

ABSTRACT

Religious Coping: The Role of Religion in Mediating the Effects of Sex Victimization on Trust

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Recent reports concerning violence against women estimate that over 3% of female college students are sexually assaulted each year. If other forms of non-consensual sexual contact are included in these numbers, the estimates climb to upwards of 20%. With such high victimization rates, there is a resounding call for study of both offenders and victims to decrease these rates and mitigate the social effects of being victimized. Using data from a longitudinal study of female college students, this paper outlines the effects of victimization on the generalized trust held by the victims. Religious service attendance, as a venue for social capital, and religious normative influence are tested as potential medium for mediation of these effects. Mechanisms for this mediation are also discussed.

Religious Coping: The Role of Religion in Mediating
the Effects of Sex Victimization on Trust

by

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"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."

~ Winston Churchill

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In a report from the early 1990s, researchers estimated that one in eight women reported being the victim of rape at some point in their lifetimes (NVC and CVC 1992), with 61.6% of these incidents occurring before the age of 18. In a 2000 report, the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) estimated that 3.5% of female college students were victims of sex crimes, with 22.8% of these being multiple-rape victims within a given academic year (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). With recent widespread reports of victimization of young women, such as the Steubenville rape case,¹ it does not appear that these rates are substantially diminishing. Recent reports confirm that despite declines in overall crime rates, rates of sexual victimization remain substantially present (Truman & Rand, 2010).

Succinctly, sexual victimization is a pervasive pandemic within modern America. Victimization in itself is disquieting, and the negative effects that stem from the incident are numerous. Individuals and organizations are combatting this pandemic from all fronts. Some focus on the perpetrator, working to minimize the number of incidents that occur while determining the proper repercussions. Others focus on the victim, working to understand the factors that contribute to higher likelihoods of being victimized as well as minimizing the subsequent social effects. There is obviously much work to be done on all fronts. Policy makers attempt to change the structural factors which contribute to

¹ In August 2012, the public rape of a sixteen-year-old in Steubenville, Ohio garnered national attention for the cultural apathy which surrounded the incident and resulted in a public outcry for justice, with international organizations becoming involved in unraveling an alleged cover-up.

victimization while social workers work to rehabilitate and reintroduce both victim and offender. It is the role of the sociologist and the criminologist to provide the information to accomplish such action.

Just as there are two directions to the focus of modifying victimization rates, there are two directions in research focus regarding sex victimization-- victim-based or offender-based. This paper focuses specifically on victims of sexually-based crimes and the social systems that may help to rehabilitate them or reduce the social effects of victimization, namely through religious beliefs or participation within religious congregations. While there has been much research regarding sex victimization, there has been little empirical investigation of the social effects of rape on the victim, and further, how these negative effects might be mediated by involvement in a social system, namely religion.

Research suggests strong links between victimization and individual social effects, such as changes in generalized trust. Other research also links between religion, through both theological beliefs and social participation, and generalized trust. These two bodies of literature, however, have not yet been linked. The purpose of this study is to fill this gap, contributing to both bodies of literature—examining the possible effects of religious social systems as venues for victims to cope with sexually-based crimes. Specifically, I aim to investigate the ability of religious beliefs and participation in religious organizations to play this role. These findings may support possible policy changes regarding religious counseling services to victims of sexual crimes, particularly young women and college students, or concerning religious programs that are working on ministries to support this same population.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Chapter Overview

Independently, the fields of religion and criminology have offered a great deal in explaining the generation and maintenance of trust. Victimization has been linked to lower levels of trust, and the mechanisms by which this effect occurs has been thoroughly documented. Religion has been shown to affect trust levels as well, via both social capital formation and maintenance and through specific theologies and beliefs. These bodies of literature provide a foundation for the theoretical framework of this paper. Through linking these two literatures, I examine the possibility for sexual victims to utilize religion as a means to cope with their victimization and the mechanisms by which this may occur.

Victimization

The Social Nature of Victimization

From the existing literature, there is much that has already been established regarding social nature of victimization. That is to say, victimization can be predicted, based on a number of social characteristics. In the same way, victimization is linked to a number of changes in social characteristics. Much of this understanding about the social nature of victimization comes from criminology studies, though a great deal, too, comes from a psychologically-based body of research.

There are specific social characteristics or other social identifiers of individuals within society that are linked to an increased likelihood of victimization. For example, an individual is more likely to be a victim of a sexual crime if he/she has a low social standing within society by way of low income, education, or social status. Women are also more often victims of sexual crimes than are men.

Victimization, especially sexual victimization, is not simply a physical act that contributes to physical effects. Just as there are social components that contribute to the likelihood of an individual becoming a victim of a crime, there are social effects of becoming a victim. That is, victimization induces change in other social characteristics and behaviors. In regard to sexual victimization, one of the most widely cited social effects of victimization is the increase in likelihood of sexual victims to be re-victimized. Those who already have been a victim of a sexual crime are more likely than the general population to be victimized (Humphrey & White, 2000). Moreover, the more severe the previous victimization is, the higher the risk of re-victimization. Decreased levels of trust, as well as increased levels of fear, are also linked with victimization. It is this effect on trust which is the focus of this study.

Trust

What is Trust?

Before progressing much further, it may be helpful to explain the concept of trust and the ways in which it has most often been operationalized within this particular field of literature. In its most abstract conception, it can be said that trust is an “important lubricant of a social system” (Arrow, 1974). That is to say, trust is a facilitator of social interaction that allows for the integration of individuals into a social network, and

ultimately a functioning society. While this observation is accurate, upon examining the concept of trust more acutely, we see that there are many more precise definitions of trust, each according to its respective purpose and application.

