Towards a Religion–Victimization Module for the International Self-Report Delinquency Study (ISRD) Context: Learning from Prior Exemplars

Sophie Litvak*

Ph.D. Candidate, Institute of Criminology and Legal Policy,
University of Helsinki, Finland
PO Box 16 (Snellmaninkatu 10), Helsinki, 00014, Finland
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4452-5154
Email: sophie.litvak@helsinki.fi

Janne Kivivuori

D. Soc. Sc., Professor of Criminology
Institute of Criminology and Legal Policy, University of Helsinki, Finland
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3572-0791
E-mail: janne.kivivuori@helsinki.fi

Markus Kaakinen

University Lecturer, Faculty of Social Sciences
Tampere University
Tampere, Finland
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7067-1665
Email: Markus Kaakinen@tuni.fi

* Corresponding author

Abstract. The concept of postsecular society highlights the increasing relevance of religion in social, cultural, and political affairs. Given this trend, criminology should pay increasing attention to how religion is linked to victimization and offending. Since the religion–crime studies have traditionally focused on offending, the research lacunae are biggest in the study of victimization. The inclusion of religion is particularly relevant in international surveys in religiously heterogeneous communities. In this article, we aim to develop a survey module suggestion for use in the context of the International Self-Report Delinquency Study (ISRD). We first examine the current content of the ISRD-4 sweep. To locate lacunae in it, we move to review how international surveys have tackled the dimension of religion, including the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study, the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD), the European Social Survey (ESS), the World Values Survey (WVS), and the International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS). Building on these state-of-the-art examples, we propose a new ISRD module (Appendix) for studying the religion–victimization link in international crime surveys with limited space. In conclusion, we argue that criminology would benefit from increasing attention to religion and other cultural variables alongside traditional socioeconomic, structural, and individual factors.

Keywords: criminology; hate crime; victimization; religion; international surveys; ISRD

Religijos-viktimizacijos modulio link tarptautinio jaunimo delinkvencijos ir viktimizacijos tyrimo (ISRD) kontekste: mokymasis iš praeities pavyzdžių

Santrauka. Postsekuliarios visuomenės samprata pabrėžia didėjančią religijos reikšmę socialinėje, kultūros ir politikos srityse. Atsižvelgiant į šią tendenciją, kriminologija turėtų skirti daugiau dėmesio klausimui, kaip religija susijusi su viktimizacija ir nusižengimais. Kadangi religijos ir nusikaltimų tyrimai tradiciškai labiau telkė dėmesį į nusižengimus, itin nedaug žinoma apie religijos sąsajas su viktimizacija. Religijos veiksnio analizė tarptautiniuose tyrimuose ypač aktuali religiškai nevienalytėse bendruomenėse. Šiame straipsnyje pristatomas apklausos modulis, kuris galėtų būti taikomas Tarptautiniame jaunimo delinkvencijos ir viktimizacijos tyrime (ISRD). Pirmiausia buvo išnagrinėta naujausia tyrimo banga ISRD-4. Siekiant aptikti šio tyrimo spragas, atlikta kitų tarptautinių tyrimų, įskaitant moksleivių sveikatos ir gyvensenos tyrimą (HBSC), Alkoholio ir kitų psichoaktyviųjų medžiagų vartojimo Europos mokyklose tyrimą (ESPAD), Europos socialinį tyrimą (ESS), Pasaulio vertybių tyrimą (WVS) ir Tarptautinį nusikaltimų aukų tyrimą (ICVS), kuriuose buvo nagrinėjamas religijos aspektas, apžvalga. Remiantis šiais pavyzdžiais, straipsnyje pristatomas naujas ISRD modulis (Priedas), skirtas religijos ir viktimizacijos sąsajai tirti tarptautiniuose nusikaltimų tyrimuose. Straipsnio autoriai prieina prie išvados, kad kriminologiniuose tyrimuose, šalia tradicinių socialinių, ekonominių, struktūrinių ir individualių veiksnių, didesnį dėmesį verta skirti religijai ir kitiems kultūriniams kintamiesiems.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: kriminologija; neapykantos nusikaltimai; viktimizacija; religija; tarptautiniai tyrimai; ISRD

During the 20th century, many sociologists believed that the modernization of societies would also mean an increasing trend towards secularization. Religion was predicted to become less and less significant in the social and cultural spheres, particularly in the most advanced industrial and postindustrial societies (Norris & Inglehart, 2004). However, this prediction proved to be problematic (Habermas, 2008). Multiple changes during the last couple of decades have involved an increasing rather than decreasing social relevance of religion, also in the West. For instance, the 9/11 terror attacks in New York were followed by a long 'war on terror' that for many appeared like a clash of religions, or even a clash of civilizations. At the same time, immigration and refugee movements in Europe resulted in demographic changes and increased religious heterogeneity also in countries which were previously very homogeneous in religious terms, like the Nordic countries (Stonawski et al., 2015). Overall, post-secular societies are described to manifest increasing visibility of religion (Moberg et al., 2012).

The postsecular trend does not exclusively derive from the immigration of individuals to the Global North. Simultaneously, seemingly secular people who are exiting the traditional religious denominations are often looking for other sources of spiritual fulfilment and "noninstitutional spiritualities" (Moberg et al., 2012, p. 2). In Nordic countries, the share of persons belonging as members to the Lutheran majority churches has been decreasing (see, e.g., Niemelä, 2015). But this trend can also reflect spiritual and religious motives. For some, leaving can be a 'principled' stand against liberalization or traditionalism in social questions like gender and sexual lifestyles, a decision thus involving identity issues rather than secularization alone (see Ibid.).

