REVICTIMIZATION AND RELATED SERVICES: LITERATURE REVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this review is to summarize relevant literature on repeat victims and the effectiveness of services offered to curb revictimization.

There is a considerable amount of literature available regarding the revictimization of female sexual assault, domestic violence and child sexual abuse survivors. However, research regarding male repeat victims and the services available to them is much more sparse. The research available also varies both in its quality and in its application to the challenges presented in California. Consequently, any efforts to synthesize the revictimization literature must contend with the manifold forms that this research has taken over the years since the field began to publish this work.

We have endeavoured, where the literature permits, to focus our attention on empirical contributions rather than theoretical contributions. However, in some instances the research was altogether too sparse to provide definitive conclusions without resorting to theoretical analyses. We begin with an overview of the methodological shortcomings of the research included in this review.

Methodology

The foremost source of data on trends and features of criminal victimization in the United States is the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), administered by the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics. It is the largest and most comprehensive research instrument relating to victimization in the country, and has been administered with sufficient consistency and rigor to permit defensible and robust claims regarding criminal victimization. It offers more than the other predominant national source of victimization data, the Uniform Crime Report (UCR), administered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Although the UCR provides useful and detailed data capturing trends across 18,000 city, county, university/college, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies voluntarily participating in the program, it is limited to information on only reported crime.

Though the NCVS wades into the much broader realm of victimization beyond simply that which is reported to authorities, it is, however, acknowledged to be an imperfect tool for significant reasons (Baumer & Lauritsen 2010; Cantor & Lynch 2000; Truman & Planty 2012). For example, scholars disagree about whether victimization surveys should capture the subjective experiences of victimization, or whether they should instead enumerate the instances that a particular criminal code was violated (Fattah 1997; Wallace 1998). As Fattah notes, this distinction is especially noteworthy in the example of rape, where the legal definition of a crime and the subjective experience of the offense may depart substantially.

A second limitation of these surveys is that comparisons over time and between surveys typically fail to account for differences in data collection practices. The NCVS, for example, underwent significant re-design in the early 1990s, implementing new procedures which yielded a significantly lower base rate of law enforcement notification for most crimes (because unreported incidents are now more likely to come to the attention of NCVS interviewers than its predecessor the National Crime Survey). This renders comparisons between data waves difficult or requiring complex adjustments (Baumer & Lauritsen 2010).

Thirdly, it is clear that even within individual-level respondent analyses, reporting practices vary across crime types (see below). This raises questions about the validity of the victimization data, as results may be an artefact of respondents' willingness to divulge information as opposed to an indication of true underlying victimization patterns (Cantor & Lynch 2000).

General critiques of survey methodology are also relevant to the question at issue here, inasmuch as surveys are designed to be more suitable to answer confirmatory rather than exploratory questions. For example, surveys are well equipped to provide general impressions. Therefore, survey methodologies integrating a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative techniques are likely to be ideally positioned to provide textured impressions of the experience of victimization, in a way that singular reliance on surveys alone cannot (Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998).

Typically, large samples are needed to generate population estimates in victimization research. However, for obvious reasons relating both to the social stigma attached to being a victim (Resick 1987) and associated data gathering and collection limitations, respondents to such surveys are rarely in ready abundance. Moreover, there is general agreement that victimization surveys have failed to capture the totality of the various ways that people self-identify and represent the experience of victimization (Strobl 2010).

This problem presents two possible avenues of recourse to the researcher (Cantor & Lynch 2000): firstly, one can extend the period of time included within the respondents' invited recall. The expectation is that the survey will encompass more history and therefore increase both the probability of an event and also the statistical power of the tests.

Secondly, one can refine the screening process in order to minimize non-response. Both of these methods, however, suffer their own weaknesses (Gaskell et al. 2000; Jobe et al. 1993): lengthening the reference period increases the probability of telescoping[1], whereas detailed screening methods encumber the research design and impede administrative ease.

In the victimization survey undertaken by Californians for Safety and Justice and commissioned by David Binder Research in April 2012, the survey authors decided to incorporate a blend of both of these approaches. This amounted firstly to setting the reference period to five years, and secondly by designing the survey to achieve a minimum number of self-identifying victim respondents.

General Trends

Despite the inconsistency in methodological and substantive approaches in victimization research, a number of consistent findings are apparent. Revictiminzation affects certain groups at a much higher rate than other groups. It is clear that victimization is not randomly distributed within populations. Tseloni & Pease (2010) refer to this observation as the "overdispersion" of victimization, whereby the variance in the distribution exceeds the mean. In other words, some victims experience revictimization frequently, others experience

it occasionally, and the remainder does not experience it at all (Fattah 1989; Tseloni & Pease 2010; Wittebrood & Nieuwbeerta 2000).

