



THEORIES OF VICTIMOLOGY: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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Abstract:

The new discipline of Victimology is more modern scientific study of victims, victimization and the relationship between victims and offenders. It was established as an integral field of criminology in the twentieth century, examining offenders' interactions with victims and their experiences of crime. Specifically, victimology is the scientific study of why some people become targeted individuals and how victimization occurs (Mazerolle). Victimology: Key theories Victim Precipitation Theory Lifestyle Theory Routine Activity Theory Deviant Place Theory Critical Victimology The purpose of this paper is to categories and discuss the most notable theories of victimology and their implications in understanding the reasons for, and trends amongst victims within society.

Keywords: Victimology, Victimization, Crime, Victim Precipitation, Lifestyle Theory

Introduction

Victimology is a branch of criminology dealing with the victims and relates to denoting to the investigation of victimization, and connections between perpetrators (offenders) and victims. Victimology emerged as a distinct discipline in the 20th century, considering issues, experiences, suffering and rights of victims (the sufferer), while traditional criminology mostly

focused on criminals and criminality. The substantive literature itself is rooted in the history of victimology, a field that was first coined by Benjamin Mendelsohn, who argued for increased focus on victims in the criminal justice system. Different theories of the victimology serve as an important framework regarding understanding why some become victims of criminal actions. They investigate the many personal, daily, environmental, social and power factors that can lead to victimization. Various theories such as Victim Precipitation Theory, Lifestyle Theory, Routine Activity Theory (Cohen and Felson), Deviant Place Theory (Shaw et al.), Critical Victimology, Feminist Victimology have been hypothesized by different scholars suggesting the reasons of and patterns of victimization. Understanding victimological theories makes up a kind of background knowledge of how crime works and what techniques must be adopted to protect victims and avoid new crimes. In addition to explaining the conditions that lead to victimization, these theories inform policies and a justice system built around victims. Given the domestic violence, cybercrime, human trafficking among multitude of other social evils our society thrives on today and with rising levels of terrorism and identity-based violations against teams these days the significance of victimology is unescapable.

Concept of Victimology

Victimology is the scientific study of the relationship between victims and offender – yeah, it is a Two-way street. Victimology was first introduced in the literature, attributed to Benjamin Mendelsohn, who is termed as the 'Father of Victimology.' Victimology is the scientific study of the nature, causes and effects of victimization including the victim's relationship to the offender and how criminal justice systems, social welfare agencies, and other institutions respond to victims. Modern victimology defines victims as not only people directly injured by criminal acts, but also those subjected to abuse of power, human rights violations, terrorism and social injustice.

Major Theories of Victimology

Victim Precipitation Theory

Marvin Wolfgang created it in 1958: Victim Precipitation Theory. This theory posits that victims can sometimes directly or indirectly instigate and aggravate the commission of criminal acts.

Types of Victim Precipitation

Active Victim Precipitation -The victim provokes/initiates the confrontation that turns into victimization.

2) Passive Victim Precipitation- this type of victim occurs because they have certain characteristics of the situation or a problem due to his high status (economic – social - race– occupation).

Strengths

- Highlights victim-offender interaction.
- Clarifies some violent crime and interpersonal dispute.

Criticisms

- Possibly re-victimization.
- Not really applicable where Child Abuse, Rape and Terrorism instead it is

Lifestyle Theory- Lifestyle Theory was given by Michael Hindelang, Michael Gottfredson and James Garofalo in 1978. The theory contends that a person's lifestyle affects their chances of being victimised.

People are more likely to become victims of crime if they regularly participate in activities that put them in risky situations.

Key Assumptions

Victimology operates on the assumption that victimization is not random, but rather a product of an individual's lifestyle and social environment. And it accepts that not all crime occurs in isolation, and acknowledges the ways in which victims interact with offenders. Among them there are theories of victimology, which indicate that the risk of becoming a victim is influenced by daily activity and by environmental factors. They also highlight how social inequalities, power relations and structural conditions can render specific groups more at risk of being victims of crime. In addition, victimology is based on the assumption that knowing about who becomes a victim and why is key to successful crime prevention and victim protection.