Because of these trends, sociologists of religion have called contemporary societies as 'post-secular' (Habermas, 2008). The increasing role of religion has repercussions to the empirical study of social life, including social conflicts ranging from war to everyday crime victimization. The increasing mixing of people with different religious views, involves changes in opportunity structure for religiously motivated hate crime (see, e.g., Rowatt & Al-Kire, 2021). There is clearly a need to study the role of religion in crime victimization as an internationally variable phenomenon. This involves both outcome measures and predictors/correlates, especially when broad international analyses are undertaken.

In this article, our aim is to explore what constructs should be included in a short survey module designed for the study of religion–victimization link

in the context of the International Self-Report Delinquency Study (ISRD, see Marshall et al., 2022). In the ISRD, participating countries are allowed to attach so called national modules to the fixed and standardized part. Often, countries collaborate to utilize a shared module within a specific region. This study links to the future possibility to focus on religion with a standard religion module attached to the fixed part. We aim to learn incrementally from prior research to suggest what kind of short religion–victimization module could be later piloted. In what follows, we first discuss the general societal need to study the religion–victimization link. After that, we explicate the current religion-related variables included in the ISRD4 questionnaire. We then explore the possible lacunae of the instrument by examining other international crime relevant survey systems, to detect what would be needed for a religion module in the ISRD framework. Based on this review and selected suggestions from prior research, we propose such a national/regional module.

Religion in Criminology

Criminological interest in the religion–crime link began from the perspective of explaining criminal offending. This approach is exemplified by Hirschi and Stark's (2002 [1969]) classic article "Hellfire and Delinquency," which indicated that religion did not protect against juvenile delinquency. They focused on Christianity and its content, such as ideas on supernatural punishment after death, or the existence of the devil. Subsequently, most studies have found that religion is a protective factor against criminal offending (Adamczyk et al., 2017), even though street offenders can be religious (Topalli et al., 2013). Another subfield of criminology where religion has played a role is the study of desistance: religion can serve a turning point for convicts, enabling desistance (Stansfield, 2017).

Less emphasis has been placed on how religion links to risk of victimization. It is known that members of different religions typically experience different levels of victimization risk. For instance, Muslims have above-average rates of victimization in Western countries in which they are considered to be a minority, sometimes in perceived conflict with the majority religion (Van Kesteren, 2016; Staubli & Kivivuori, 2017; Litvak et al., 2023). Also, youths without religion have a heightened risk for victimization, a particularly salient observation in the face of possible secularization (Litvak et al., 2023).

Relevant explanatory mechanisms include routine activities (Cohen & Felson, 1979) and lifestyles (Hindelang et al., 1978). These theories suggest that religious groups may have differential crime risks due to their different everyday routines. Such routines can protect people from crime victimization or increase their risk of victimization. From the offending perspective, religious beliefs may inhibit people from crime (Knafo & Khoury-Kassabri, 2008), or, in extreme situations, incite hostility against other groups (Setiawan et al., 2020). Protective and risk mechanisms may differ by type of religion, the level of personal religiosity and by the way in which religious individuals navigate through social life (Baier, 2014). It is also possible that religion impacts victimization directly, without the mediating role of routines (Litvak et al., 2023).

Thus, religion can protect people from crime victimization. But it can also be a risk factor, placing people at risk to become victims. Religion can motivate hate crime or make people visible targets for potential hate offenders. Different religions differ in the degree to which their adherents make their membership visible, thus potentially impacting the risks involved (Chakraborti & Zempi, 2012; Staubli & Kivivuori, 2017; Kivivuori et al., 2022). Victim characteristics can impact risk apart from offender motivation and knowledge. Thus, studies suggest that some Sikhs have been victimized because they have been mistakenly identified as Muslims by offenders (Falcone, 2006).

Prior research on hate crime victimization patters of different religious groups suggest, that victims from religious groups are often attacked by strangers while being in a public spaces, such as on the street, clubs/bars, in the city or in public transportation (Hardy & Chakraborti, 2020; Mason-Bish & Zempi, 2019; Zempi, 2020; Chakraborti & Garland, 2012; Williams, 2021). The role of religious congregations and places of worship is also complex. Religious congregations can serve as a protective factor by offering protection by co-religionists. On the other hand, such congregations can expose people to risk by placing them all in the same space (Scheitle, 2018). Additionally, places of social gathering or educational institutions associated with a specific religion, for example, Jewish schools, can potentially protect and at the same time expose the religious group to external threats (Scheitle & Halligan, 2018; Samson, 2021).

The possible intersectional nature of hate crime victimization calls for attention. Members of a particular religious community may experience differential targeting based on identifiable individual characteristics, such as their perceived gender or disability (Hardy & Chakraborti, 2020), and because of

their social structural position. Typically, repeated international surveys such as the ISRD have *fixed part* including questions which can interact with within-religion risk factors. These questions include gender identification, socioeconomic position, and individual personality traits. Indeed, variables of the fixed part can reveal interactions with religion, but also the spuriousness of the possible bivariate associations between religion and victimization risk. For instance, it is possible that people high on self-control are more likely to enter religious communities, and also refrain from risky activities, creating a correlation between religion and crime risk. In this article, we explore how within-religion risk factors should be addressed in the study of victimization. Therefore, we exclude a more general discussion of the important other risk factors, presuming that the international survey fixed part already contains key social and induvial risk factors.

