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He Sends Rain Upon the Wicked

A Panel Study of the Influence of Religiosity on Violent Victimization

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This research investigates low religiosity as a predictor of violent victimization. The theoretical framework the authors present here posits that religiosity should help structure daily activities in such a way as to (a) limit exposure to offenders by encouraging contact with peers who are less deviant, (b) lessen one's target suitability by inhibiting grievance-causing delinquent activity, and (c) enhance guardianship by fostering stronger bonds with parents and school. Thus, although researchers expect religion to be a bivariate predictor of violent victimization, its influence should be indirect. The authors investigate these claims using two waves from the public-use version of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health). The results indicate that religiosity is a correlate of violent victimization. Consistent with these theoretical claims, the effect of religiosity is not direct, but instead occurs indirectly primarily through its influence on self-reported delinquency and peer deviance.

Keywords: *victimization; religiosity; routine activities*

Since Durkheim's work (1897) more than a century ago, the possibility that one's religiosity can lead to greater conformity has produced considerable scholarly attention (e.g., Hirschi & Stark, 1969; Kvaraceus, 1944; Lombroso, 1911; Pearce & Haynie, 2004; Weber, 1958). Indeed, a meta-analysis of 60 studies conducted between 1962 and 1998, concluded that religion has a moderate negative effect on criminal behavior (Baier & Wright, 2001). The reasons why religiosity might affect criminal behavior

included deterrent effects (i.e., the "Hellfire" hypothesis), role-modeling influence, inhibitory influence as an institution of social control, and/or indirect effect of religiosity on peer networks. The meta-analysis also indicated that religion's importance varied across these studies, depending on sample characteristics, as well as offense type and religion. For instance, religion tended to matter more when predicting nonpredatory crime (like drug use) as well as when researchers employed samples from regions where religion is more salient, like the southern United States (e.g., Benda, 1995; Stark & Bainbridge, 1989).

In these contexts, religiosity was often defined (and subsequently measured) as the salience of religion to individuals, denominational affiliation, denominational homogamy, attendance at religious services, level of belief in the Bible and its teachings, and/or a combination of these factors. Teachings such as the golden rule and other principles presented through participation in organized religions were hypothesized to affect adverse behaviors and protect society's members by acting as a mechanism of informal social control (Elifson, Petersen, & Hadaway, 1983; Mason & Windle, 2001). In this regard, the dogmas, practices, traditions, and consequences (both good and bad for those who follow the teachings and those who transgress, respectively) can contribute to increases in pro-social integration for believers (Ross, 1994). For example, several studies have noted a significant decrease in antiascetic, or victimless, behaviors such as alcohol and drug use for religious respondents (Burkett & White, 1974; Cochran & Akers, 1989; Pearce & Haynie, 2004).

Over the years, researchers have continued to address the inverse relationship between religiosity and law-violating behaviors. The majority of studies in the religion-deviance literature have focused on exploring religion's influence on delinquent behaviors; a large proportion of these studies surveyed

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juveniles (Evans, Cullen, Dunaway, & Burton, 1995). Given the significant negative findings observed therein, several major theories of crime (particularly strain, differential association, social control, and deterrence theories) have been extended to proffer explanations for why religion might add to our understanding of crime causation (e.g., Coleman, 1988; Grasmick, Bursik, & Cochran, 1991; Harris, 2003; Hirschi, 1969; Hirschi & Stark, 1969; Smith, 2003). Religiosity is clearly a topic of consequence among criminologists.

Around the same time researchers were examining the connection between religiosity and crime/delinquency, other scholars were offering explanations for the homogeneous connection between offenders and victims commonly observed in such publications as the National Crime Victimization Survey, the British Crime Survey, and large self-report studies (e.g., Wolfgang, Figlio, & Sellin, 1972). Given the shared relationship between offending and becoming a victim, it would be expected that religiosity, as a significant correlate of deviance, might also impact victimization. Thus, if religion can restrain believers from engaging in deviant acts, could it also lessen victimization risk for the religious?

