

Victims



Questions?

Who here would consider themselves to have been a victim of crime?

Who here has worked with victims?

Are some victims more deserving of justice than others? (e.g. criminal injuries compensation only to completely 'blameless' victims Barnes, 2013).

Overview of the Presentation

- × Defining victim terms
- × Approaches to victimology
- × How we measure victimisation
- × Prevalence and Patterns
- × Effects on victims
- × Offenders as victims
- × Victims and the Criminal Justice Service

What is a victim?

Definition difficult - crime is a social construct

How useful is the term victim for those harmed by crime?

What about the term 'survivor'?



NORA EPHRON QUOTE:

ABOVE ALL,
BE THE
HEROINE OF
YOUR LIFE, NOT
THE VICTIM

THE VICTIM

What is a victim?

“A person harmed, injured, or killed as a result of a crime, accident, or other event or action.”



WHAT IS A VICTIM (2)

Loosely - any individual harmed by crime may be considered a victim, and so, this includes a diverse group.

Victims

- × Primary/secondary/tertiary victims
- × Who are they?



Victimology defined

Victimology is the study of why certain people are victims of crime and how lifestyle affect the chances that a certain person will fall victim to a crime.

Victimology (2)

- ✗ Victimology is defined as the study of the victims of crime and the effects of their experience
- ✗ It considers the extent, nature and causes of criminal victimisation and the consequences for those involved
- ✗ In some cases some individuals may not realise they are victims of crime (e.g. sex workers, trafficked women and men, young people)
 - ✗ Spalek (2006)

Approaches to Victimology

- ✗ Positivist victimology
- ✗ Lifestyle approach
- ✗ Radical approach
- ✗ Feminist perspective



Measuring the effects of victims

- × Surveys
- × Criminal victimization survey first deployed in USA in late 1960s.
- × In England and Wales first survey 1982, now conducted annually.
- × What could be the problems with using data from large surveys?



Problems with measuring victimisation

- ✗ Only incorporate individuals who identify themselves as victims.
- ✗ Only include people from the electoral register
- ✗ Only use individuals aged 16 and upwards
- ✗ Domestic Abuse-what could be the problems here?
- ✗ Questions may convey different meanings

Prevalence

- Figures show 1 in 4 of us has been a victim of crime. (Source: Crime in England and Wales 2005/06 report.)
- Since 1995 the BCS has reported a fall in crime at each successive survey. There has been a 25% fall in the crime measured by the BCS over the last 5 years, between 1997 and the 2002/2003 BCS.

British Crime Survey 2001

- ✗ On average counted crimes as four times higher than those reported to the police (Kershaw et al, 2001)
- ✗ More recently, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (formerly BCS) highlighted there were an estimated 7.3 million incidents of crime against households and resident adults for the year ending March 2014 (ONS, 2014)

Fear of Crime

- × What is 'fear of crime?'
- × Recognised phenomenon (Hale , 1996)
- × Compounded by media effects, leading to heuristic bias in estimating the volume of crime.
- × At least as prevalent as crime itself.
- × Varies according to factors such as age, gender, mental health, physical functioning, area living in, socioeconomic status, quality of life and race.

Fear of Crime (2)

- ✗ Fear of crime does not necessarily track objective rates of actual victimisation (e.g. young, low income males tend to be the least fearful yet actually are at greatest risk of victimisation than other groups (Wolhunter, Olley and Denham, 2009))
- ✗ Women and elderly fear crime most and yet least at risk.
- ✗ Chivite-Matthews & Maggs (2002) found 16-29 year olds subject to violence at a rate 17 times higher than those aged 60 years or over.

Patterns of Crime

- ✗ There is considerable variation in patterns of crime across England and Wales both geographically and by type of area.
- ✗ BCS victimisation rates show household crime to be highest in Yorkshire and Humberside and lowest in Wales.

Alcohol related violence

- ✗ Focusing only on alcohol-related assaults between strangers and between acquaintances, the following factors were consistently associated with a heightened risk:
 - ✗ Being male aged 16 to 29
 - ✗ Being single
 - ✗ Being unemployed
 - ✗ Visiting a pub frequently



Alcohol Related Violence

- × Visiting a night club frequently
- × High level of alcohol consumption.
- × People who most regularly expose themselves to social situations where they are in contact with a large number of people who have consumed relatively large amounts of alcohol are more likely to become victims of an alcohol-related assault.

Domestic Abuse

- ✗ According to the UK Home Office (2008), victims experience over 35 abusive incidents on average, perpetrated by an intimate partner, before actually reporting it.
- ✗ Nearly 1 million women experience at least one incident of domestic abuse each year (2009/10 *British Crime Survey*)
- ✗ 54 per cent of women victims of serious sexual assault were assaulted by their partner or ex-partner (*Stern, 2010*)

- ✗ **Dispelling the myths**
- ✗ Few men experience DA
- ✗ Abuse of men has no serious effects
- ✗ Abused men don't stay

The process of overcoming victimisation

Immediate effects

Disorganisation

Reconstruction and
Acceptance

Normalization/Adjustment

Domestic Abuse-Effects

- × Psychological Effects
- × Physical Effects

- × Factors that may influence permanence of effects.