Religion in the International Self-Report Delinquency Study (ISRD)

The International Self-Report Delinquency Study (ISRD) is a global network-based collaboration for the study of youth crime (Marshall et al., 2022). Launched in 1991, the fourth ISRD sweep is currently in the data collection stage. The main aim of the ISRD is to compare the patterns of youth victimization and offending in different countries, and to study the correlates of crime in a globally comparative context. The ISRD is linked to social science criminology as a discipline and focuses on young people.

Compared to the special one-off survey with extensive space for a narrow topic, the domain-general crime surveys like the ISRD tend to be multipurpose tools like the Swiss army knife, with multiple parts tailored for different purposes. The ISRD is basically divided into the fixed part, the changing parts, and the national modules. The fixed part incorporates sociodemographic variables, other general predictor measures, and core outcomes of criminal offending and victimization. The changing part is compulsory for users but changes from sweep to sweep. The national or regional modules can be appended to the core instrument by local data collectors. The religion module we are aiming to build would be such a national/regional module. To ensure reasonably low attrition in responding, the space for any single part of the survey is highly limited. It is therefore of interest how other international surveys with space limi-

tations have solved the problem. The space limitation also means that many instruments developed for special religion-related surveys are not feasible due to their length.

Religion as a main predictor question has been included in the ISRD system from the sweep 3 (2012–2019). The 4th sweep incorporated, as a new element, a question on the visibility of religion, a dimension with high relevance for the study of victimization risk (Marshall et al., 2022; Kivivuori et al., 2022). The original target age group of the ISRD system was 13- to 16-year-olds, but this has been extended upwards in the 4th sweep.

Thus, studying the crime-victimization link in ISRD context immanently justifies focus on youths and young adults. This age group is also generally relevant as young people are known to have an above average risk to be victims of a hate crime (Enzmann et al., 2018; Van Kesteren, 2016). Furthermore, studies suggest that during adolescence, changes in religiosity can take place (Day, 2013; Sugimura et al., 2019). Before adolescence, children often administratively or culturally follow the religion of the parents in terms of beliefs and practices. Hence, period of life can witness changes towards, or away from, parental religion, possibly linked to how the young person wishes to be seen as a member of a religious community (Tervo-Niemelä, 2021). Studying the link between religion, victimization and crime at that stage of identity formation appears particularly relevant for the study of victimization risk. We next briefly describe the religion-related variables of the ISRD4.

Religiously motivated Hate Crime. In regards to the crime victimization outcome, the ISRD asks the respondent, "Has anyone ever threatened you with violence or committed physical violence against you because of your race, ethnicity or nationality, *religion*, gender identity, sexual orientation, or for similar reasons?" (italics added). Thus, the main outcome question combines several identity features that can trigger hate crime. This is as such warranted, because it is important to study the risk of (any) hate crime in different religious groups. Yet it would be useful to be able to differentiate religious hate crime from other biases. The ISRD does this by using follow-up questions. Those who respond having been victims of hate crime are asked, what was the trigger in the most recent incident (lifetime recall period). This follow-up can be used to examine separately those respondents whose most recent experience was about religion. An alternative solution would be to use a main victimization question for religion-related hate violence.

Religious Affiliation. The main question on religious affiliation is "What is your religion or to which religious community do you belong?" After this, the main religions are listed. If the respondent chooses Christianity or Islam, the response triggers a follow-up question, asking to specify which branch of the said religion the respondent is affiliated to. The affiliation question of the ISRD has been inspired by the corresponding question in the European Social Survey (2018). In ISRD, the 'nonreligious' alternative is given as a response options, rather than as a preceding filter question as in the ESS.

Visibility of Religion. In ISRD4, the question on the importance of religion was replaced by a question on external visibility of religious affiliation. This question was suggested in research using the ISRD3 in Finland and Switzerland (Staubli & Kivivuori, 2017). The research suggested that the ISRD3 lacked the visibility dimension. It is especially important for the study of victimization since religion can be targeted only if the motivated offender can assume the religious affiliation.

Group Identity and Discrimination. The ISRD4 incorporates a question on religious group attachment as part of a general belonging scale. One of the items is "I feel part of a group of people who share the same belief/religion as me." The belonging scale [M1] also incorporates an item on self-assessed discrimination. The respondent is first asked, if he/she feels like belonging to a group that is unfairly treated. If the person answers 'fully agree' or 'somewhat agree,' this triggers the follow-up question on the type of group which is unfairly treated. One of the options refers to religious groups. In case multiple such groups are cited, the respondent is asked what the minority group membership calls up subjectively experienced unfair treatment. This question is framed as part of general identity and belonging scale, and therefore uses more space than is likely to be available in a religions-specific module. A more concise option is to ask the respondent directly if he/she belongs to a religious group he/she considers to be discriminated against.