Religiosity may have broader implications than the literature has so far indicated. Specifically, religion might have relevance for understanding the incidence of crime victimization among individuals. One can extrapolate a link between religion and victimization from some of the major findings reported in the victimization literature. This literature has consistently found that (a) offenders and victims are often the same people, and (b) predictors of crime also successfully predict victimization (e.g., Haynie & Piquero, 2006; Jensen & Brownfield, 1986; Lauritsen, Laub, & Sampson, 1992; Piquero & Hickman, 2003; Schreck, 1999; Wolfgang et al., 1972). In view of the well-established close connection between criminal activity and victimization, it would seem to follow that those who are less religious (and who typically engage in more crime) should be moderately more likely to be victims of crime. A small number of recent studies have offered somewhat more direct evidence, finding that religion has a moderate, and sometimes indirect, influence on experiencing intimate violence (e.g., Cunradi, Caetano, & Schafer, 2002; Howard, Qui, & Boekeloo, 2003). Apart from these exploratory studies, which employed samples of limited generalizability, (for instance 12- to 17-year-olds in a managed care health program in the Washington, D. C. area), the literature offers little insight about the link between religiosity and general violent victimization. Besides a small empirical literature from which to draw insights, the possible theoretical importance of religiosity as a precursor of victimization has yet to be articulated as well.

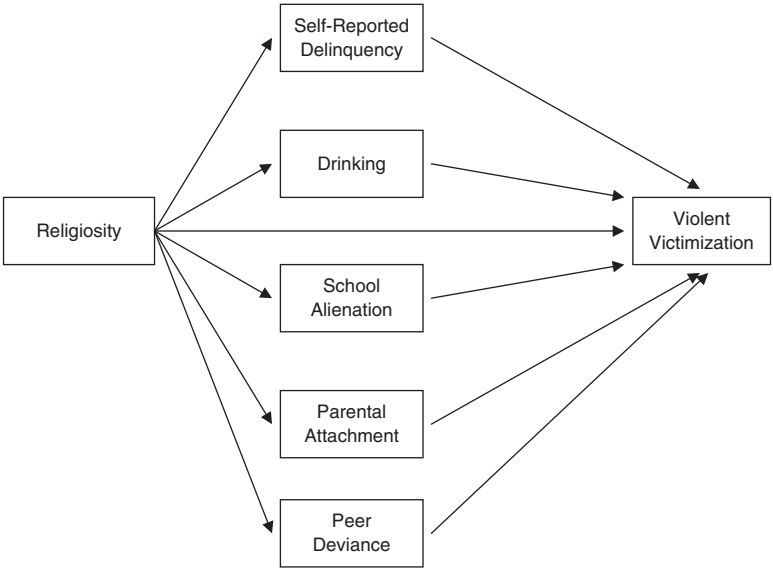
The research presented here therefore has two purposes. First, we propose a substantive explanation for why religion might influence victimization risk. We theorize that religion should structure individual lifestyles in such a way as to make it less likely individuals will find themselves in situations where victimization risk is high. This paradigm, most commonly utilized and supported in the victim-offender overlap literature, introduces a novel way of validating religion's significance as a correlate of not only delinquency and antiascetic behaviors, but also, victimization. Second, we test our substantive claims using the first two waves of the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health). There are a number of advantages associated with using the Add Health. The data set is longitudinal, thus allowing us to incorporate a temporal order element into the analysis. Besides offering a broad range of relevant measures, results obtained from Add Health data can be generalized to adolescents attending school in the United States. We begin by describing our conceptual framework as a prelude to the analysis.

Conceptual Framework

Our general framework builds from the work of Cohen and Felson (1979) and Hindelang, Gottfredson, and Garofalo (1978), and their routine activities/lifestyles perspective. This perspective argues that crime occurs through the convergence in time and space of motivated offenders, worthwhile targets, and ineffective guardianship. Situations with these three characteristics will have the highest inherent risk of victimization, and removing any one of these elements from a given situation should eliminate the possibility of direct-contact victimization. The routine activities/lifestyles perspective has generated a large body of research (e.g., Cohen, Kluegel, & Land, 1981; Fisher, Sloan, Cullen, & Lu, 1998; Meier & Miethe, 1993; Miethe, Stafford, & Long, 1987; Miethe, Stafford, & Sloane, 1990; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 1998), and indeed it is fair to say that this perspective is the most important framework for understanding victimization.

Below, we suggest that religion might structure the lives and routines of its adherents to a greater degree than those who are less involved in religious life and thus affect the convergence of the three necessary conditions for crime, presumably making those who are more religious less likely to be victims of crime. Figure 1 depicts the basic causal model that we propose. As it is beyond our purpose to explain variation in religiosity, the model therefore treats religiosity as exogenous. We theorize that religiosity would influence bonds to adults and school, self-reported delinquency, and friendships

Figure 1
The Effect of Religiosity on Violent Victimization



with deviant peers. These intervening variables should then, in turn, affect one's level of violent victimization.

