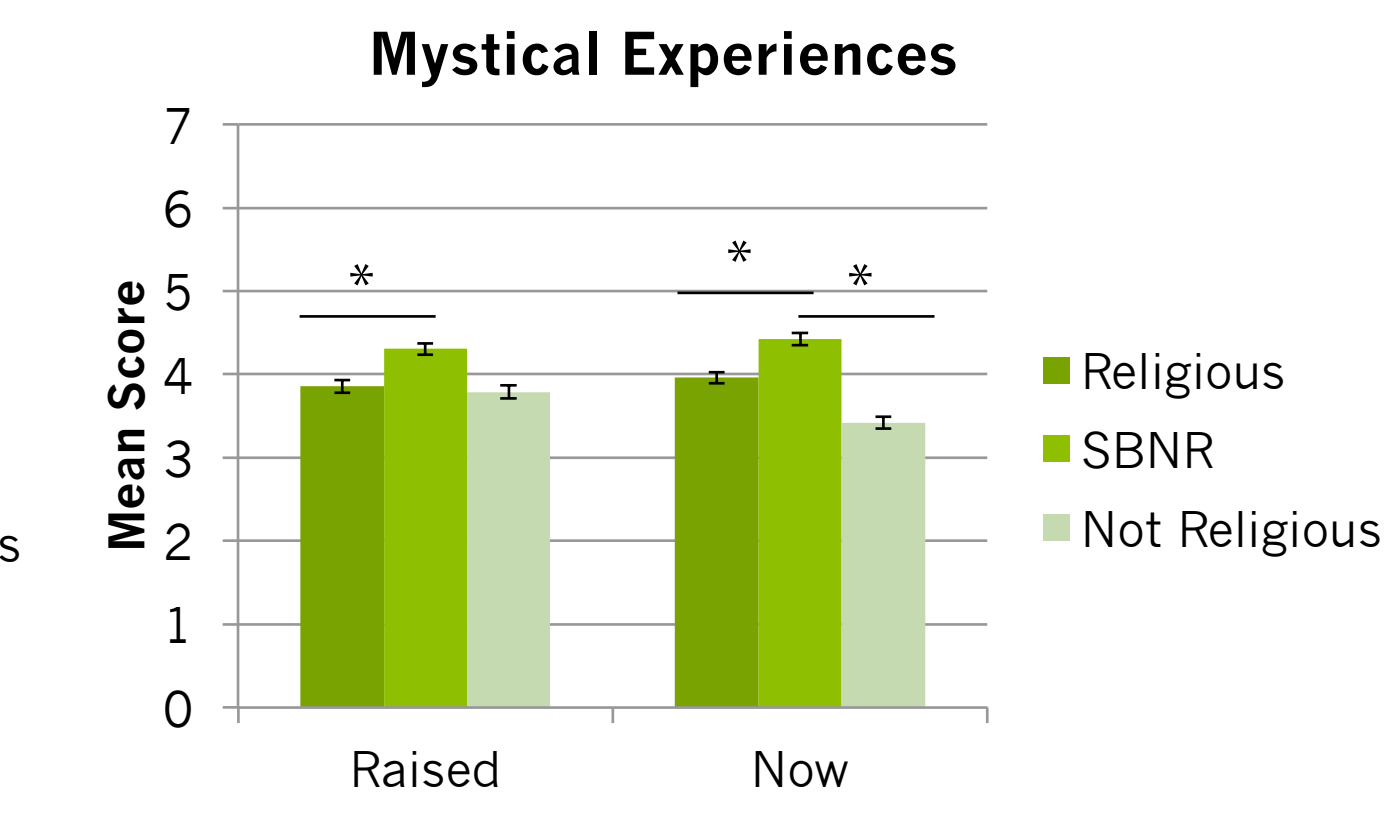
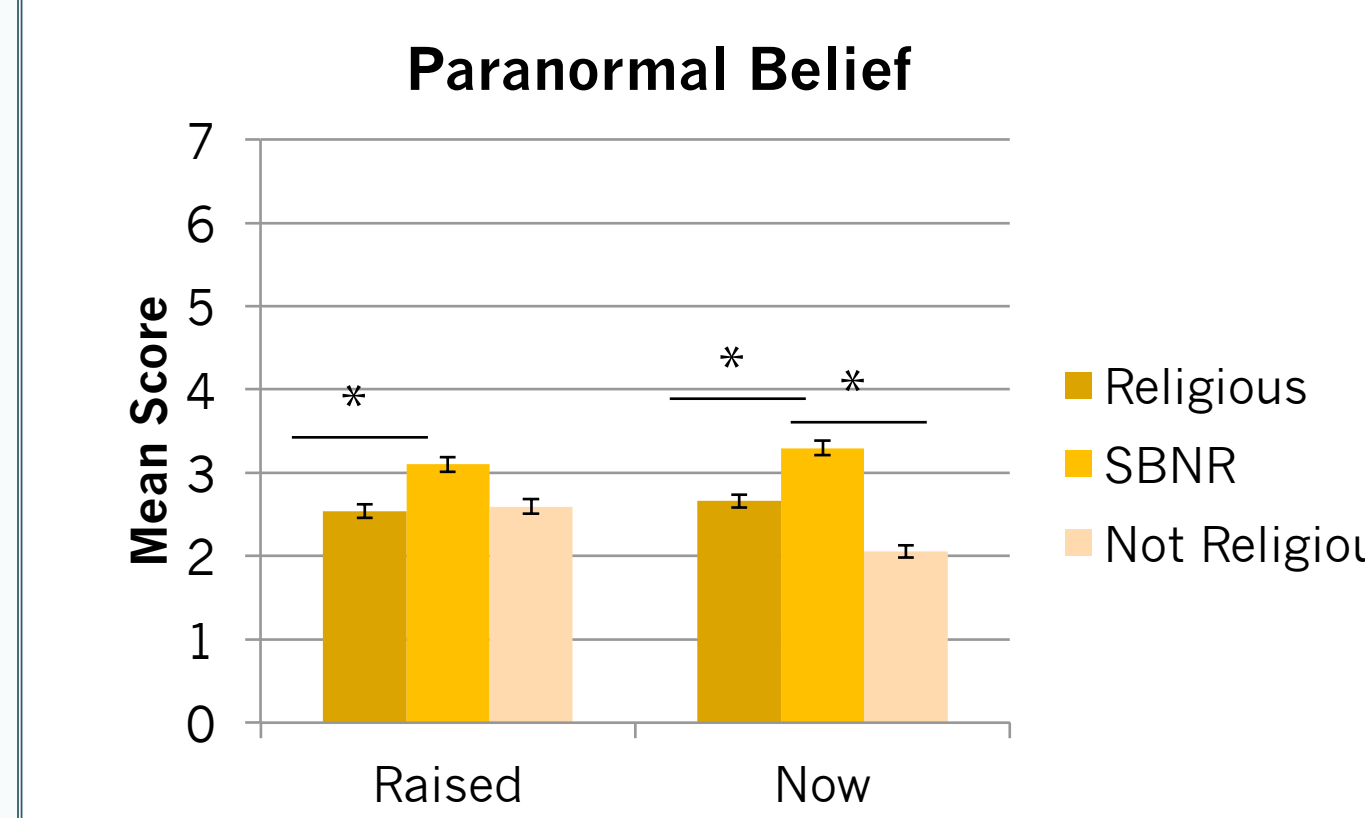
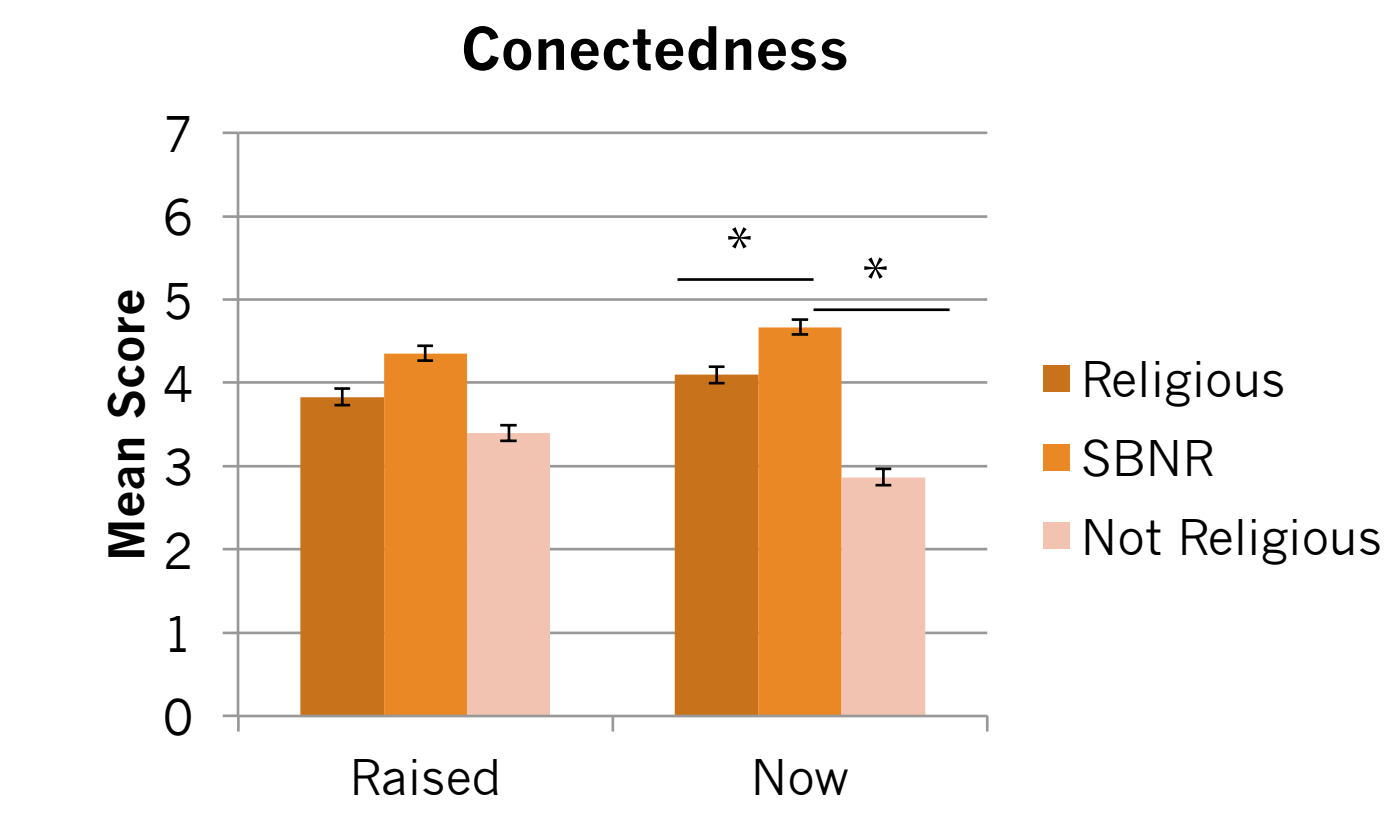
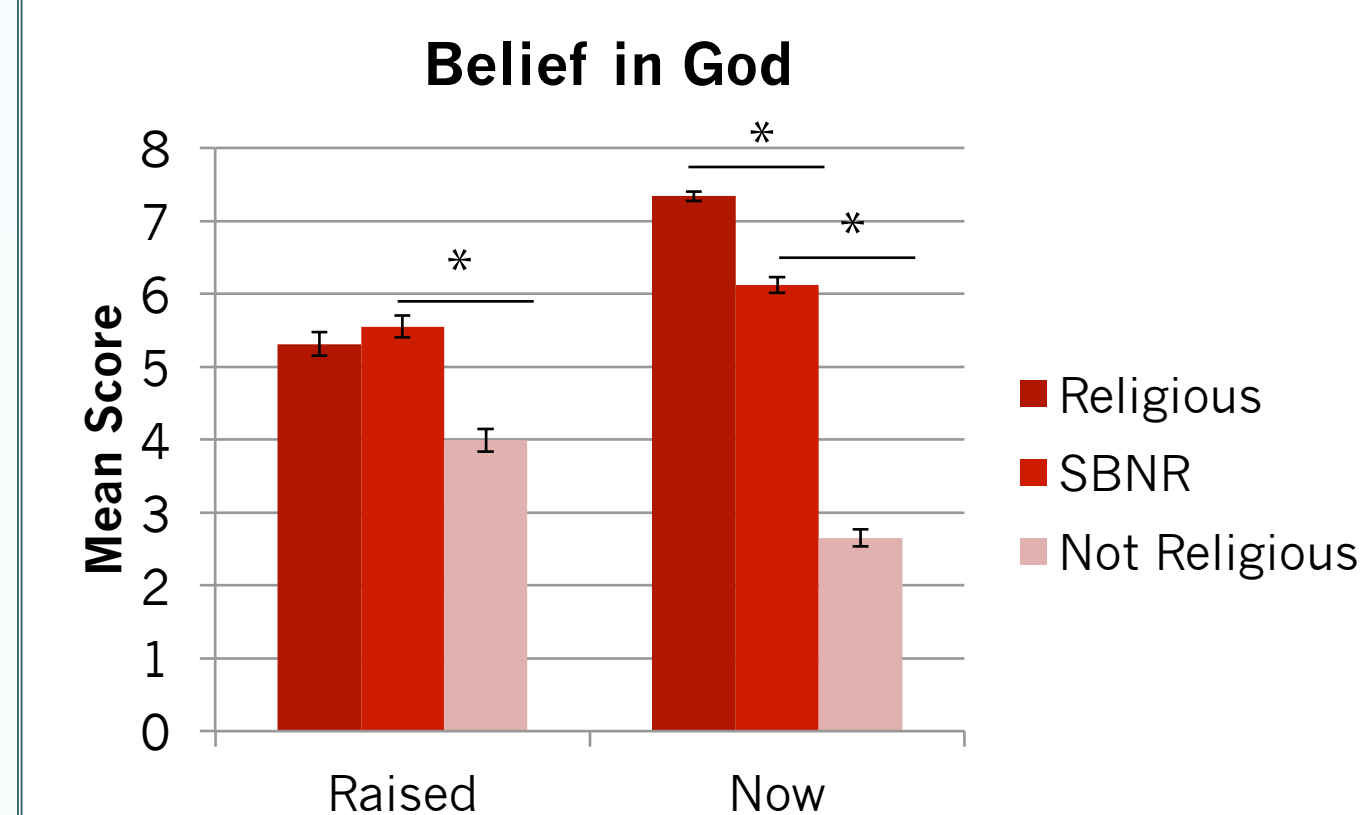
- Mentalizing:** The ability to see others as having mental states such as beliefs thoughts and desires and being able to interpret these states (22 items).
- Dualism:** Seeing the mind as a non-physical entity separate from the body (26 items).
- Anthropomorphism:** The tendency to see non-humans as having human-like minds (15 items).
- Belief in God:** Three questions assessing peoples belief in God (3 items).
- Paranormal Beliefs:** Belief in non-religious supernatural phenomenon such as astrology, psychic abilities and witchcraft (19 items)
- Connectedness:** The feeling of being connected to the universe or a higher power (not explicitly God; 10 items).
- Mystical Experiences:** The direct and personal experience of religious or other supernatural phenomenon (16 items).
- Schizotypal Personality:** A personality disorder associated with cognitive or perceptual distortions and eccentricities of behavior. Can be seen as a precursor to schizophrenia (75 items).