In international crime surveys, the questions can be divided to those which are addressed to all (main question), and those which are addressed to crime victims only (follow-up questions). Using the latter question type, we can follow up on hate crime victims whether the motivation was religious, as judged by the victim. In this article, we limit our attention to main questions intended for all respondents, as these are more amenable to risk factor analysis, and because follow-ups depend on the questions included in the fixed part. To de-

velop a new religion–victimization module for the ISRD context, it is helpful to look how religion has been factored in other international survey systems with crime relevance.[1]

Religion in Key International Crime-Relevant Surveys

In this section, we review how existing academically driven cross-national surveys with some crime related content deal with religion. We explore how religion is factored in as a possible predictor variable, and/or in the outcome side of the equation. In this narrative review, we focus on academically driven international surveys using repeated cross-sectional sweeps, with particular attention regarding the various dimensions of religious life that could have a bearing on crime victimization. Such systems are relatively few and well known to professional circles. Yet, we additionally used selected search engines such as Google Scholar and PubMed to locate possible additional international surveys.

We included general community surveys covering youths or young adults but excluded surveys targeted exclusively at special groups such as businesses, health professionals, specific immigrant groups, or women. Also surveys that were not primarily collected as data for scientific research were left out (e.g., surveys by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights). We canvassed surveys which have crime related content, even though the main topic can be different. In addition to reading the questionnaires of the most recent sweeps, we additionally searched with search words (such as "relig*") for religion-related content of the most recent sweep questionnaires, to ensure full capture (see also Table 1 for summary).

We start with surveys addressed to general populations, World Values Survey (WVS) and the European Social Survey (ESS). We then move to a general-population crime survey, the International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS). Thereafter, we continue to surveys targeted at children and/or young people,

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[1]   Some crime victim surveys measure the outcome (victimization based on religion) but not the predictor/correlates (religious affiliation, practices etc). See the critique by Scheitle and Hansmann (2016, p. 869) of the U.S. National Crime Victim Survey which then incorporated a measure of religion-related hate crime (outcome) but not sufficient information on religious affiliation of the respondent (risk factor). Without such variables, it is not possible to describe the differential risks of various religions or intensities of religious observance.

the Health Behaviour of School Children (HBSC) and the European Survey of Alcohol and Drugs (ESPAD). In that category, we describe in detail the role of religion in the ISRD system and its fourth sweep in particular. The ISRD 4th sweep incorporates a relatively extensive theme of religion. As noted above, our suggestion for a religion–victimization module is developed in the general ISRD framework, while being applicable more widely.

World Values Survey (WVS). Launched in 1981, the World Values Survey (WVS) is considered as currently the largest noncommercial cross-national empirical time-series investigation of human beliefs and values (Haerpfer et al., 2022). The questionnaire of the most recent sweep (2017–2021) includes more than ten questions about religious values, but many other questions also deal with religious issues.

The WVS includes questions of religious affiliation, activity level of membership in religious organizations, practices (ceremonies and praying), and importance of religion. The WVS asks about the importance of religion in two ways, referring to personal importance (Q6) and to the importance of religion in child rearing (Q15). Activity in religious organizations (Q94) appears to be a unique measure to WVS. As a construct, it is placed on a list of voluntary organizations. It differs from (often passive) membership in a denomination, from inner importance of religion, and from ceremonies and prayer.

The WVS also contains several questions about the ideational content of religious belief. For instance, the respondents are asked "independently of whether you attend religious services or not, would you say you are…?", with the following response alternatives: "a religious person," "not a religious person," and "an atheist" (Q173). After that question, two forced-choice dichotomies capture aspects or religious beliefs, such as normativity versus altruism.

The WVS also contains several crime related variables, like personal and family victimization, perception of crime in the neighborhood, fear of terrorism, feeling unsafe from crime at one's home, considering violence and terrorism as justified, and considering fighting crime a policy priority. It includes a question on adaptations to crime, asking the respondent, "Which of the following things have you done for reasons of security?", with "Didn't carry much money," "Preferred not to go out at night" and "Carried a knife, gun or other weapon" as items. The survey does not focus on the visibility of religion in everyday routines, such as through clothing or jewellery, a construct likely needed in the study of religion–victimization link.

European Social Survey (ESS). The European Social Survey (ESS) is a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) established to create cross-national data especially in the domain of attitudes, beliefs, and values (European Social Survey, 2020). It covers a wide variety of topics in the domain of social and political sciences. Among these are also criminologically relevant variables, such as a question on burglary or assault victimization against the respondent or his/her family, and on feeling safe while walking alone in the respondent's residential area. The ESS also contains several questions on religion.

Religious affiliation is asked by first filtering on whether the respondents identify themselves as belonging to a denomination. The filter question is: "Do you consider yourself as belonging to any particular religion or denomination?" If the respondent affirms, he/she is asked a follow-up on the specific religion ("Which one?") from a list of major world religions. *Religiosity* is measured by the question, "Regardless of whether you belong to a particular religion, how religious would you say you are?" The response scale starts from 0 "Not at all religious" and ends with 10 "Very religious." *Religious practice* is covered in the ESS core by two questions pertaining to ceremonial participation and prayer. Ceremonial practice is captured by the question: "Apart from special occasions such as weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services nowadays?" Prayer is covered by the question: "Apart from when you are at religious services, how often, if at all, do you pray?"

The ESS religion questions thus capture affiliation, importance, and practice. Practice is captured by one item on external public ceremonies and another which can include very private and nonvisible religious behavior, praying. The examination of WVS and ESS instruments suggest that the key constructs of measuring religion in international survey are affiliation, ceremonial/ritual activity, organizational activity, personal activity, and personal importance. The WVS contains more questions about religion, while the ESS shows a relatively strong social structural emphasis. Its items do not address the dimension of the *visibility* of religion, such as wearing specific clothing or insignia, a dimension, as mentioned above, which is particularly relevant for victimization studies.