Religiosity and Peer Deviance (Exposure to Motivated Offenders)

Hindelang et al. (1978) proposed what they termed "the principle of homogamy," which asserts that persons often become victims because of increased contact with socio-demographically similar offenders, independent of their own law-violating behavior. Young people, for instance, would tend to be in greater contact with others who are of similar age, which is potentially risky in that young people are disproportionately likely to be involved in crime. The demographic similarities between offenders and their victims are well established in the literature (e.g., Cohen et al., 1981; Miethe et al., 1987; Miethe et al., 1990).

Researchers investigating religion have found some evidence to support the idea of "homogamy" associated with religious sentiment—those with high religiosity tend to have like-minded friends (e.g., Burkett & Warren, 1987; Johnson, Jang, Larson, & Li, 2001). This connection is potentially consequential in that research has found that individuals who have delinquent friends tend to report higher levels of violent victimization (e.g., Lauritsen et al., 1992; Schreck, Fisher, & Miller, 2004; Schreck, Wright, & Miller, 2002; Whitbeck, Hoyt, & Yoder, 1999). Indeed, while offenders can sometimes be strangers, National Crime Victimization Survey data reveal that most victims know their offender (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003). The peer context therefore might be important for understanding victimization risk, as religiosity might lead individuals into more sustained contact with conventional peers, and less time with peers who are associated with one having a greater risk of victimization. At the same time, we should note that peer deviance is only one potential indicator of exposure to motivated offenders. Exposure may also come from living in a disorganized neighborhood (Lauritsen, 2001) or even walking out one's front door (Hindelang et al., 1978).

Thus, to the extent that religiosity inhibits criminal activity, a side effect of associating with those high in religiosity might be decreased exposure to motivated offenders. Whereas religiousness likely constrains exposure to motivated offenders in ways other than friendships, we expect that because these peers are generally less likely to engage in criminal activity, individuals who form friendships with them will tend to be safer from victimization.

Religiosity and Self-Reported Delinquency (Enhanced Target Suitability)

As we already noted, there is empirical support for the idea that the religious tend to be less inclined to engage in criminal activity (Baier & Wright, 2001).[1] This tendency among the religious to engage in less crime has clear significance for victimization risk. The literature indicates that delinquent behavior is an important predictor of victimization (e.g., Lauritsen, Sampson, & Laub, 1991). Many explanations for this correlation tend to focus on how delinquency makes one into a suitable target. Singer (1981), for instance, posited that in some subcultures violent retaliation is an appropriate response to one's own victimization (see also, Anderson, 1999). Tedeschi and Felson (1994) noted that much violence and homicide occur because of grievances (see also, Kennedy & Forde, 1998). Whereas grievances may arise for many reasons (e.g., insults), it seems reasonable that victimizing others through force or deception would be very efficacious at sowing grievances as well. Because individuals who are more religious should tend to engage in fewer

criminal acts, they should be less apt to provoke grievances that might lead to violent victimization.

Religiosity and Social Bonds (Guardianship)

Although there are notable exceptions (e.g., the Branch Davidian cult in Waco, Texas), scholars have described religious organizations generally as "eminently conventional" institutions (Marcos, Bahr, & Johnson, 1986). Researchers have also speculated that religiosity is an institution that typically involves stronger ties to conventional others, thus strengthening an individual's bond to society (Baier & Wright, 2001; Tittle & Welch, 1983). Indeed empirical research reports that religious individuals appear to have stronger social bonds with family and school than those who are less religious (Benda, 1995; Cochran, Wood, & Arneklev, 1994; Dijkstra & Peschar, 1996; Jeynes, 2003). To the extent that a strong bond with parents and teachers implies that children will spend greater time in the company of these individuals, bonds may be relevant for enhancing guardianship.[2] Felson (1986) was perhaps the first to suggest that bonds promoted more effective guardianship. For instance, adults, whom a child knows and respects, can function as that child's "handler" and thus deter the child from committing crime. Moreover, bonds may also imply greater time spent in the company of responsible adults, who can serve as protectors as well as monitors of a child's behavior (Schreck et al., 2002). An offender looking to assault a juvenile, for example, would likely find it more convenient to do so when that child's parents or teachers are not around.