Within the current literature, the research is framed to examine the micro- to meso-level interactions within society that contribute to the development of an individual's trust, specifically a trust in a generalized other.⁴ This refers to a trust in others, regardless of identifying factors, and not specifically the individual by which they have been victimized. This concept of generalized trust⁴ is typically defined as a default expectation of other people's goodwill" (Miller & Mitamura, 2003) and a belief in the benign intentions of others (Miller & Kanazawa, 2001; Yamagishi, 1998).

The most common form of measuring generalized trust within a survey is based upon that of the General Social Survey (GSS). This question reads, "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?" with the possible responses of "Most people can be trusted," "Can't be too careful," or "Depends." Fairly recently, the construct validity of such questions have been scrutinized. Research indicates that these generic attitudinal measures of trust, especially binary measures such as this one, may not translate to actual trusting behaviors (Glaeser, Laibson, Scheinkman, & Soutter, 2000), though other research indicates that these questions accurately measure caution⁴ in dealing with others (Miller & Mitamura, 2003). With all of this to consider, trust is as abstract a concept as Kenneth Arrow alludes (1974), and it must be recognized that the meaning of these measures are fluid.

Who Trusts/Distrusts?

The concept of trust, like victimization, has been shown to have a social component, with individuals within some social groups being more trusting than members of other groups. As with victimization, it appears that the marginalized members of society are likely to have lower levels of trust. This is true for those with lower levels of income and education and also for individuals that are part of a group that has historically been a social minority, such as blacks or women (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002). A recent history of traumatic experiences as well as living within a racially or economically heterogeneous area have also been linked with lower levels of generalized trust (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002). Evidence has also been presented that indicates residents of southern states are less trusting than residents of any other region within the United States (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002; Simpson, 2006).

Forming Generalized Trust

How do individuals develop this generalized trust? In a practical sense, it seems that people utilize the knowledge that they have about others with whom they come into direct contact and generalize this level of trust to a conception of others who share similar characteristics, much like the creation of fear of crime stemming from victimization. This trust, then, becomes generalized to a universal level at which all strangers can be efficiently assessed in conditions where further information is not available. Using a computer simulation, Macy and Skovoretz (1998) presented the mechanisms and pathways by which this diffusion of trust may occur. Trust is generated via local exchanges and diffused through ‘weak ties’ to strangers, to form the individual’s concept of generalized trust.

Victimization, Fear of Crime, and Trust—the Overlap

It is generally acknowledged by researchers that victims of crime, both personal and property crimes, become less trusting (Skogan, 1987). This is true for those who report being victim to bullying at a younger age (Jantzer, Hoover, & Narloch, 2006), but it is also true of victims of violent crimes, such as those who have been sexually victimized.

Victimization instills many emotions, including generalized fear and the specific fear of crime, and this in turn impacts the trust that exists between strangers and members of dissimilar groups (Williams, 2001). This transfer of distrust from the offender to others in general, or others who share similar characteristics, is not simply relegated by the characteristics relevant to the offense itself. Victims are likely to develop distrust for individuals sharing the same racial group as the attacker (Skogan, 1995). Likewise, female victims of sexual harassment at the workplace are likely to transfer distrust not simply from the offender to men in general, but also to all coworkers, regardless of gender (Schafer, Huebner, & Bynum, 2006).

This mistrust is not simply attributed to the offending individual, but there is a ‘spillover effect’ in which this distrust of the offender transfers to overall society (Blount, 1995). This begins as a distrust of the neighborhood where the individual was victimized and the residents of that neighborhood, or individuals who share similar characteristics to those residents (Rountree & Land, 1996). Then, fear is increased relative to other neighborhoods which are seen as disorderly (Schafer et al., 2006).

Social Capital

What is Social Capital?

Closely linked to the concept of trust is the notion of social capital. Social capital, most clearly defined, refers to social networks and the associated norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness (Putnam, 2007) that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Putnam, 1995). As a strong predictor of both community embeddedness and cohesion, the concept of social capital is an essential staple within the sociological studies of both community and criminology.

Bonding and Bridging

All social capital is not equal in essence and function. There are forms of social capital that exist most easily in homogenous populations and function to bond group members to each other (Leonard, 2004; Wuthnow, 2002a). This type of social capital is referred to as ‘bonding’ social capital. This interpersonal solidarity, often referred to as ‘thick trust,’ is exclusivist and, as a result, benefits only in-group members, often to the detriment of out-group members and sometimes even inhibiting the full potential of the group (Leonard, 2004). Bonding social capital is reminiscent of Durkheim’s mechanical solidarity in which individuals are bound by common beliefs, values, and sentiments (1893).

Conversely, there is a form of social capital that exists to link members between groups through a type of ‘thin trust’ through weaker ties (Granovetter, 1973). These less intimate ties, though individually weaker than the tie of bonding social capital, provide a mechanism which strengthens the larger society (Wuthnow, 2002a). Again reminiscent of Durkheim’s archetypes of solidarity, bridging social capital, based more upon an

economic interdependence than upon common beliefs values and sentiments, reflects an organic form of solidarity.