International Crime Victim Survey. In contrast to multipurpose surveys WVS and ESS, the International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS) focuses on crime. It begun in the 1980s as a collaboration among researchers. The final full sweep of the ICVS was conducted in 2003–2005 under the aegis of the

European Union, with the results published as "*The Burden of Crime in the EU*" in 2007 (van Dijk et al., 2007). The survey instrument used in that final sweep contained one religion related outcome measure and two religion related predictor measures. The predictors were a single question technically divided into two parts. The respondent was first asked: "Do you consider yourself as belonging to any particular religion or denomination?" If the respondent answered yes, he/she was asked, "Which one?" The interviewer then coded in one of the 22 response alternatives listing major religious groups. The outcome measure was about religious hate crime victimization: "EU 02. In the past 5 years, did you, or any member of your immediate family fell victim of a crime because, or partly because of your nationality, race or colour, religious belief, or sexual orientation?"

TABLE 1. Religion-related concepts in internationally comparative survey systems.

	ISRD[a]	WVS	ESS	ICVS	HBSC	ESPAD	Module[b]
Affiliation	X	X	X	X			X
Importance		X	X				X
Practices		X	X				X
Visibility	X						X
Beliefs / attitudes		X	X		(X)[c]		X
Victimization	X[d]	X	X	X	X	X	X
Religious hate crime victimization				X			X
Victimization Prevention strategies[e]		X		X			X
Most recent completed sweep	2012–19	2017–21	2020–2022	2004–2005	2017–2018	2019	..
Age groups	13–16	18–85	15 and over	16 and over	11–15	15-16	
Number of countries (sweep)	35	30	30	30	45	35	..

a) ISRD4 questionnaire. b) The survey module suggested in this research, see Appendix. c) HBSC has an optional spiritual health scale. d) ISRD contains a general hate crime victimization item where religion is mentioned as one of the listed triggers of hate crime. e) Victimization prevention strategies are not necessarily linked to religion-based victimization.

Health Behavior in School-aged Children (HBSC). The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey is youth health survey organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) since 1984. The collaborative effort has grown to include 50 countries. The system is based on a cluster sample of school classes, with students responding in the classes to the HBSC instrument. The focus of the survey is on health-related issues among youths aged 11 to 15. The instrument includes questions on bullying and fighting (World Health Organization, 2020). Fighting is factored in as a main question ("During the past 12 months, how many times were you in a physical fight?"). The questionnaire asks about physical injuries using a different question, whose introduction mentions fights as a potential source of injury, amongst other causes ("During the past 12 months, how many times were you injured and had to be treated by a doctor or nurse?"). The system does not include religious affiliation as a sociodemographic variable, or follow-up questions related to religious motives. However, a special spiritual health scale is listed as an optional module.

European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD). The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) focuses on substance abuse among 15–16-year-old youths. The system aims at creating comparative data on the substance use among youth, to describe trends within and across countries. The ESPAD is repeated every four years. As in HBSC, the ESPAD collaboration has been based on health-related approaches rather than criminology. The ESPAD (2019) master questionnaire includes questions about experiencing physical fights, robbery and theft victimization, trouble with police, and sexual victimization. It also contains a follow-up question capturing the consequences of cannabis use; this item includes, among other negative consequences, fighting.

The ESPAD instrument does not include questions about religion, or about new forms of spiritual and noninstitutional religion, or follow-up questions related to religious motives of using or abstaining from substances. In the 1990s the system incorporated religion in a question probing why the respondent was abstaining from drugs or alcohol, but this question appears to have been abandoned. More generally, it is of some interest that the system does not link substance use to cultural-ideational forces. This is an interesting demarcation as the link of religion and neo-spirituality to substance use can be complex.

Possible other lacunae

The examination of international surveys suggested that the ISRD religion–victimization module should incorporate, in addition to the ISRD-4 variables, the importance of religion, religious practices, selected questions about beliefs/attitudes, as well as an outcome question specifying religion-motivated hate crime victimization.

Measures regarding content of beliefs. Above, we referred to the rise of postsecular society where the salience of religion is rising, and its forms diversifying. One of the aspects of this trend is the rise of "noninstitutional spirituality". People can self-identify as "spiritual but not religious." The religious affiliation questions direct respondents to consider religion as one of the major world-religions or smaller institutional sects. Yet new forms of religiosity can be criminologically relevant. At least one recent study found that "spiritual but not religious" youths tend to have above-average offending risk (Seto, 2021). Regarding victimization, prior examination, while using Finnish data, indicated that religiously nonaffiliated youth have an increased risk of crime victimization (Litvak et al., 2023).

There are many scales to measure "unaffiliated religiosity" or various types of nonreligiosity and antireligiosity, such as atheism and humanism (Coleman & Jong, 2017). The problem with such scales for the current study goal is that they tend to be long, and as such, not feasible in the short modular space available in general crime surveys. A short question is used in the American National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR, 2023).[2] The survey used a question capturing spirituality as distinct from religion. The respondents were said: "Some people say that they are 'spiritual but not religious.' How true or not would you say this of you…," with response alternatives "Very true," "somewhat true" and "not true at all."

We suggest that short questions probing these dimensions of belief could be inserted to the religion–victimization module. These would probe the spiritual/religious distinction, the possible identification as nonbeliever, and the relation to revenge.

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[2]   The US-based NSYR differs from the comparative surveys discussed here. It is a longitudinal survey of individuals (the same persons interviewed over time). Some of the sweeps have incorporated questions on crime as well.