Thus, irrespective of which data source is marshalled in support of the finding, the consistent conclusion remains that systemic differences exist in the rate, intensity, and frequency of victimization between certain categories of the population (Daigle 2012). Moreover, the subpopulations that do experience victimization suffer it at considerably higher levels than their non-victimized counterparts. This central distinction highlights two of the salient features of victimization research: firstly, that it affects certain types of people more; secondly, that the people most statistically affected by victimization tend to suffer from "repeat victimization."

Among the clear trends to have emerged within the literature, the following are especially robust, and have been replicated on numerous occasions. While we present some bivariate associations below, we emphasise that the prevalence of victimization is especially pronounced when these demographic variables are observed simultaneously.

Age: The risk for violent personal victimization is especially high among people below the age of 25 (Sampson & Lauritsen 1994; van Kesteren & van Dijk 2012). Recent U.S. figures estimate the rate of victimization for those aged between 18 and 24 to be roughly 49 per 1,000, whereas the rate for those aged 25 and above is at most roughly 27 per 1,000 (Truman & Planty 2012).

Gender: Men and women suffer similar rates of victimization overall, with a slightly higher representation of victimization among males (25.4 per 1,000) compared to females (19.8 per 1,000) (Truman & Planty 2012). However, considerable gender differences become apparent when looking at specific crime types (Jensen & Brownfield 1986).

Men are far more likely (to an order of roughly twice to three times the risk) to be victims of serious violent crimes such as homicide, or violent crimes such as assault or robbery (Daigle 2012; Kellerman & Mercy 1992). However, women are more likely to be victimized repeatedly, and to experience non-stranger crime (Marley & Buila 2001).

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[1] "Telescoping" refers to the problematic phenomenon whereby survey respondents incorrectly recall events outside the precise reference period specified for the survey. Thus, a survey collecting data over the past ten years is likely to elicit memories from the respondent concerning events that may have happened in the past twelve years.

The nature of victimization itself varies between women and men. For example, in instances of sexual assault especially, victimization for women is more likely to lead to physical injury than among men, and to PTSD (Kilpatrick & Acierno 2003). Conversely, assaultative victimization among men more typically involves a weapon. Significantly, similar patterns develop when looking at fear of victimization (Schafer et al. 2006).

Race: NCVS data repeatedly affirms the observation that blacks are disproportionately victimized at higher rates than non-blacks (Truman & Planty 2012). While some have noted that the predictive value of race in assessing an individual's likelihood of victimization diminishes somewhat once it is controlled in a multivariate analysis (Rennison & Planty 2003), scholars equivocate about whether this is attributable to the confounding factors (such as socioeconomic status) for which race might be operating as a proxy. Moreover, multivariate analyses that control for the influence of individual variables reveal a strong "intersectionality" effect, whereby the risk of victimization for an individual occupying any one of the aforementioned at-risk categories (young, male, or black) is significantly lower than for individuals manifesting a combination of these attributes (young, male and black) (Sampson & Lauritsen 1994).

Reporting Practices

We cannot get a clear picture of repeat victims because victims, particularly repeat victims, frequently do not report crime to the authorities. In 2000, for example, only half of all known violent crime was reported to the police, and a substantial portion of this (approximately a fifth of serious violent assaults) was reported by bystanders, relatives, or acquaintances (Hart & Rennison 2003). The statewide poll commissioned by Californians for Safety and Justice was the first statewide breakdown including nonreported victimizations (Californians for Safety and Justice 2013). This studied showed that those who did not report were "reluctant to inform the authorities mostly because they struggled with the time and effort required to report, especially if they were doubtful that the police could or would do anything" (Californians for Safety and Justice 2013).

By triangulating information concerning victims' reporting practices with authoritative data on the true prevalence and incidence of criminal victimization, researchers have learned that the police are more likely to be notified about certain types of crime than other crimes. For example, we know that the police are less likely to be notified of crimes such as sexual assault and rape than they are of crimes that do not carry the same social stigma, such as robberies and aggravated assaults (Fisher et al. 2003; Hart & Rennison 2003; Kilpatrick et al. 1987). Among property crimes, we know that the police are notified most often of crimes such as motor vehicle theft and least often for larceny (Rand & Catalano 2007).

We also know that the police are more likely to be notified of crimes by certain types of victim than others; for example, older victims, women, African Americans, and poor people may be more likely to report certain crimes than their counterparts (Tjaden & Thoennes 2000).