Study 2

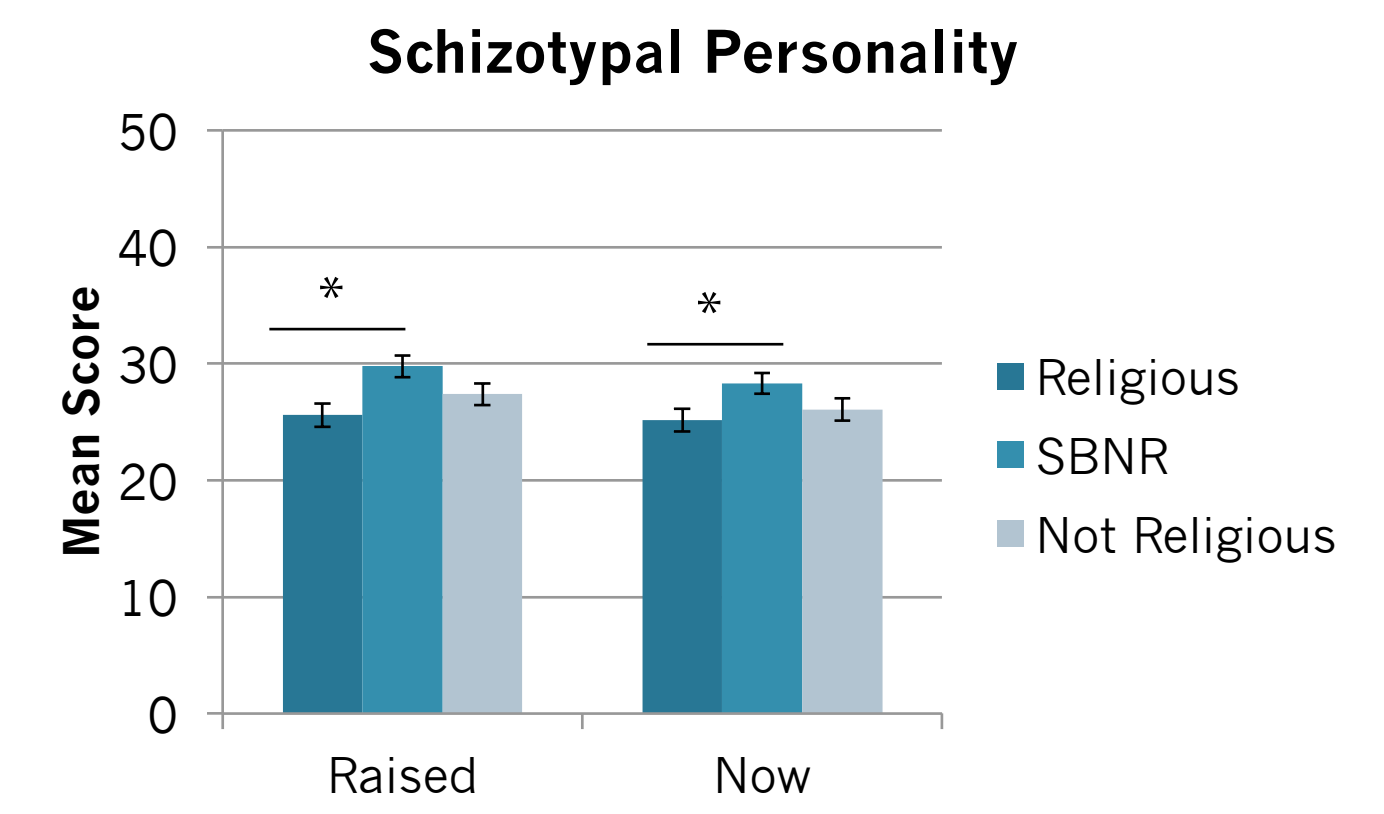
Participants: 1010 people (57.8% female) collect on Amazons Mechanical Turk.

Affiliation: raised and now

		Now			Total
		Religious	SBNR	Not Religious	
Raised	Religious	207	188	218	613
		33.80%	30.70%	35.60%	60.70%
	SBNR	13	90	32	135
		9.60%	66.70%	23.70%	13.40%
Not Religious	31	68	163	262	
	11.80%	26.00%	62.20%	25.90%	
Total	251	346	413	1010	
	24.90%	34.30%	40.90%		



Research in mental health has found some associations between SBNR affiliation and poor mental health outcomes. We looked at schizotypal personality disorder and found that people who are either raised SBNR or are currently SBNR score higher on this measure. Those both raised or currently religious score the lowest on this measure, though this difference is not significant.



We wanted to see if any of the cognitive biases predicted which people converted from one group to another. We looked at people who claimed to be raised in one group but now see themselves as another. The graph below is odds ratios. This mean, for example, that a one unit increase in dualism increased the odds of converting from religious to SBNR by 1.57 times. Significance is indicated by a star.