Linking Social Capital and Trust

—Positive experiences with dissimilar individuals will have greater effects on the development of generalized trust” than do interactions with others who are more similar (Marschall & Stolle, 2004, p. 129). The interactions through strong social ties, via bonding social networks, do not influence an individual’s generalized trust as significantly as the interactions with out-group members through bridging social networks. Interacting with strangers through public venues, such as those involved in civic participation, have been shown to increase trust through these same mechanisms (Brehm & Rahn, 1997). This social bonding has not only been shown to influence trust levels, but also to decrease fear of crime and victimization (Ross, Reynolds, & Geis, 2000).

Benefits of Trust and Social Capital

As Arrow suggests (1974), trust is not simply a “nice thing to have,” rather, it is an essential factor within society. The benefits of trust and social capital are numerous. Trust exists as a social catalyst, functioning alongside group membership, to assist in the creation and maintenance of cooperation, civic participation, and collective action (Kwak, Shah, & Holbert, 2004; Putnam, 2001; Stolle, 1998; Uslaner, 2002). Individuals with higher levels of trust are less likely to cheat, steal, and lie and are more likely to give others a second chance and respect the rights of others (Rotter, 1980).

Trust also benefits the individual directly. It is associated with higher levels of happiness, and those who trust are less likely to be conflicted or maladjusted. They are

generally liked more and sought out as a friend more often (ibid.). Likewise, social capital has been linked to a number of personal benefits, particularly health-related (Berkman & Kawachi, 2000; Putnam, 2007). These positive benefits include both mental and physical health outcomes as well as mortality risk (Umberson & Montez, 2010).

The Feedback Loop—Trust, Fear of Crime and Victimization

For each of these mechanisms, the social effects and the social components of victimization, are rooted in established sociological theories, as outlined above. Once victimization occurs, it is likely to develop a feedback loop by which victimization, fear of crime, and mistrust are able to perpetuate each other.

The social-disorganization approach holds that a victim's experience or simply the perception of local disorder will lessen the degree of social bonds, including trust, among residents (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Skogan, 1990). This effect summarizes many of the findings explained earlier. When individuals are victimized, they develop distrust toward others—particularly toward those who share characteristics with the offender and toward areas where the crime occurred.

Social-interaction perspective holds that a neighborhood is a “social community in which residents fulfill a collective life through social networks and participation in sets of local organizations” (Hallman, 1984, p. 13). As victimized individuals begin to develop a mistrust of others, their participation within the community diminishes and ties to social networks weaken—they lose social capital. As this occurs, monitoring decreases and disorganization within a community increases.

With this decrease in monitoring and an increase in perceptions of disorganization, ‘broken windows theory’ states that instances of crime will occur more

frequently (Kelling & Wilson, 1982). This process may occur at the individual level through social signaling (Cisneros, 1996; Harcourt & Ludwig, 2006). This effect may also develop within an environmental context through a systemic lack of monitoring or through the development of social norms that are complacent toward these sorts of crime.

For many social scientists, as well as for residents who are invested in the state of the community, the question then arises-- are there ways to mitigate these effects and possibly break the feedback loop? Personnel within the fields of law and law enforcement focus on policing and criminal prosecution as possible solutions, while task-based community developers focus on counseling and neighborhood rehabilitation. My aim is to examine the possible structures that may already exist to aid in individual coping and assist in the perpetuation of trust, regardless of crime and victimization.

On Social Capital, Trust, and Religion

Religious Venues for Network-Based Social Capital

Religious organizations, namely churches and other congregations, can be a venue by which social capital is created and maintained. This fact has been well studied by Putnam (2010; 1995), Becker and Dhingra (2001), and Wuthnow (2002a, 2002b, 2003) among others. Frequency of religious service attendance and religious participation in general have been shown to contribute to increased levels of generalized trust (Balswick, 1970; Lupfer & Wald, 1985; Schoenfeld, 1978; Welch, Sikkink, Sartain, & Bond, 2004), and this effect has been shown to exist independently of the existence of any particular religious belief, though these beliefs, too, influence an individual's trust in others.

The Effects of Theology, Belief, and Conception of Human Nature on Trust

Participation in congregations is unique in that, unlike other voluntary organizations, association with a religious organization is most often associated with a set of moral and social beliefs. This belief set, based in the theology instilled through the congregation, contributes to an individual's conception of human nature, whether inherently 'good' or 'evil,' and by extension, their trust in others (Balswick, 1970; Lupfer & Wald, 1985).

This idea has been conceptualized empirically in several ways, and as such, a consensus on these effects has not been reached. Using international data, it has been suggested that religiosity has an inverse relationship with generalized trust (Berggren & Bjørnskov, 2011), though the opposite has been evinced with data from the United States (Mencken, Bader, & Embry, 2009). More often, research has shown that this effect is not a matter of simply holding a religious belief, or how strong that religious belief is, but instead it is dependent on the nature of that belief.

One of the most common dichotomies used when researching religious individuals or beliefs pertains to the conservativeness, or strictness, of an individual's beliefs or group. It has been suggested that a prominent strength of conservative Evangelical churches is their strictness that instills a distrust of others (Iannaccone, 1994). This has been tested and supported numerous times (Balswick, 1970; Lupfer & Wald, 1985; Schoenfeld, 1978; Welch et al., 2004)—as a whole, members of mainline or 'liberal' congregations are more trusting than their counterparts within the Evangelical or 'conservative' denominations.

Research has suggested that this distrust stems from an individual's beliefs about the nature of God and of man. Those within Evangelical congregations are likely to conceive of God as angry or vengeful and, as a result, they maintain the same judging perspective toward others (Mencken et al., 2009). Inversely, those who hold a view of God as benevolent and generous are most likely to have higher levels of generalized trust (ibid.). Likewise, those within conservative congregations, particularly those with deterministic views of morality, are more likely to hold a view of human nature rooted in selfishness and evil tendencies. As a result, the natural reaction among determinists is to distrust others (Schoenfeld, 1978).