However, the research on the effectiveness of social bonds as a source of protection from victimization tends to be mixed. Researchers have shown that bonds to parents and school relate to victimization at the bivariate level (e.g., Lauritsen et al., 1992), but the effects can become insignificant in a multivariate analysis (e.g., Schreck et al., 2002). Other research finds some support for a connection between family and school attachments and victimization (e.g., Augustine, Wilcox, Ousey, & Clayton, 2002; Esbensen, Huizinga, & Menard, 1999; Schreck & Fisher, 2004). In short, to the extent that religiosity constrains individuals to spend more time with parents and teachers (or other responsible persons), one would expect that religiosity would indirectly lead to less violent victimization.

Summary of Hypotheses

The theory described above offers the following hypotheses. First, religiosity will be a statistically significant predictor of violent victimization,

net of the standard array of demographic control variables. That is, those who have high religiosity should experience lower levels of victimization. Second, religiosity should not have a statistically significant direct effect on victimization after incorporating controls for social bonds, delinquency, and peer deviance. Third, the indirect effect of religiosity on victimization, however, should be statistically significant. Moreover, religiosity should correspond with stronger bonds with parents and school, less delinquency, and friends who are less deviant.

Methods

To explore these hypotheses, we use two waves of data from the public-use version of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health). The Add Health samples a nationally representative sample of American adolescents attending school between Grades 7 and 12. The initial wave of data collection was in 1995, with the second wave a year later. The full sample at Wave 1 consists of approximately 6,500 youth. More than 3,000 youth completed the questions of interest to us in the analysis in both waves of data. The loss of more than half of the sample is because of the combination of attrition of subjects between waves (i.e., subjects who participated in Wave 1 but not Wave 2), as well as respondents who did not answer questions that we used in our analyses. To minimize lost cases because of the latter problem, we replaced missing values with the series mean for those individuals who were only missing one item in an index; the remainder of respondents was subject to listwise deletion.

Measures

To reduce problems with endogeneity, at least with respect to the main research questions, the primary predictors (religiosity, delinquency, social bonds, and peer deviance) were measured during Wave 1 and violent victimization at Wave 2. We describe our measures in greater detail below. Descriptive statistics for these measures are reported in Table 1.

Violent victimization. Three items, measured during Wave 2, contributed to the latent variable for violent victimization. These questions asked respondents whether, in the past 12 months, they had been threatened with a knife or gun, had someone attempt to stab them, and whether they had been "jumped." The coding of these items is ordinal (e.g., 0 = *never*, 1 = *once*, 2 = *more than once*). As expected for violent victimization, the distribution

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Standardized Bivariate Correlations, Corrected for Measurement Error

	Male	Age	White	Welfare Receipt	Low Religiosity	Delinqency	Drinking	School Alienation	Parental Attachment	Peer Deviance	Violent Victimization
Male	1.00										
Age	−.02	1.00									
White	.14	.03	1.00								
Welfare Receipt	−.06	−.08	−.46	1.00							
Low Religiosity	.08	.11	.19	.00	1.00						
Delinquency	.32	−.08	−.19	.20	.15	1.00					
Drinking	.05	−.36	−.14	−.07	−.27	−.54	1.00				
School Alienation	−.02	.12	.02	.06	.22	.24	−.23	1.00			
Parental Attachment	.08	−.19	−.06	.09	−.20	−.14	.22	−.40	1.00		
Peer Deviance	−.04	.46	.00	.09	.31	.19	−.48	.22	−.19	1.00	
Violent Victimization	.38	−.05	−.28	.15	.04	.65	−.27	.12	−.06	.12	1.00
Mean	.51	15.95	.74	.09	2.31	.26	3.46	2.25	4.76	.84	.08
Standard Deviation	.50	1.78	.44	.29	1.32	.41	1.02	.88	.47	.72	.22
Minimum	0	13	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0
Maximum	1	19	1	1	5	3	4	5	5	3	3

for this measure is highly skewed, with only a very small proportion experiencing one incident and considerably less experiencing two or more incidents.[3]

Low religiosity. To measure religiosity, we employed Pearce and Haynie's (2004) measurement strategy. The latent variable for low religiosity included two 5-point items, measured during Wave 1. First, respondents were asked how often they attended religious services (1 = *once a week or more*). Second, they were asked how important religion was to them (1 = *very important*). The typical respondents scored approximately a 2 on these measures, indicating that they generally attended church, but on a less than weekly basis.[4] Because these two items tended to predict victimization equally well, as well as the fact that they correlated well with each other, we elected to combine two items into a "low religiosity" index to eliminate redundancy in the analysis as well as in the presentation of the results.