Victims report a variety of reasons justifying their decision not to report crimes to the police. Data from 2000 reveal that approximately 20% of victims of violent crimes felt that the offense was a personal or private matter (Hart & Rennison 2003). This was followed by justifications including a belief that the crime was not sufficiently important (14%), or that there was an expectation that the police would not take the offense seriously (6%).

Victim-Offender Overlap

Scholars have long recognized that the historic treatment of offenders and victims as entirely separate populations is unsupported by the evidence (Jensen & Brownfield 1986; Sampson & Lauritsen 1994). Rather, there is now recognition within victimization scholarship that not only do offenders and victims share multiple attributes; often, they tend to be the same people (Jennings et al. 2010). Moreover, while recent research has begun to demonstrate a more sophisticated connection between individuals' identification as either offender or victim, it is clear that there is a considerable relationship that makes these roles coincide (Schreck et al. 2008).

The victim-offender overlap also has important implications for reporting practices, although these conclusions are somewhat unclear. While some have found that victimization

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[2] We know that the proportion of "known crime" to total crime is below 1 (FBI UCR 2011); moreover, we know that the proportion of reported crime to known crime is below 1. The loss at various points of the process is non-randomly distributed, such that certain crimes are less likely to come to the attention of the police than other crimes.

perpetrated by acquaintances was related to lower levels of reporting (Block 1974), others have found no such relationship (Bachman 1993), and others found a relationship to higher levels of reporting (Felson et al. 1999).

Personal Experience with Victimization

While significant theoretical contributions exist in the literature outlining the dynamics and personal construction of victimization (notable examples include Strobl 2010 and Taylor et al. 1983), nonetheless this research remains relatively underdeveloped within the field of victimization studies. The absence of this research may owe its provenance to a sense of apprehension among some theorists that the voice of victims, if included in the criminal justice system, will lead to more punitiveness in sentencing (e.g., Ashworth 2000; Erez & Rogers 2000).

However, empirical research is not especially supportive of this concern. Analyses that use data from a variety of countries demonstrate that opinions concerning whether sentencing policy is sufficiently or insufficiently punitive are negligibly related to personal histories of victimization (King & Maruna 2009; Unnever et al. 2007; van Kesteren & van Dijk 2012). There is also an exigent need to accommodate the impact of victimization throughout the structure of the criminal justice system more generally. It is clear that victimization at even very young ages can have substantial effects on quality of life later in the life course (e.g., Ttofi et al. 2011), and numerous studies detail the deleterious human and monetary consequences of victimization (Finkelhor et al. 2007; MacMillan 2000; Paine & Gainey 2007).

Victim's Services

The proliferation of victim's services has been accompanied by a thread of research that is preoccupied with two separate lines of inquiry. The first asks whether victims use those services; the second asks whether those services deliver an effective program that satisfies the needs of their participants. These studies are consistent and indicate very little usage of services by crime victims (Sims et al. 2005; New & Berliner 2000). Victims' reasons for not utilizing services typically include not being referred to services, unknown cost of services, little knowledge of the types of services available, or not thinking it was worth the trouble to seek out such services (Californians for Safety and Justice

2013; Sims et al. 2005; Freedy et al. 1994). Overall, this body of research has not been entirely promising, as "most evaluations of victim programs, services, and other initiatives... [indicate they have left] the vast majority of crime victims without help, assistance, care, or compensation" (Fattah 2012: 78).

Notwithstanding the legislative changes at both the state and federal level, integrating system-based victim services to a significant percentage of victims remains a typically volunteer-based and grassroots effort that contends with constrained budgets and overwrought resources (Maguire & Pointing 1988). [However, the precise percentage remains unknown.] The lack of integration between victim services and better-resourced state departments is coupled with the historic ineffectiveness of those services at delivering on victims' needs – which Grauwiler (2008) attribute to the absence of a victim voice in the design and implementation of those services.

Still, research adds to the discussion of challenges and successes each victim service contains. This data can direct improvements to existing services and provide a foundation for new and more effective programs (Farrell 1998). The types of services prevalent in current research include early intervention programs, risk-reduction, educational workshops and legal intervention services.

Early Intervention: Numerous studies suggest any type of childhood maltreatment increases the risk of revictimization in adulthood (Widom et al. 2008; Hill et al. 2010; Desai et al. 2002; Ruback et al. 2013). This is true for both men and women (Desai et al. 2002). This knowledge has given rise to increased services aimed at children and adolescents with early intervention in mind.

Although any type of maltreatment increases the risk of revictimization, it has been found that the efficacy of specific prevention models differ depending on the type of maltreatment. For example, the results of one study suggests that the effects of physical assault and sexual abuse are "mediated by services that provide greater emotional support and self-esteem, but not social support" (Hill et al. 2010). Ultimately, a combination of intervention types is suggested with this population. Combining instrumental support, emotional support and self-esteem building appears to be the most effective prevention method thus far (Hill et al. 2010).