Conclusion

Independently, these fields have offered a great deal in explaining the generation and maintenance of trust. Victimization of all sorts has been linked to lower levels of trust, and the mechanisms by which this effect occurs has been thoroughly documented. Religion has been shown to affect trust levels as well, via both social capital formation and maintenance and through specific theologies and beliefs. These bodies of literature provide a foundation for the theoretical framework of this paper in examining the possibility for sexual victims to utilize religion as a means to cope with their victimization.

CHAPTER THREE

Theoretical Framework

Independently, the fields pertaining to victimization and religion have dealt with associations between trust and social capital, but to date, no one has linked these two fields. There are a number of effects that have been found in previous literature and have been shown to affect levels of trust. It is expected that these will remain consistent here. First, as previous results have shown, reports of sexual victimization should lead to lower levels of generalized trust (Jantzer et al., 2006; Skogan, 1987). At an individual psychological level, victims are hesitant to trust, but sociologically, it has been shown that this decline in generalized trust can also occur absent of the strong affective inducement. This occurs via diffusion from the offender to those who share characteristics with the offender, and finally to society as a whole.

Second, I hypothesize that results will show that religious service attendance will lead to higher levels of generalized trust. Controlling for other factors, participation in religious services should result in higher levels of generalized trust, just as participation in a number of local volunteer organizations does, via the mechanisms of network-based social capital.

Third, I hypothesize that the internalization of a religious moral order will have an effect on trust dependent upon an individual's religious preference. As proposed in previous literature (Balswick, 1970; Lupfer & Wald, 1985; Schoenfeld, 1978; Welch et al., 2004), those who are involved in conservative, especially deterministic, religious

traditions, will likely hold views of an 'evil' human nature. As a result, these individuals will be less trusting, in general, than those within other religious traditions.

Combining these propositions, it is hypothesized that the mechanisms by which trust is generated via religious beliefs and religious involvement may function in a way by which victims might be able to cope with the social effects of victimization, thereby mediating these effects. It is expected, then, that religious service attendance will mediate the negative effects on generalized trust, regardless of religious preference. Additionally, it is predicted that this mediating effects of an internalized religious moral order will be dependent upon an individual's religious tradition.

CHAPTER FOUR

Dataset

The data used in this study come from the Longitudinal Study of Violence Against Women (LSVAW) as available from the database of the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). The LSVAW is an ideal dataset for the analyses included within this study because 1) it is specifically geared toward the population most often sexually victimized, female college students, 2) the measures included are intentionally designed to assess the of victimization of the respondents, and 3) the data were collected longitudinally, allowing for accuracy in reporting causal effects.

Data were collected via convenience sampling procedures and consists of five waves between 1990 and 1995. LSVAW contains data for both men and women, but this study only utilized the data geared toward females, as the LSVAW frames females as victims and males as offenders. The female sample consists of 1580 undergraduate women in a state-supported university who were born in 1972 and 1973, making them 18 years old in wave 1 of the study.

Although collected via convenience sampling procedures, these data are appropriate for the function of this study. First, the purpose of this study is not to create a generalizable profile of female college students at a national level; rather, it is to test a theoretical relationship between two concepts as it pertains to this population. As with experimental data, generalizability need not be a condition of utility.

Second, although technically classified as a convenience sample, the collection procedures risk little issue with non-coverage, as it pertains to this particular class of the university. Researchers surveyed students in groups during the first day of student orientation, using orientation leaders to administer the survey, thus making participation in the study an integral part of the student orientation activities. Students who did not attend orientation were later contacted to be recruited into the study. Because of the thoroughness of these procedures, 83 percent of the class of 1990 and 84 percent of the class of 1991 provided usable data.

Of the five waves of the survey, only data from the first two waves are used for this study. The reason for this restriction is to combat common methodological problems, such as respondent attrition, associated with longitudinal surveys. Between waves 1 and 2 of the study, 183 respondents ‘opted-out’ of the survey, for a total usable sample of 1397. Analyses show that attrition at wave 2 was not linked with any of the independent variables or controls at wave 1, nor was it associated with any other basic demographic or characteristic.

CHAPTER FIVE

Sample Descriptives

Variables Not Included in Analyses

There are a number of standard control measures which, due to a lack in variance inherent within this sample population, are not included within the analyses of this study. Age, for example, shows little variance within this population of college students, and this effect is compounded by the fact that a specific graduating class was targeted. As stated previously, the population that was targeted for this sample was born between 1972 and 1973 and the data reflect this targeting, with a median birth year of 1972. Likely because of some openness in sampling procedures, the sample also includes respondents born as early as 1970 and as late as 1977.

Likewise, educational attainment, while a standard measure of control within sociological studies, shows little variance within this sample and thus, is not included in the analyses. Again, targeting incoming freshmen as a sampling frame, the median educational level was freshmen in college, although some respondents from each of the higher classes are present in the sample.

In the same way, relationship status shows very little variation within this sample. 74.17% of respondents were single, in that they were not exclusive in their dating, and 23.31% of the sample was exclusively dating someone. Traditionally, both of these response categories would be combined into a single category. With over 97% of the sample falling into this category, relationship status shows too little variance to be considered as a viable control. It is, therefore, not included in these analyses.