Self-reported delinquency. The latent variable for self-reported delinquency consisted of five items measured at Wave 1. These items measure participation in paint graffiti, vandalism, involvement in a serious physical fight, injuring someone in a fight, and participation in a group fight. The ordinal response categories permitted responses ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 3 (*five or more times*). The average respondent reported very infrequent participation in the forms of delinquency that we measured here.

Binge-drinking. Because heavy alcohol consumption is, in many studies, connected with higher levels of violent victimization, we included an indicator for binge-drinking. The question item asked respondents how often they consumed five or more alcoholic drinks in a row (with a range of 1 through 4, with 1 = *almost every day* and 4 = *never*). According to the descriptive statistics, the typical respondent reported binge-drinking approximately two to three times per month.[5]

Peer deviance. Peer deviance consists of four items tapping minor forms of deviance measured at Wave 1, with an identical coding scheme to that of self-reported delinquency (i.e., scores ranging from 0 to 3). Note that the respondents did not provide any data on their peers, except to nominate others attending the school as friends. The Add Health survey designers identified those nominated and reconstructed each respondent's peer network. These peer-deviance items report the average scores for all peers nominated or who nominated the respondent. For the typical respondent, the deviance of his or her peers is generally low, with an average peer deviance score of .84 (almost equivalent to *once or twice* for each of the four items).

Parental attachment. Four question items from the Wave 1 survey contributed to the parental attachment index, which we adapted from Haynie (2001). Two items measured whether the respondent felt close to the mother or father. Because many respondents came from families with only one parent, we created a "parental closeness" variable. The score for this variable was determined by whichever parent scored highest on closeness (also, if the respondent was missing either the father or the mother, then the other parent's score was retained). The other two questionnaire items asked whether the respondent felt that mother or father cared. The same procedure for creating the parental-closeness measure was used to create a "parents' care" measure. The two items for parental closeness and caring were combined in the latent variable analysis to create the parental-attachment measure. The average scores for both measures approached 5, indicating that the typical respondent felt close to his or her parents and believed that they cared.

School alienation. Three items measure school attachment at Wave 1, which we also used from Haynie's (2001) research. Respondents were asked how close they felt to people at school, whether they felt a part of school, and whether they were happy at school. All items have scores ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). The average level of school attachment among the respondents was approximately a 2, indicating agreement (but not strong agreement) that they felt like they were a part of school and were happy at school.

Demographic controls. The analysis includes four demographic control variables: age, gender (1 = *male*), race (1 = *White*), and whether the family was receiving welfare support (1 = *yes*). The sample is very nearly evenly divided between males and females. Because the Add Health oversampled African-Americans, only 66 percent of the base sample is white. To address this problem, the survey designers included sampling weights to correct the oversampling. We include these three demographic measures in particular, because, according to National Crime Victimization Survey statistics, they are each correlates of victimization (e.g., Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003).

Analysis Techniques

To analyze the hypotheses mentioned earlier, we created structural equation models using LISREL 8.7 software (Joreskog & Sorbom, 2004). This particular software is highly suitable in that it can easily decompose a predictor variable's total influence on a dependent variable and report the magnitude of

Table 2
Standardized Coefficients for Structural Parameters
(Reduced Model, *N* = 3,082)

Dependent Variables	Controls			Religiosity	Explained Variance
	Male	Age	White		
Low Religiosity (W1)	.04	.07*	.23*	—	.06
Violent Victimization (W2)	.39*	−.03	−.18*	.11*	.18

Note: W1 = Wave 1, W2 = Wave 2. Goodness-of-Fit Index = .999; Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index = .998; Critical N = 4,359.07; Satorra-Bentler Chi Square = 19.58; *df* = 13.
*$p < .05$.

that variable's direct and indirect effects, as well as the statistical significance of these effects. Because we postulated that the influence of religion on victimization is generally indirect, this ability is critically important to testing our hypotheses.[6]

Results

Table 1 reports the standardized bivariate correlations produced in LISREL, which corrects the estimates for measurement error. This table also reports the descriptive statistics for all of the measures summarized earlier.

Table 2 shows a reduced-form structural equation model, containing only the controls, religiosity, and victimization. The purpose of this model is to test whether religiosity can predict victimization in the presence of basic demographic controls well established as correlates of violent victimization (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003). All summary model statistics indicate a good model fit. In this analysis, religion appears to have a significant direct influence on victimization risk, net of the control variables.