The dimension of change. People's religious affiliations and attachments are subject to change over the life course, with potentially drastic positive and negative consequences (Björkmark et al., 2022). To study the effects of such changes on victimization would require longitudinal studies. Yet, for purposes of comparative surveys, it is possible to integrate questions on self-reported change in religiosity. The NSYR (2023) has a question of whether the respondent has become more or less religious over a specific time. In addition to this question on change, there is a need to ask if the respondent has left the religion of his/her parents. Such a transition could be linked to a decrease or increase of victimization from external persons or former co-religionists (Ransom & Heim, 2021; Scharp & Beck, 2017).

Adaptations against crime. One criminologically important aspect of the crime–religion link is whether and how people adapt to crime risk by taking precautions against it. These can be passive or active. Passive forms involve withdrawal from potential risk, or camouflaging traits that are considered risk-triggering. The passive forms of adaptation are to a degree, the reverse side of the public visibility of religion: hiding one's religion is a means of protection. More active forms of adaptation could include using public space in groups with co-religionists to deter aggressions. Revenge is the most active form adaptation to risk, as it serves as a deterrent. The religion module should include a series of questions on adaptations to perceived risk (See Appendix).

Victimization questions

The results of the above canvassing can be summarized on a more general level: we suggest the incorporation of affiliation, importance, practice, change, and belief as key risk/protective factors (see Figure 1). The exact items for each dimension are shown in the Appendix. Note that the dimension of practice is designed from the perspective of the visibility of religion, as potential offenders can only use religion as victim selection heuristic if they associate a person to a religious group.

The main dimensions seem necessary for studying the risk factors associated with religiously motivated hate crime victimization. But they can also be used to study the risk factors of any type of crime victimization.[3] We can thus

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[3]   They can be used also to study offending. Yet, the offending perspective would require also additional variables which are not dealt with in this study.

explore if groups defined by religion variables differ in general victimization risk, or in a wide spectrum of crime victimization types. This is a criminologically relevant research question. It also avoids some validity pitfalls related to motive-specific victimization, because incident recall is not dependent on how the victim sees offender motivation. We therefore suggest that the outcome variables always incorporate both general victimization and religion-based (hate) victimization.
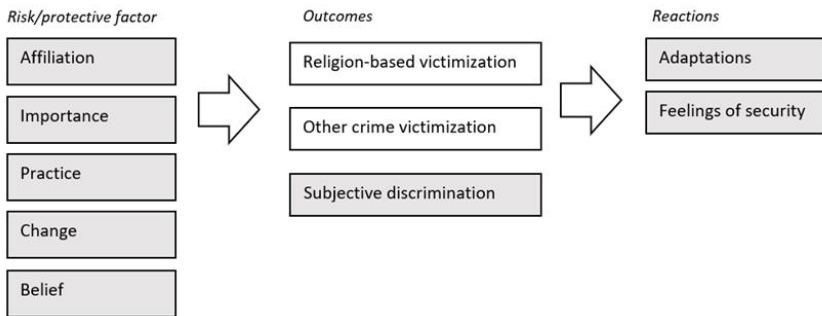

FIGURE 1. Conceptual map of the survey module for the study of religion–victimization link in international surveys[4] (See also Appendix)

In ISRD, hate victimization was measured with a single item incorporating multiple possible triggers of hate crime. Religious motive was screened only with a follow-up question on *the most recent* incident. This can underestimate religious hate crime, because some respondents may have been targeted for some other identity aspect in the most recent situation, while they have been victims of religious hate crime previously, in a single or even multiple incidents.

Therefore, it would be ideal to have an independent main question about religiously motivated hate crime victimization. We divide the ISRD standard question into two questions (see B4 and B5 in the Appendix) measuring separately 1) religion-motivated hate crime victimization and 2) victimization by hate crime targeting other than religion-based characteristics (or identities).

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[4]   Grey boxes are included in the suggested survey module (see Appendix). Religion based or other victimization is recommended to be incorporated to the standard part of the survey system.

This allows for the prevalence of religious bias crime to be estimated and used as an additional outcome variable in analyses. This should not endanger comparability to standard ISRD hate victimization question, because the divided two-question set can be combined in the analysis if the analyst does not need to address religiously motivated incidents separately. A similar solution is suggested for the online hate crime (or hate speech) victimization (see the questions B6 and B7 in the Appendix).

Discussion

In this study our primary research question was, what constructs need to be included if the link of religion and victimization is studied in the context of the International Self-Report Delinquency Study, an internationally comparative survey. This implies strict space limitations. Therefore, we focused on international comparative general community surveys with crime relevance. We identified affiliation, importance, practice, change, and belief as key dimensions to be incorporated, with visibility of religion included in the concept of practice. We also recommend using a set of questions on subjective discrimination, personal adaptations, and fearing to go to religious places. We presented the result of the mapping also as a ready-made suggestion for key variables (Appendix) capturing religious victimization and key predictors and adaptive responses.

In this research, we focused on the primary question of "what" we should ask about religion when we want to examine its link to crime *victimization*. The question of "how" a specific question is best formulated, requires further attention to validation and reliability of the instruments. The aim here was more limited: to chart the current best practices, to critically discuss them, and to suggest ways to go forward in the study of the religion–victimization link, given the context of repeated cross-sectional international surveys. One of the limitations is that the language or the terms presented in survey might be unfamiliar to some respondents, depending on the targeted age group. Conducting a pretest of the survey would be useful especially in younger groups. Furthermore, scholars intending to utilize this module are encouraged to customize it by including or excluding specific questions that they find more appropriate or inappropriate for the particular location, age groups, and research focus.