Control

Only one standard control is present within this dataset that exhibits sufficient variance--race. Within this sample, 74.13% classified themselves as White, non-Hispanic,⁴ while 22.62% classified themselves as Black, non-Hispanic.⁴ The remaining 3.25% classified themselves as Hispanic.⁴ In these analyses, race is measured as a simple dichotomous variable for White, non-Black, non-Hispanic.⁴ This recoding eliminates the statistical complications which would be present due to the small number of Hispanics, but theoretically causes no conflict as we consider this a measure of racial majority/minority status.

Sexual Victimization

There are a number of measures of victimization within this dataset, and these measures are not limited to sexual victimization. Those within the scope of this survey assess specific instances and types of victimization, but the most useful measure for the purposes of the advanced analyses here is a composite binary measure of sexual victimization within the year previous to survey administration. It is this self-reported binary measure of sexual victimization that is used in the analyses of this study. This allows for three points within a time-series to occur within two survey administrations—Wave 1 reports, reports of victimization between Waves 1 and 2, and Wave 2 reports. Based upon specific incidence reports within the survey, LSVAW researchers created this composite binary measure which classifies 26.6% of the sample as being sexually victimized between Waves 1 and 2 of the survey. It should be noted, as well, that 16.3% of responses are missing on this measure.

Religious Measures

Religious service attendance was assessed with a self-report of the number of times the respondent attended church or synagogue in a typical month apart from weddings, funerals, or special events within the past year. Response choices include more than once a week, once a week, one to three times a month, less than once a month, and never. The median response was one to three times a month with a robust variation existing between both extremes.

An internalized religious identity was assessed with using responses to the question How much of an influence would you say religion has on the way you choose to spend your time each day? Response categories are a standard four-point scale ranging from no influence to a great deal of influence. The median response was some influence, again with a robust variation existing between both extremes.

Religious preference is measured as a self-report from the respondent. Response choices include Baptist, other Protestant, Roman Catholic, other, and none. Because this measure of religious preference does not follow the typical assessments within the scientific study of religion, standard theory framing is not possible. Instead, I use the Baptist category to represent the most conservative of the categories, and correspondingly, representing the beliefs which embody the evil or selfish human nature.

For these analyses, each of these religious measures was assessed before victimization, establishing a pattern of religious behavior and identity that existed prior to the victimization incident.

Trust

The measure included within this survey for trust is assessed as a part of a series of questions that ask the respondent to say *‘what kind of person [they] are.’* For trust, like each of the other items, response choices fall on a 5-point scale from *‘not at all like me’* to *‘very much like me.’* The specific survey item used in these analyses utilizes responses to the statement *‘Most people are out for themselves. I don’t trust them very much.’* While this question embodies the concept of generalized trust, responses required reverse-coding to assess trust rather than distrust or non-trust.

As shown in Table 1, the median response for the measure, after recoding, is 4 on a 5-point scale. This is a relatively high median measure of trust, when compared to established measures, such as the one from the GSS. This is likely due to two factors: 1) the measure initially was a measure of distrust and was subsequently reverse-coded. There is likely a reluctance of respondents to report that they are distrusting of others, especially to an extreme extent. 2) This may also be reflective of the sample population. Incoming, female, freshman are likely to report higher levels of trust, regardless of the way it is measured.

Basic descriptive statistics of each of these measures can be found in Table 1 below.

Further Explaining the Measure of Victimization

The frequency of sexual victimization evinced in this dataset is higher than the numbers reported by the NCJRS, NVC, and CVC¹ that were mentioned earlier. This is not evidence of sampling or measurement error, rather, of differences in definitions of

¹ National Criminal Justice Reference Service, National Victim Center, and Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center; see Page 1.

sexual victimization. The definition utilized here includes not only incidents that were reported to the police, but also, experiences that have been categorized as a type of sexual victimization by an accepted methodology within the psychology and criminology fields, as established by Koss and Oros (1982).

These types consist of six categories of sexual experience differing in severity and type of sexual encounter, allowing for a measure not only as a simple binary measure of victimization, but toward a more robust assessment of victimization. These categories consist of *_no sexual experience*, *_consensual sexual contact*, *_unwanted sexual contact*, *_coercive sexual contact*, *_sex abuse victim*, and *_sexual assault victim*.² For more on the classification of each of these types, see Koss and Oros (1982). A table outlining the questions that create these measures can be found in the appendix.

Evidence Supporting the Theory in Dataset

As a precursor to the time-series analyses, a student's t-test was used to assess the difference in means in trust among respondents within each of these categories. Shown below in Table 2, those who only participated in consensual sex² reported higher rates of trust than those who were subject to unwanted sexual contact, or were victims of sexual abuse or sexual assault. Interestingly, the differences between trust levels among those who participated in consensual sex and those who were subject to coercive sexual contact were not statically significant in this test.

While these statistics provide support for the hypothesis that victims of sexual offenses report lower levels of trust, regardless of the nature or severity of the offense, the method of measurement of this variable is not conducive to the time-series analyses

² These categories group respondents according to the most severe sexual incident which has occurred since the respondent was 14 years of age.

that allow for the prediction of causal mechanisms. The wording of the questions that assign these ‘Koss categories’ refer to incidents that have occurred since the respondent was 14 years old. Because these questions were not asked until the second wave of the study, incidence between the first and second waves of the study cannot be assessed. Because of this, I do not utilize these Koss measures to assess sexual victimization and use the binary self-reported measure instead.