Table 3 presents the full structural equation model results, which incorporate the variables that we hypothesized to intervene between religion and victimization. Summary model statistics indicate excellent goodness of fit (GFI = .990; AGFI = .985). The Satorra-Bentler χ^2 statistic, however, does suggest a significant lack of model fit ($\chi^2 = 3{,}193.49$, $p < .000$), indicating the possibility of model misspecification because of omitted variables, but this estimate may also be influenced by the sample size. An alternative indicator, the critical N (CN = 495.30), exceeds the 200 minimum that Hoelter (1983) established as the baseline for acceptable model fit. Consequently, the

Table 3
Standardized Coefficients for Structural Parameters (Full Model, N = 3,082)

Dependent Variables	Controls										
	Male	Age	White	Welfare Receipt	Low Religiosity	Delinqency	Drinking	School Alienation	Parental Attachment	Peer Deviance	Explained Victimization
Low Religiosity (W1)	0.06*	0.12*	0.24*	0.12*	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.06
Delinquency (W1)	0.34*	–0.08*	–0.21*	0.12*	0.17*	—	—	—	—	—	0.20
Drinking (W1)	–0.03*	–0.35*	–0.17*	–0.17*	–0.19*	—	—	—	—	—	0.21
School Alienation (W1)	–0.03*	0.10*	0.02	0.07*	0.21*	—	—	—	—	—	0.06
Parental Attachment (W1)	0.10*	–0.16*	0.01	0.09*	–0.19*	—	—	—	—	—	0.09
Peer Deviance (W1)	–0.04*	0.44*	–0.01	0.12*	0.27*	—	—	—	—	—	0.30
Violent Victimization (W2)	0.23*	–0.01	–0.22*	–0.05	–0.03	0.55*	0.03	–0.01	–0.02	0.05*	0.50

Note: W1 = Wave 1; W2 = Wave 2; Goodness-of-Fit Index = .996; Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index = .993; Critical N = 1,857.06; Satorra-Bentler Chi Square = 764.02; df = 172.
* $p < .05$.

significant χ^2 value is likely a consequence of the sample size more than model misspecification.

The structural equation model reveals that religiosity significantly corresponds with a lessened frequency of binge-drinking, stronger parental attachment, less involvement in delinquency and alienation from school, and peers who are less deviant. The results show that the ability of religiosity to explain the variation of these intervening measures is relatively low—clearly social bonds, drinking, delinquency, and association with deviant peers are also a consequence of a broader range of factors than those controlled for in our analysis. Nevertheless, religiosity appears to perform as expected with respect to its connection to those variables we theorized as intervening between it and victimization.

Religiosity, however, does not have a significant direct pathway to later violent victimization. A number of other variables emerged as significant predictors. Net of the other variables, males and nonwhites tend to have significantly greater risk of experiencing violent victimization. As expected, self-reported delinquency has a very strong influence on future violent victimization, with delinquents during Wave 1 having a much higher risk of later becoming victims than was the case with nondelinquents. Peer deviance has a significant, though relatively weak, effect on later victimization. That is, respondents who reported peers who were more deviant during Wave 1 were somewhat more likely to become victims at Wave 2. Consistent with other research (e.g., Schreck et al., 2002), social bonds did not significantly affect victimization net of the other variables. Likewise, the connection between drinking and victimization failed to achieve statistical significance.

LISREL is capable of determining the strength and significance of direct as well as indirect effects of independent variables on dependent variables. The results of this analysis indicated that although religion does not have a significant direct effect (–.01) on violent victimization, it does have a statistically significant indirect effect (.11). This supports our contention that the influence of religion on victimization occurs through intervening variables, especially self-reported delinquency and peer deviance.

Discussion

We began with the speculation, derived from our understanding of the crime and victimization literature, that religion might be a predictor of violent crime victimization. We explored our substantive claims using panel data

collected from a national probability sample of adolescents attending school in the United States. Our results were supportive of our major research hypotheses. Religiosity is a predictor of victimization, but its influence is not direct. Apparently, religion matters for victimization because those who have high religiosity tend to engage in less delinquency, thus, we theorized, giving others somewhat less justification for subjecting them to violence.