Routine Activity Theory

Routine Activity Theory introduced by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson in 1979. According to the theory crime only happens when a motivated offender, a suitable target and the absence of capable guardians come together in space and time. It highlights the fact that mundane actions and patterns could either raise or lower a victimization vulnerability. The theory is more concerned with opportunity for crime than it is the reasons that a person may choose to commit a crime. It widely targets crime prevention and security planning.

Deviant Place Theory

Deviant Place Theory holds that the propensity to be a victim of crime is greatest for those who live in, or usually more along haphazardly frequent high-crime areas. Environmental and neighborhood conditions that influence victimization are central to the theory. It contended that location matters more than people for victimization risks. Social disorganization, poverty and low community control nearly always lead to a higher crime rate in those areas. This theory aids in the explanation of why some communities have more crime and victimization compared to others.

Critical Victimology Theory

Rather than focusing upon crime and individual (or group) victimization, Critical Victimology has an interest in why certain groups are normatively ascribed the status of victims when other local events may produce equally valid claims to that title; it focuses on structural inequality and injustice with regard to socio-political factors. It claims that some groups become victims because they are economically, politically and socially disadvantaged. Theory states that the criminal justice system pays less attention to and support those who are living from marginalised communities when they were victims. They also highlight that victims may be made as a result of institutional and state policies. Such a view not only considers victimization in terms of specific events but also as collection of broader social structures.

Feminist Victimology

Feminist Victimology looks into the victimization through a gender-based lens as well as motivates crimes that are predominantly committed against women. It brings to light matters including domestic violence, sexual assault, dowry harassment and workplace sexual harassment, The theory further contends that women's victimization is greatly linked to patriarchal social structures and gender inequalities. It highlights the importance of acknowledging women's experiences in the criminal justice system. It has helped to democratise victim rights, gender justice and legal reform in a significant way.

Contributions

The aim of this research paper is to deepen your knowledge of the leading theories in victimology and their place within the dynamics of victimization. In this way, it adds to the criminological knowledge by giving information that would be helpful for policymakers, researchers and criminal justice agencies on how to create effective victim protection and crime prevention approaches.

Limitations

The present study is restricted to competing analysis of victimological theories based on the analysis of secondary sources — books, journals and research articles. Nor does it comprise original fieldwork or extensive empirical exploration of individual instances of victimization, which may limit the generalizability of its findings.

Comparative Analysis of Victimology Theories

Theory	Main Focus	Major Contribution
Victim Precipitation Theory	Victim-offender interaction	Explains interpersonal violence
Lifestyle Theory	Individual behavior and activities	Identifies risk factors
Routine Activity Theory	Opportunity structure	Supports crime prevention
Deviant Place Theory	Environmental influences	Explains neighborhood crime risks
Critical Victimology	Social inequality and power	Highlights structural victimization
Feminist Victimology	Gender-based victimization	Focuses on women’s rights and protection

Significance of Victimology

The study of victimology you are studying all data until October 2023 It advocates for the interests, rights and wellbeing of victims from within the criminal justice system. Research of victimology helps policymakers establish successful methods for both preventing crime and supporting victims. It raises awareness of vulnerable groups and the ordeals they endure as victims. In addition, victimology also helps to inform a more humane and victim-oriented approach to justice.

Conclusion

It finds that there are also no one-theory-fits-all explanations for victimization. Victimization is the consequence of a combination of personal behavior, institutional context, social structures and power relations. Opportunistic crimes are well accounted for in the main crime theories such as Lifestyle and Routine Activity, whereas structural inequalities and social

injustice are addressed by other schools of thought such as Critical and Feminist Victimology. Thus, a holistic understanding of victimization requires an integrated approach. Today, victimology has developed into a core branch of criminology and criminal justice. The diverse victimology theories provide different dimensions on why people become victims and the process of being victimized as well. Victim Precipitation Theory emphasizes interaction between victims and offenders, while Lifestyle and Routine Activity theories emphasize exposure of individual victims to risk or opportunities for crime. Deviant Place Theory underscores environmental factors, while Critical and Feminist Victimology consider macro social inequities and power dynamics. Combining these theories leads to a unified perspective on victimization and indicates how policies can be directed toward offender prevention, victim protection, and social justice. Contemporary victimology is still in favor of stressing the rights of victims and developing a more humane, responsive system of justice.

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