Table 1
Sample Descriptive Statistics (n = 1397)

Variable	Median/Percent	Min.	Max.
Dependent Variable			
Trust ^b	4	1	5
Not included in analyses^a			
Birth Year	1972	1970	1977
Educational attainment	12	12	15
Relationship Status			
Single	74.17	--	--
Dating Exclusively	23.31	--	--
Control^a			
White non-Hispanic	74.13	--	--
Independent Variables^a			
Sex Victim ^b	26.6	--	--
Religious Attendance	3	1	5
Religious Influence	2	1	4
Religious Preference			
Baptist	35.69	--	--
Other Protestant	22.08	--	--
Catholic	9.31	--	--
Other Protestant	24.58	--	--
None	8.33	--	--

Source: The Longitudinal Study of Violence Against Women

^a Wave 1, ^b Wave 2

Table 2
Mean Trust Levels Among Those With Various Sexual Experiences (n = 1395)

Koss Category	n	(%)	Lower 95%	Mean	Upper 95%
No Sexual Experience	382	27.38%	3.63	3.75	3.87
Consensual Sexual Contact	574	41.15%	3.81	3.89	3.98
Unwanted Sexual Contact	134	9.61%	3.24	3.46	3.67
Coercive Sexual Contact	162	11.61%	3.59	3.78	3.96
Sexual Abuse Victim	53	3.80%	2.95	3.30	3.65
Sexual Assault Victim	90	6.45%	3.33	3.57	3.80

Source: The Longitudinal Study of Violence Against Women (Wave 2)

Another measure, not asked until later in the study, which provides further evidence for these hypotheses asks, in Wave 4 of the study, “How much did you rely on your religion to cope” with being sexually victimized? Possible responses include _not at all, _a little, _some, and _a lot. Of those who identified themselves as religious³, 43.81% report that their religion has helped them to cope with being victimized. See Table 3 below.

Table 3
How much did you rely on religion to cope [with being sexually victimized]? Among 'Religious' Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
A Lot	19	18.10%	19	18.10%
Some	11	10.48%	30	28.57%
A Little	16	15.24%	46	43.81%
Not At All	59	56.19%	105	100%

Source: The Longitudinal Study of Violence Against Women (Wave 4)

Again, while each of these statistics provides evidence that supports the hypotheses outlined above, they cannot be included in the time-series analyses used to

³ Another measure, not assessed until Wave 4 of the study, asks respondents to self-identify as religious with a simple yes/no binary measure. It is with this measure that _religious respondents were sele

test these hypotheses in total because they only exist in later waves of the study after respondent attrition becomes problematic.

Formalized Hypotheses

Using the variables outlined above, I submit the following hypotheses, as adapted from my theoretical framework:

H1: A respondent who is sexually victimized between Waves 1 and 2 is predicted to report lower levels of trust than respondents who are not sexually victimized.

H2: Rates of religious service attendance, as reported in Wave 1, will directly relate to trust levels reported in Wave 2, such that higher levels of religious service attendance will correspond to higher levels of trust and vice versa.

H3: The influence of religion on the life of the respondent will affect trust levels more strongly in the positive direction when the respondents' religious preference is not Baptist, than if the respondent is Baptist.

H4: The effects of religious service attendance and religious influence will mediate the negative effects of sexual victimization on trust corresponding to the main effects outlined in H2 and H3.

CHAPTER SIX

Methods and Analyses

To test these hypotheses, a series of ordered logistic regressions were used to assess a time-series causal relationship between each of the independent variables and the dependent variable, as well as a mediation of the effects of sexual victimization on trust by these religious measures. First, the main effect of sexual victimization on trust is tested, and then the main effect of religious service attendance on trust is tested. Results are listed below and in Table 4.

In model 1, the main effects of sexual victimization are shown to decrease reported levels of trust by 23.8% when controlling for race of the respondent. Race affects the baseline levels of trust such that, controlling for sexual victimization, white non-Hispanics are 64% more trusting than non-whites.

In model 2, the main effects of religious service attendance are shown to increase reported levels of trust. For each unit increase on the religious attendance scale, reported levels of trust increase by 14.7% when controlling for the race of the respondent. Race affects the baseline levels of trust such that, controlling for religious service attendance, white non-Hispanics are 77.4% more trusting than non-whites.

Next, the mediating effect of religious preference on the effect of religious influence on trust is measured. Results of this analysis are outlined below and in Table 5. In model 3, none of the proposed main effects are present, nor is the interaction of these effects, when controlling for race of the respondent. Race maintains its effect, with white non-Hispanics reporting 45.6% higher levels of trust than non-whites.

Table 4
Ordered Logistic Regression Predicting Trust: Main Effects

Parameter	Model 1				Model 2			
	<i>b</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>e^b</i>	β	<i>b</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>e^b</i>	β
Intercept 5	-1.1254	****	---	---	-1.6666	****	---	---
Intercept 4	0.354	**	---	---	-0.1874		---	---
Intercept 3	1.5407	****	---	---	0.9659	****	---	---
Intercept 2	2.4993	****	---	---	1.9178	****	---	---
Intercept 1	-2.2686	---	---	---	-0.0297	---	---	---
Race	0.4949	****	1.64	0.118	0.5732	****	1.774	0.1382
Sex Victim	-0.259	*	0.772	-0.0631	---	---	---	---
Religious Attendance	---	---	---	---	0.1373	***	1.147	0.0983
n	1162				1382			
r sq equiv	0.0191				0.0273			