In this study, we focused on general community surveys rather than on surveys focused on special subgroups such as specific professions, immigrant groups or gender identities. Religion-related variables might be useful also in such studies. Furthermore, business victimization surveys could benefit from exploring whether the religious affiliation of business owners or staff impacts the risk of victimization.

In many countries, religious heterogeneity is related to migration processes. The diversity of religions and their visibility in the public space might expose the believers to victimization through those motivated to do them harm. On the other hand, religion can be a source of resilience and strength in a case of victimization (Flax, 2021). Many religious people belonging to the same group can have different and unique characteristics. Thus, victims of hate crime can have intersectional statuses, all of which are potential identity-based triggers for motivated hate offenders. Therefore, the analytic use of the religion module requires an ability to examine key intersectional identities in the fixed parts of the study. The minimum requirement is a question about immigrant status of the respondent. Preferably, there could also be a question, about the country of origin.

At the time of this narrative review, we have not yet used the module recommended in this article (Appendix). When it is used, the research must take care of ethical review and legal considerations at the intended research location, relative to targeted age category. We plan to test the module among young adults (18–29) but consider it to be usable at least from the age 15. The module will be piloted, possibly with a pilot study incorporating locations with different religious compositions and contexts. After the piloting, we may introduce changes. The final recommendation will then be published in ISRD translation file mode, to facilitate internationally comparative use of the data in the study of religion–victimization link. Studies testing and using the religion–victimization link are likely to yield an improved view on how the various dimensions of religious life, such as practices, visibility, and adaptations (see Figure 1), function as risk or protective factors, and whether such mechanisms differ in different countries across the world.

The overall picture gained in our narrative review can also be discussed from the more abstract point of view of what variable domains have received most attention in international surveys. In this sociology of knowledge type of discussion, the variable repertories of survey indicators testify to paradigmatic

focal concerns in social science. With the notable exception of the culturally oriented World Value Survey, the emphasis seems to have been in socioeconomic, structural, and health spheres. This applies to criminological systems as well. Criminology has been traditionally interested in root causes of crime, such as social disadvantage and social stratification.

It thus seems legitimate to ask the question if cultural factors such as religion have been neglected at least in a comparative sense. With exceptions,[5] criminological youth surveys may have inclined towards a social-structural emphasis at the expense of a more Weberian sociology which takes religion and immaterial and ideational factors into consideration. This may be due to the secularization thesis, or even because religion may seem marginal for scientifically oriented researchers. The social importance of religion has increased over the recent decades, due to global population movements and to internal shifts in religiosity towards more individual and noninstitutional forms, sometimes described as 'spiritual' rather than religious. Religious ideation can thus tacitly also influence secular behavior, a sociological hypothesis explored by Max Weber in his classic work on the links between protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism (2005 [1904]). There are thus multiple reasons why criminology needs to pay more attention to how religion impacts crime victimization and offending.

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[5]   We are here thinking about the spiritual health option of HBSC, and the religion questions of the ISRD-4 sweep.

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Appendix: Religion module for comparative studies of crime victimization (ISRD framework).[a]

A **Some bad things that sometimes happen to people**

A1 **Has anyone ever used a weapon, force or threat of force to get money or things from you?**

☐ no   *If no, continue with question B2.*

☐ yes

Did this happen to you in the last 12 months?

☐ no

☐ if yes, how often:_____

A2 **Has anyone ever beaten you up or hurt you with a stick, club, knife or gun so badly that you were injured?**

☐ no   *If no, continue with question B3.*

☐ yes

Did this happen to you in the last 12 months?

☐ no

☐ if yes, how often:_____

A3 **Has something ever been stolen from you (such as a book, money, mobile phone, sports gear, bicycle …)?**

☐ no   *If no, continue with question B4.*

☐ yes

Did this happen to you in the last 12 months?

☐ no

☐ if yes, how often:_____

A4 **Has anyone ever threatened you with violence or committed physical violence against you <u>because of your religion or views about religion</u>?**

☐ no   *If no, continue with question B5.*

☐ yes

Did this happen to you in the last 12 months?

☐ no

☐ if yes, how often:_____

A5 **Has anyone ever threatened you with violence or committed physical violence against you for <u>other reasons</u>, such as because of your race, ethnicity or nationality, gender identity, or sexual orientation, or for similar reasons?**

☐ no   *If no, continue with question B6.*

☐ yes

Did this happen to you in the last 12 months?
☐ no
☐ if yes, how often:_____

A6 Has anyone ever sent you hurtful messages or comments on social media about your <u>religion</u>?
☐ no   *If no, continue with question B7.*
☐ yes
    Did this happen to you in the last 12 months?
    ☐ no
    ☐ if yes, how often:_____

A7 Has anyone ever sent you hurtful messages or comments on social media about <u>other</u> aspects of your identity, such as gender, sexual orientation, or for similar reasons?
☐ no   *If no, continue with question C1.*
☐ yes
    Did this happen to you in the last 12 months?
    ☐ no
    ☐ if yes, how often:_____