It also appears that religion reduces victimization risk by inhibiting friendships with deviant peers, whose friendships enhance victimization risk for a variety of reasons (see Schreck et al., 2004). When surveys measure peer deviance from data provided by the respondents, the effect of peers on victimization is generally much stronger (e.g., Lauritsen et al., 1992; Schreck et al., 2002). This weak performance of peer deviance is in accord with the findings of Schreck and his colleagues (2004), who also used the Add Health to study victimization. They reported that peer deviance tends to matter more in interaction with the structural characteristics of peer networks (such as centrality, density, and popularity) than as a main effect. That is, network structure is either a facilitator or inhibitor of victimization, depending on how deviant one's peers are. Future research might seek to explore whether religion influences victimization through its effects on peer network structure. In the meantime, however, the influence of peer deviance appears secondary in importance to that of self-reported delinquency, perhaps because delinquents tend to prefer the company of delinquents (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990).

Limitations

Although the pathways specified in our structural equation model are derived from routine activities/lifestyles theories, readers should be aware that these pathways could be specified in other ways as well (e.g., Benda, 1997; Johnson et al., 2001; Smith, 2003). For instance, one may reasonably argue that parental attachment is an antecedent to religiosity, rather than the other way around. We should first note that our data could not conclusively resolve this question, because both constructs were measured during Wave 1. Second, testing alternative conceptual frameworks was tangential to our purpose. Specifically, we were interested in (a) whether religion is a correlate of violent victimization, and (b) whether controlling for social bonds and delinquency mediates the influence of religion. Rearranging the pathways of the structural equation model to reflect other theoretical perspectives would not have affected our results with respect to the central issues of this study.

Another limitation of our research follows from the large number of studies on religiosity and delinquency. As we noted earlier, Baier and Wright

(2001) counted more than 60 of these studies during a three-decade period, and there are many more. Although the religiosity measures in this study derive from existing literature (Pearce & Haynie, 2004), it is clear that there are other ways to measure religiosity and that these alternative measures might have empirical consequences (e.g., Benda & Corwyn, 2002). Also noted earlier, numerous other theoretical frameworks have already attempted to explain the effect of religion on delinquency. For example, one can point to the "moral communities" hypothesis of Stark and Bainbridge (1989), who posited that community contexts could inhibit or amplify the effect of religiosity on delinquency (see also, Regnerus, 2003). Readers should be aware that, in contrast to the research exploring the connection between religion and delinquency, the religion-victimization literature is in an embryonic state with scant empirical literature and no theories. To the extent that the findings of the religion and delinquency literature parallel what we might find with respect to victimization, it is not possible to adequately address each of the issues suggested in this literature with a single study. Readers should view this research as a first step toward developing the literature on religion and victimization.

Implications

Our results potentially speak to extending routine activities/lifestyles theories. Theories of delinquency often consider religion as it changes individuals in ways that make them less likely to commit crime. Differential association theory, for instance, would interpret religion as a context in which differential learning takes place. In our view, religion serves other functions as well. In the case of victimization, at least, religion may impose controls on the mundane daily lifestyles of its adherents as well as socialize them in important ways. In this case, religion might (perhaps inadvertently, given the more explicit social control purposes of religious dogma) constrain individuals to spend much more of their time in situations that are relatively safer from victimization. The Add Health data, however, do not offer the highly detailed measures of daily activity that are reported in some of the major recent studies of victimization (e.g., Fisher et al., 1998; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 1998). Future research might profit from more refined measures of lifestyle.

Our results also might have utility for the understanding of victimization more generally. Unlike criminology, where research has uncovered dozens of correlates of criminal behavior, the same level of development is not evident in the victimization literature. Research uncovering new correlates of victimization therefore increases the breadth of inquiry and may well generate further

theoretical attention. The extensiveness of the religion and delinquency literature suggests the research potential with respect to religion and victimization.

Conclusion

Past literature generally finds that religion is a correlate of crime; this fact, combined with the finding that the correlates of crime and victimization are often identical, indicates that religion ought to therefore be predictive of victimization. Although the finding of a new correlate of victimization is useful in and of itself, we provided a conceptual framework to explain the connection herein. More specifically, we reasoned that religiosity structured daily activity and lifestyles in such a way as to position individuals in situations where their personal safety tended to be greater. Those who are religious will tend to have stronger bonds with parents and school (leading to more effective guardianship), commit less crime (decreasing target attractiveness), and spend more time with peers who are not deviant (lessening exposure to offenders).