Source: The Longitudinal Study of Violence Against Women

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, **** $p < .0001$

Table 5
Ordered Logistic Regression Predicting Trust: Interaction Effects

Parameter	Model 3				Model 4			
	<i>b</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>e^b</i>	β	<i>b</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>e^b</i>	β
Intercept 5	-1.3424	****	---	---	-1.6181	****	---	---
Intercept 4	0.1272		---	---	-0.1242		---	---
Intercept 3	1.2084	****	---	---	1.0701	****	---	---
Intercept 2	2.3286	****	---	---	2.0408	****	---	---
Intercept 1	-1.3218	---	---	---	-0.3686	---	---	---
Race	0.376	*	1.456	0.0937	0.5269	****	1.694	0.1254
Sex Victim	---	---	---	---	-0.2276	^a	0.796	-0.0555
Religious Attendance	---	---	---	---	0.1521	***	1.164	0.1087
Religious Influence	0.1047		1.11	0.0573	---	---	---	---
Baptist	0.0501		1.051	0.0132	---	---	---	---
Influence * Baptist	-0.0334		0.967	-0.0231	---	---	---	---
n	715				1160			
r sq equiv	0.0109				0.0307			

Source: *The Longitudinal Study of Violence Against Women*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, **** $p < .0001$

^a $p < .10$

Model 4 tests the proposed mediating effect of religious service attendance on the main effects of sexual victimization on reported levels of trust. Results of this analysis are outlined below and listed in Table 5. Here, religious service attendance maintains its positive effect, such that trust levels are reported to be 16.4% higher for each unit increase in the religious service attendance scale, controlling for the race and victimization status of the respondent. The effect of sexual victimization on trust, once controlling for religious service attendance, is no longer significant at 95% confidence. Race maintains its main effect on trust such that, controlling for the measures in this model, white non-Hispanics are 69.4% more trusting than non-whites.

Model 5 tests the proposed mediating effect of religious influence on the main effect of sexual victimization on trust among respondents with a Baptist religious preference, with a comparison analysis of non-Baptists. Because of the extra level of analysis, cell sizes became too small on one side of the dependent variable for the proportional odds assumption to be satisfied. To remedy this, the lowest two trust categories were combined for these analyses. Results of these analyses are outlined below and in Table 6. Just as the main effects of these variables were not statistically significant in model 3, their mediating effects are not significant here, in either model. The main effects of race also lose statistical significance.

In each of these models, the proportional odds assumption is satisfied. Correlation between the effects of each of the variables was tested in each model and no correlation coefficients were .5 or above. Tables of these data checks may be provided upon request.

Table 6
Ordered Logistic Regression Predicting Trust by Religious Preference

Parameter	Baptist				Non-Baptist			
	<i>b</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>e^b</i>	β	<i>b</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>e^b</i>	β
Intercept 4	-1.1111	0.0012	---	---	-0.9552	0.027	---	---
Intercept 3	0.362	0.2835	---	---	0.5402	0.2071	---	---
Intercept 2	1.5095	<.0001	---	---	1.6068	0.0003	---	---
Intercept 1	0.2396	---	---	---	-0.1918	---	---	---
Race	0.1456		1.157	0.0329	0.4241		1.528	0.1129
Sex Victim	-0.6802		0.507	-0.1705	-1.0391		0.354	-0.2561
Religious Influence	0.0986		1.104	0.0538	-0.026		0.974	-0.0132
Victim * Influence	0.197		1.218	0.1142	0.3271		1.387	0.197
n	385				208			
r sq equiv	0.014				0.024			

Source: The Longitudinal Study of Violence Against Women

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, **** $p < .0001$

CHAPTER SEVEN

Discussion

Results of the analyses outlined above provide support for the proposed theory of religious coping. First, in terms of the main effects: sexual victimization is shown to decrease trust, and religious service attendance is shown to increase trust. Both of these effects were suggested by previous theory. Here, their effects were confirmed, both in presence and in direction. Being a victim to unwanted sexual contact is shown to decrease trust, not only of the offender, but of the ‘generalized other’ and society as a whole. Religious service attendance, conversely, is shown to be associated with increased levels of trust among this sample. Because this effect is not present in the measures of religious influence, it is proposed that the effect of religious service attendance on trust occurs via social capital mechanisms.

When examining the relationship between the effects of religious service attendance and sexual victimization on reported levels of trust, these analyses show that the effects of religious service attendance mediate the effects of sexual victimization on trust. That is, variation in the levels of religious service attendance account for a large portion of the variation in trust levels that are explained by sexual victimization. This may be a result of two separate effects, or a recursive composite of the two. The effect proposed in the hypotheses here stated that religious social capital can function as a coping mechanism for victims, thus reducing, or eliminating, the negative effects of sexual victimization on trust. Because religious service attendance, however, was measured at a point preceding victimization, this effect may be a function of the social

patterns that those who attend religious services more often are also less likely to become victims of sexual crimes. Further research would be required to untangle these effects to determine which plays a more significant role.

The effect of religious normative influence on levels of trust, as hypothesized here, found little support. This concept, as it was measured in this dataset, was not shown to have any effect on reported levels of trust. This may be evidence disproving the relationship between these two concepts, however, it is more likely that the normative influence of religious beliefs is significantly more nuanced than the measures within this dataset are able to accurately measure. Likewise, the measurement of this concept was insufficient to assess any sort of mediating influence in reducing the negative effect of sexual victimization on trust.