Risk-reduction and Educational Workshops: Several types of workshops aimed at educating victims in safety and crime prevention have been studied to evaluate their efficacy in reducing revictimization. The studies focused specifically on female victims of sexual assault or domestic violence. In each of these instances, no meaningful reduction of revictimization was achieved (Breitenbecher & Gidycz 1998; Davis et al. 2006).

Women who participated in relevant workshops did not gain an awareness of high-risk situations and behaviors. Several factors may have contributed to this result. For example, many of the participants faced more immediate challenges, such as finding housing or health concerns. While others were still traumatized from past assaults and were not in a position to deal with the issues covered in the workshop (Davis et al. 2006).

Legal Intervention Services: In addition to emotional and educational programs, there are legal intervention services that are implemented to curb revictimization. These include protective restraining orders for victims and mandated treatment for offenders. The research regarding these services vary, but none state unequivocally that they effectively reduce revictimization by significant measures, at least not on their own.

Protective or restraining orders are one way the legal system attempts to reduce revictimization. Issued by the court, these orders are meant to prevent revictimization from the victim's previous offender. These orders require the offender to stay away from the victim's person, home and/or work for a specified period. Studies focused on protective restraining orders show some positive results in increasing victim's self-esteem. However, there is no conclusive evidence they reduce revictimization when teamed with other legal sanctions against the offender (Mears 2003).

Legal sanctions against offenders may include mandated treatment such as anger management and counselling. Study results regarding the efficacy in preventing revictimization via these types of sanctions are mixed (Mears 2003). Some results regarding domestic violence abusers show a reduction in battering and thus a reduction in revictimization. Other studies however, show an increase in battering (Mears 2003). These inconsistencies are attributed to the diversity of treatment settings and approaches. However, legal sanctions teamed with other legal interventions works best (Mears 2003 citing Gondolf, 2002).

Challenges of Studying Victim Services: The main challenge of studying victim services is that the efficacy of each program is difficult to measure. This challenge is due to numerous variable factors regarding the victim's current psychological, emotional and practical states (Davis et al. 2006). Factors such as the types of crimes and trauma experienced, the victim's immediate concerns including issues with health and housing, and what types of personal issues are on-going (Davis et al. 2006; Ruback et al. 2013). These issues can include dealing with anxiety, depression or substance abuse stemming from the effects of their victimization (Ruback et al. 2013). What is consistent however, is that each study concludes that a combination of services is likely to have the most positive effect on reduction of revictimization.

Gaps in Previous Research

Research regarding revictimization includes several challenges. First, relevant research focuses primarily on victims of crimes such as sexual assault, domestic violence and child sexual abuse (Finkelhor et al. 2006). This means many of the finding are specific to one gender (woman) or based on age. This rings true for all populations regardless of age, race or gender (Washington 1999; Widom et al. 2007; Cuevas 2012). Research relating to services offered to those who are repeat victims of property crimes, petty crimes and non-violent crimes are often unaccounted for in the studies. More research in these areas may aid in understanding the vast array of repeat victims and provide an additional voice for more effective services.

Second, there is almost no current research on revictimization of males. Most of the current research focuses on women, leaving a sizable gap in information regarding males and their likelihood to become repeat victims (Cho & Wilke 2010; Washington 1999). What limited research there is on male revictimization centers primarily on child sexual assault survivors or male victims of intimate partner violence (Washington 1999). In addition, few studies have examined services offered exclusively to men in dealing with, or preventing, revictimization. Further research would be beneficial in ensuring a representative voice for this population and building future programs that meet their specific needs.

Thirdly, more information is needed regarding the immediate challenges victims face. This information may help services be more effective. These concerns include housing, substance abuse, law enforcement interactions, employment, and other

factors relating to the emotional, psychological and practical wellbeing of the victim (Davis et al. 2006). Additional qualitative research in this area can create a representative voice for victims and offer a clearer understanding of what challenges victims most often face. This in turn will aid in offering more effective victim services.

Lastly, there are very few studies specific to California victims and their usage or ability to access victim services. Throughout this literature review there was a desire to find additional research regarding the services available in California beyond that completed by the Warren Institute (Warnken 2012). Unfortunately, this research is scarce. Studies offered by the California Attorney General's Office and associated divisions focus primarily on types of crime and offender statistics (California Department of Justice 2012). Further research specific to California would provide much needed information on how to better serve the needs of resident victims' and assess the services already offered to them.

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