Results from the statistical analyses indicated that religiosity indirectly influenced violent victimization for juveniles. We acknowledged that other mechanisms, such as an individual's daily activities, might explain the connection between religion and victimization. At present, however, the literature is silent about these alternatives. Given a century of interest by researchers about religion and its ability to enforce conformity, learning more about why religion matters for victimization promises to be a fruitful and interesting area of inquiry.

Notes

1. Readers should note that it is beyond the scope of this study to further research the religion-delinquency connection. Although, as noted earlier, the religion-delinquency literature is very deep, we believe that an in-depth discussion at this point would distract from the connection between religion and victimization.

2. Note that there is some evidence to suggest that controlling for delinquent peers renders spurious the connection between religious bonds and delinquency (e.g., Benda & Corwyn, 1997). Some researchers, however, have questioned the validity of the standard measurement of "delinquent peers," noting that the measures are compelled to rely on the respondent to provide an accurate and honest assessment of his or her friends' participation in deviant or delinquent activity (e.g., Jussim & Osgood, 1989). Gottfredson and Hirschi (1987), for instance, were highly skeptical of the validity of respondent-generated peer measures, pointing out that peer deviance is quite likely a proxy measure for the respondent's own deviance. What few studies use peer-generated peer deviance measures tend to support

the critics of the respondent-generated peer measures. For example, Haynie (2001), using the Add Health data, found that the impact of peer deviance on delinquency is considerably less when the peers themselves provide the data for the peer measure (see also, Schreck, Fisher, & Miller, 2004). As this research also employs the Add Health, a very strong peer effect is unlikely.

3. We intended to include a measure of victimization at Wave 1 to estimate stability of victimization across waves, as well as control for other preexisting differences in level of victimization; however, our preliminary tests revealed very strong correlations between victimization and self-reported delinquency. For this reason we elected to drop the victimization measure as essentially redundant with delinquency.

4. Pearce and Haynie also included a measure of type of religious affiliation in their analysis. Besides not having a theoretical reason to believe that one religious denomination would be safer from victimization than another, we elected not to use this measure because bivariate analyses indicated that, of the numerous denominations measured, none of them (except for Lutherans) had a significant correlation with victimization. Given that the list of denominations was lengthy, it is quite probable that the weak significance of Lutheran religious identification is an artifact of random error. By collapsing denominations into broader categories (e.g., "conservative Protestant") statistically significant influences could emerge (see Regnerus, 2003); however, as noted already, we would not be able to meaningfully interpret any observed relationship, and therefore would not be able to ascertain whether the results were the consequence of chance.

5. In our preliminary analyses, we also controlled for other measures of what religion scholars refer to as "ascetic" delinquency, like times skipped school, and times he/she smoked pot. The literature has established a connection between ascetic delinquency and religiosity (e.g., Cochran, 1988; Harris, 2003), and these activities would have obvious connections with guardianship. Although some research indicates that drinking activity was associated with less victimization (at least among homeless youth; e.g., Baron, Kennedy, & Forde, 2001), other research using domiciled populations indicates that alcohol and drug use exacerbates risk, probably because the incoherence and incapacity of those who drink a lot is a considerable disadvantage when it comes to self-protection (e.g., Stewart, Elifson, & Sterk, 2004). Skipping school represents an activity that normally occurs away from responsible adults, and thus may be a proxy for "unsupervised and unmonitored social activity with peers" that other research indicates is a risky lifestyle (e.g. Schreck et al., 2002; Osgood et al., 1996). We elected to report the results for only one form of ascetic delinquency (i.e., binge-drinking) because its effect on victimization, or lack thereof, net of the other measures, is identical to that of the other indicators of ascetic delinquency.

6. Structural equation models (SEM) also offer other advantages. Most regression procedures assume that the independent variables are directly observed and, consequently, are perfectly measured. Critics of self-report research, on the other hand, have noted that this assumption is often inappropriate and, moreover, that different measures can vary considerably in their accuracy (e.g., Hindelang, Hirschi, & Weis, 1981). This means that some indexes and items can appear more salient, based simply on the fact that they were better measured than other items in the analysis. On the other hand, a researcher can use SEM to create a latent variable analysis that can account for measurement error (Bollen, 1989). Because our data are primarily ordinal, we used the PRELIS procedure to create polychoric correlation and asymptotic covariance matrices. During the LISREL procedure, which computes the SEM, we used the diagonally weighted least squares criterion (which can control for the varying degrees of accuracy across the polychoric correlations) to estimate the structural parameters.

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