It was hypothesized that the direction of this effect would be dependent upon the specific theologies and religious beliefs of the respondent—a concept that had its own measurement problems within this dataset. Again, this concept is much more nuanced than could be understood from the measures available within this dataset. It is a common characteristic of Baptists to hold deterministic theologies fully embodying a belief in the influence of total depravity on human nature, but this is not a clear-cut definition of all who associate with this religious tradition. While religious preference is the most useful proxy within this dataset, these analyses show that it is not nearly precise enough of a measure of this concept for useful analysis in this regard. Further, there was a significant issue of non-response for this survey item—lacking response from nearly 49% of the sample. A different dataset, better suited to assessing religious beliefs of respondents,

would be required to properly test the hypothesized relationships relative to religious normative influence and specific theologies.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Implications, Weaknesses, and What's Next

What implications do these findings hold for those dealing with sexual victimization, and how do we further this research agenda? In regard to these effects of religious service attendance, it appears that participation in religious organizations can be helpful, not only for victims looking to cope, but also in preventing victimization in the first place. The lack of evidence for effects of religious normative influence should not be interpreted as a lack of these effects. Instead, we should seek better measures to test this theory.

While this study provides evidence in support of parts of this theory, there is still much to be done to understand these effects better. Rather than working with publicly available data, like this LSVAW dataset, there may be more promising data in existing restricted-use datasets. Further investigating this population of young women, the National College Women Sexual Victimization Study (NCWSVS), National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NCSY), or National Longitudinal survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health) may serve as effective nationally representative samples for these purposes. This theory may then be further utilized to study other ‘at risk’ populations, like young Latinas, with data from studies such as the Sexual Assault Among Latinas Study. Regardless, there is still much to be done in understanding the social effects of sexual victimization and attempting to mitigate these effects.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

These Koss categories were created by the initial researchers who collected this data and created this dataset. These categories were created using the questions outlined in Table A and below, where 1= never and 2=occurred at least once since the age of 14.

A respondent was classified in the category no sexual experience if (CONSENT EQ 1 AND PRESSSP EQ 1 AND AUTHSP EQ 1 AND FORCESP EQ 1 AND ATTEMPT EQ 1 AND DRUGATT EQ 1 AND PRESSSI EQ 1 AND AUTHSI EQ 1 AND DRUGSI EQ 1 AND FORCESI EQ 1 AND SEXACTS EQ 1).

A respondent was classified in the category consensual sexual contact if (CONSENT EQ 2 AND PRESSSP EQ 1 AND AUTHSP EQ 1 AND FORCESP EQ 1 AND ATTEMPT EQ 1 AND DRUGATT EQ 1 AND PRESSSI EQ 1 AND AUTHSI EQ 1 AND DRUGSI EQ 1 AND FORCESI EQ 1 AND SEXACTS EQ 1).

A respondent was classified in the category unwanted sexual contact if ((PRESSSP EQ 2 OR AUTHSP EQ 2 OR FORCESP EQ 2) AND ATTEMPT EQ 1 AND DRUGATT EQ 1 AND PRESSSI EQ 1 AND AUTHSI EQ 1 AND DRUGSI EQ 1 AND FORCESI EQ 1 AND SEXACTS EQ 1).

A respondent was classified in the category sexual abuse victim if ((ATTEMPT EQ 2 OR DRUGATT EQ 2) AND PRESSSI EQ 1 AND AUTHSI EQ 1 AND DRUGSI EQ 1 AND FORCESI EQ 1 AND SEXACTS EQ 1).

A respondent was classified in the category coercive sexual contact if ((PRESSSI EQ 2 OR AUTHSI EQ 2) AND DRUGSI EQ 1 AND FORCESI EQ 1 AND SEXACTS EQ 1).

A respondent was classified in the category `_sexual assault victim` if (DRUGSI EQ 2 OR FORCESI EQ 2 OR SEXACTS EQ 2).

Table A.1
Questions Used to Create 'Koss Categories'

"For the next set of questions, answer how often each of the following has occurred, from the time you were 14 to the present."	
Variable Name	Question
xconsent	Have you ever had sexual intercourse with a male when you both wanted to?
xpresssp	Have you ever given in to sex play (fondling, kissing or petting but not intercourse) when you didn't want to because you were overwhelmed by a male's continual arguments and pressure?
xauthsp	Have you ever engaged in sex play (fondling, kissing or petting but not intercourse) when you didn't want to because a male used his position of authority (boss, teacher, camp counselor, supervisor) to make you?
xforcesp	Have you ever engaged in sex play (fondling, kissing or petting but not intercourse) when you didn't want to because a male threatened to use some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down etc.) to make you?
xattempt	Have you had a male attempt sexual intercourse (get on top of you, attempt to insert his penis) when you didn't want to by threatening to use some degree of force (twisting your arm, holding you down etc.) but intercourse <i>did not</i> occur?
xdrugatt	Has a male ever deliberately given you alcohol or drugs and attempted to engage in sexual intercourse (get on top of you, attempt to insert his penis) when you didn't want to but intercourse <i>did not</i> occur?
xpresssi	Have you ever given in to sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because you were overwhelmed by a male's continual arguments and pressure?
xauthsi	Have you ever engaged in sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because a male used his position of authority (boss, teacher, camp counselor, supervisor) to make you?
xdrugsi	Has a male ever deliberately given you alcohol or drugs and engaged in sexual intercourse when you didn't want to?
xforcesi	Have you engaged in sexual intercourse when you didn't want to by threatening to use some degree of force (twisting your arm, holding you down etc.) to make you?
xsexacts	Have you ever been in a situation where you had sexual acts with a male such as anal or oral intercourse when you didn't want to because he used threats or physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.) to make you?

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