- × <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGDTDawB4wE&feature=related>
- × <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WL3rfk2iFww&feature=related>

Impact of being a 'victim'

- ✗ Consequences of victimisation have been a topic of research since 1970's
- ✗ Notion of 'secondary victimisation' also studied. That is when the actual investigative process and prosecution system itself causes additional distress to the victim
- ✗ Direct and indirect victims
- ✗ Response to being a 'victim' of crime individual.

Direct Victims

- × Effects are many and varied
 - × physical
 - × emotional
 - × behavioural
 - × financial
 - × Spirit injury in the case of repeated experiences of threat of violence and fear and actual violence.(Davis, 1997)

Short term and long-term effects

Jordan (2008) study

- × women who survived attacks from a serial sex offender Malcolm Rewa in New Zealand gave the following quotes:
 - × “you just can’t describe it. It goes through your mind that you are not going to see your family again”
Kathleen
 - × “even though the sex side of it was revolting, it was that fright, when he burst into the room and kept beating me - that has been worse to get over than the sexual bit” - Suzanne
 - × there was no violence in it, which was actually something i found really difficult to cope with afterwards” - Karen

Indirect Victims

- × Friends, family, partners, relatives (Rock, 1998)
- × One mother captures the moment she was told her son had been murdered:

“I didn’t hear what he said...I was in shock...I could hear him calling me...I could hear myself screaming...I thought wow - my world is going to come to an end”

(Thompson, 2007)

Indirect Victims (2)

- × Indirect victims may experience the following:
 - × PTSD
 - × Anxiety
 - × Depression
 - × Suicide
 - × Avoidant behaviour
 - × Substance misuse
 - × Feelings of self-blame
 - × Changed world view of the world as a safe and just place

Secondary victimisation by the CJS

- ✗ Victimised again by the process of the CJS (Pointing and Maguire, 1988)
- ✗ May dissuade victims from reporting and proceeding with CJ process (Ellison, 2002)
- ✗ In relation to sexual and domestic violence victims, Herman (2005) commented “the single greatest shock was the discovery of just how little they mattered”.
- ✗ How a victim is treated is critical to their recovery
- ✗ Experience of being revictimised in court (Jordan, 2008)
- ✗ Herman said “if one set out intentionally to design a system for provoking symptoms of traumatic stress, it might look very much like a court of law”.

Vicarious victimisation

- ✗ Observing the stress and suffering of victim
- ✗ Mimicked symptoms variously called compassion fatigue, vicarious or secondary victimisation (Pearson, La Bash and Follette, 2010)
- ✗ Police officers, mental health professionals, forensic psychologists open to this!

Vicarious victimisation (2)

✗ Risk factors for professionals (Levin and Griesberg, 2003):

- Identification with the dead and survivors
- Working with child survivors
- Low levels of social support
- Lengthy exposure
- Prior history of trauma
- Prior treatment for a psychological disorder
- Limited experience
- Lack of supervision

Offenders as victims

- ✗ Peoples whose lifestyle are associated with offending are exposed to considerable risks of victimisation.
- ✗ Homelessness is associated with offending and is also a risk marker for being a victim of violence (Canton, 2011)



Offenders as victims

- ✗ Rungay (2004) found a strong association between women's involvement as offenders in the CJS and their experiences of victimisation.
- ✗ "...some offenders may need to work through issues of their own victimisation before they can begin to contemplate putting themselves psychologically into the position of their own victims." (Williams and Goodman, 2007)

Prisoners Families: The Forgotten Victim, Codd (1998)

- ✗ Disruption of family life can lead to children of imprisoned parents being more likely to offend themselves later on in life.
- ✗ What difficulties may offenders' families face?



Families Shamed

✗ “And she said, well actually one of the prison officers, one of the officers was arrogant, enjoyed his job, and actually said “you’re all alike”. And that’s it. If you’ve got somebody in your family that’s committed a crime, you’ll be judged for that crime as well as your family member because you’re related to him...they judge the whole family for it, not just the offender.”

Angela, husband accused of sex offence, p/67
Condry (2007)

Recent Developments in Sentencing (Oct, 2011)



The Sentencing Council has published a new burglary sentencing guideline which for the first time takes into account the impact of the crime on victims.

“It will mean that even if a householder faced with that terrifying situation uses force that in the cold light of day might seem over the top, unless their response is grossly disproportionate, the law will be on their side.”
Grayling, 2012

How is victimology important to the work of Forensic Psychologists?

- ✗ Collecting data (e.g. interview techniques etc.)
- ✗ Analysing the offence (e.g. crime analysts considering patterns of offences in order to assist in targeting detection or prevention, analysis of victim selection)
- ✗ Post trial - assessing and treating the offender. Important to read victim statements to make a full assessment of the offender, to enable work on victim empathy, to understand and work with offenders victim experiences and how this impacts on offending and treatment issues

Conclusion

- Victims can be defined in many ways, as can the approach of victimology.
- Measuring the impact of victimisation has its problems.
- Restorative Justice shows theoretical strength, though in practice there are problems

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