B Your religion and views about religion

B1 What is your religion or to which religious community do you belong? (Choose one of the following answers)
☐ I do not belong to a religion / religious community
☐ Christianity (if checked, choose what branch of Christianity:)
    ☐ Roman Catholic
    ☐ Eastern Orthodox
    ☐ Protestant (such as Evangelical, Lutheran, Anglican, etc.)
    ☐ Other (specify:) _____
    ☐ I don't know
☐ Judaism
☐ Islam (if checked, choose what branch of Islam:)
    ☐ Sunni Islam
    ☐ Shi'ite Islam
    ☐ Other (specify:) _____
    ☐ I don't know
☐ Buddhism
☐ Hinduism
☐ Another religion / religious community (specify:) _____

B2 How important to you (personally) is religion in your everyday life?
(Choose one of the following answers)

☐ Very important	☐ Quite important	☐ A bit important	☐ A bit un-important	☐ Quite un-important	☐ Totally unimportant

B3 How often you do the following things?

	Every day	More than once a week	Once a week	At least once a month	Rarely	(Almost) Never	Only on specific holy days
a. I will be with my friends in public places after 9 p.m.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Don't come home on evenings until after ten	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Attending religious services (not counting special occasions such as weddings and funerals)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Praying when you are not at religious services?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Visiting or spending time in religious buildings such churches, mosques, synagogues, or similar?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Wearing clothes or symbols that can show your religion (such as headscarves, hats, hairstyles, jewellery, tattoos, or any other visible signs)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Speaking in public a language that can be associated with specific religion?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B4 People have different notions about how to respond in conflict situations.
Select the one which you would prefer:
- ☐ Turning the other cheek, believing in karma, or trusting in God's punishment
- ☐ Seeking personal revenge ("An eye for an eye")

B5 **Over the past two years, has religion become more or less important for you personally?**

☐ More important   ☐ No change   ☐ Less important

B6 **Would you describe yourself as any of the following? (You can choose multiple options)**

☐ Atheist

☐ Agnostic

☐ Nonbeliever

☐ None of the above

B7 **Would you describe yourself as any of the following? (You can choose multiple options)**

☐ Spiritual

☐ Religious

☐ Neither

B8 **Have you left the religion to which you were born / the religion of your parents?**

☐ No, I remain in the same religion

☐ No, because I never belonged to a religion

☐ Yes

B9 **Do you feel part of a group whose religion, or views about religion, are treated unfairly in [country name]?**

☐ No

☐ Yes, to some extent

☐ Yes, to a large extent

☐ Yes, absolutely

B10 **How safe you feel while visiting:**

	Very secure	*Secure*	*Neither secure nor insecure*	*Insecure*	*very insecure*	*I never go to these places*
a. A church, mosque, synagogue, temple, or similar public place of worship?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Religious schools?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Religious-social gatherings (clubs, events)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B11 **Religion or views about religion can sometimes attract negative attention or aggression from other people.** *To protect you from negative comments or aggression against your religion/religious views,* **how often you do the following things?**

	Al-ways	Often	Some-times	Rarely	Never
a. Hiding or deciding not to wear clothes or symbols that can show your religion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Not speaking about religion when others can hear	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Not praying if others can see it	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Disguising yourself as non-believer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Not saying to others that you have left the religion of your parents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Check "Always" here to show you are attentive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Not speaking your own language because others can link it to a specific religion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Moving in public places with people of the same religion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Not going to church, mosque, synagogue, temple, or similar public place of worship	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Carrying a weapon (such as a knife or pepper spray) for self-defence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B12 **Are there any additional measures or practices that you employ to safeguard yourself against negative comments or acts of aggression targeting your religion or religious beliefs that have not been mentioned previously?**
Please specify: _____
_____
_____

B13 **How many of your friends share the same religion as you?**
☐   All of them
☐   Most of them
☐   Some of them
☐   None of them

C1 Your views about this study

    C1 How easy or difficult this survey was for you to respond?

        ☐ Very easy

        ☐ Easy

        ☐ Not easy or difficult

        ☐ Difficult

        ☐ Very difficult

    C2 Do you have anything you wish to comment about this study? You can give any comments about the topic of the study, about the questions, or about how you felt like when responding. We welcome any critical reflections or suggestions to improve this study.

        _____

        _____

        _____

[a] This module suggestion can be applied selectively. If some questions are considered inappropriate for the targeted age category, they can be excluded. The use of "don't know" option reflects the general principles in the ISRD-4 questionnaire.

The sources of inspiration for the questions are listed here:

B1-B7 ISRD4 (Marshall et al., 2022). B4 and B5 are separated from the original formulation so that B4 captures only religion-based hate crime victimization.

C1 ISRD4 (Marshall et al., 2022).

C2 ISRD3, originally inspired by European Social Survey.

C3a-b ISRD4 (Marshall et all., 2022).

C3c-d Adapted from the 7th wave of WVS, see Haerpfer et al., 2022.

C3e-g Added based on prior research (Litvak et al., 2023).

C4 Inspired by the 7th wave of WVS, see Haerpfer et al., 2022.

C5 Inspired by NYSR 2023.

C6-C7 Added based on prior research (Litvak et al., 2023). Analogous questions are used also in NYSR 2023.

C8 Added to the module based on prior research.

C9 Adapted from ISRD4 (Marshall et al., 2022).

C10-C13 Based on research needs indicated in prior research (Scheitle, 2018; Litvak et al., 2023).

D1-D2 Standard additions. The survey contexts should also inform the respondents about institutions providing help for crime victims. Local ethical and legal rules apply.