Paradigms and Paradoxes of Victimology

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> *The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the*
> *same level of thinking we were at when we created them*
> (Albert Einstein).

Several years ago, in a paper he presented at the Fifth International Symposium on Victimology, Donald Cressey (1992) claimed that:

> *Victimology is . . . a non-academic programme under which a hodgepodge of ideas, interests, ideologies and research methods have been rather arbitrarily grouped . . . [and] is characterized by a clash between two equally desirable orientations to human suffering—the humanistic and the scientific.*
> *. . . [However], [T]he humanists' work tends to be deprecated because it is considered propagandistic rather than scientific, and the scientists' work tends to be deprecated because it is not sufficiently oriented to social action. Each set of victimologists would probably be better off if it divorced the other and formed alliances outside the shadow of the victimology umbrella.*

This is pretty strong criticism. Cressey posed two possible solutions: Victimology should limit itself only to scientific victimologists, and push the humanistic victimologists into human rights activism or social work. Or victimology should fade away altogether, with the scientific victimologists merging with the criminologists (Cressey 1992).

Was Cressey right? Do internal contradictions undermine victimology's effectiveness? Is it making a contribution or has it lost its direction? Has victimology outlived its usefulness?

The Prevailing Ideology

While much valuable work in victimology has been done over the last 40 years, most of it remains confined within narrow boundaries, both conceptually and

politically. We must decide whether we are satisfied with the kind of victimology most of us are practising. Cressey is quite justified in worrying about victimology but we should be alarmed for somewhat different reasons than those he suggests. To see why, let's examine the prevailing ideology of crime and victim policy.

Crime policy

Understanding 'where we are' in victimology relies on more than chronicling the latest research and policies. Even more important is the political context of that work: the ideological assumptions that permeate our field. In a few words, mainstream victimology is dominated by a law and order ideology—sometimes known as 'right realism'.

Law and order ideology promotes conservative strategies for fighting crime and victimisation. It relies largely on a negative view of human nature that assumes that people (and especially some people more than others) are inclined toward evil. Crime occurs when people either choose not to restrain their evil tendencies, or when law and order institutions act too weakly to deter them, or both. Thus, crime results from individual choices, not social conditions. Preventing crime depends on whether enough force has been generated to deter it: force in the form of tough criminal laws, strong police forces, frequent arrests and convictions, wars on crime and drugs, a proliferation of prisons, and severe penalties—including capital punishment.

This ideology has dominated nations like the United States for the last century. In the 1980s, it was intensified under the Reagan and Bush administrations. By the decade's end, rather than being only third in the world (behind South Africa and the USSR) in its incarceration rate and length of punishments, it was now first (Rothman 1994). The United States has perfected what Nils Christie (1993) has called the 'crime control industry'—a market just 'waiting for its entrepreneurs'; an industry with unlimited growth potential, motivated by war fever toward increasingly repressive policies.

Thus, even the recent escalation of force has not been enough. Crime and victimisation continue unabated so, in the 1990s, the Clinton administration has decided to 'get tough' (once again) on crime, devising a new crime bill that merely reproduces the failed policies of the past (Currie 1994; Parenti 1994). Its key provision is a 'three strikes' clause that will send offenders to prison for life for committing three crimes (Dresslar 1994; Wright 1994). Corporate offenders are excluded from these laws, despite their high recidivism rate and the far greater victimisation they cause (Greider 1994).

Besides policy, also consider the strong United States public support for punishment to deter offenders or to teach them lessons. For example, the United States public recently applauded the caning of an American who was convicted of painting graffiti in the streets of Singapore. Never mind that despite this kind of brutal punishment, this repressive society still has a big crime problem (Neier 1994). And never mind that according to a recent National Public Radio report (22 July 1994), getting in to prison (rather than staying out—that is, getting punished) has increasingly become a 'badge of courage' among street-tough young men in many United States cities. So much for deterrence.

Nothing in the new crime bill will challenge business as usual. Whether promoted by Democrats or Republicans, the only answer to crime has been more wars, more force. Neither one works (Gordon 1990).

Victim policy

Despite the flurry of research and law and order policy initiatives in the last 20 years, victims have gained far less than promised. Many victim policies have not been implemented, resources have been scarce, drug wars have victimised hundreds of communities (Elias 1991a), feminist programs have been defunded, progressive victim initiatives have been shunned, and in many ways victimisation has gotten worse (Elias 1993).

While some applaud the victim movement's apparent institutionalisation in many nations (Maguire & Shapland 1990; Smith 1992), others believe that victims and the movement have been largely coopted, and politically manipulated for official purposes (Elias 1990; Phipps 1988).

Alternatives

But alternatives to law and order policies are certainly possible (Elias 1993). For example, instead of assuming the worst of human nature, we could recognise that people more often commit evil (that is, crime) less by individual choice, and more in response to their environment. We could significantly improve that environment, providing positive reinforcement rather than negative threats and punishments (MacLean & Pepinsky 1993). The victim movement could demand tangible rather than symbolic policies from officials, and a concern not only for crime victims but for all victims (Elias 1991b, 1993). To reduce victimisation, we could promote a social policy of enhancing social justice, rather than moral crusades and rights rollbacks (Derber 1994). And so forth.

But victimologists have resisted these and other alternatives. They believe the victim movement is succeeding, that criminal justice is helping victims, and that alternative policies are utopian and cannot relieve the real suffering victims are experiencing right now. They would maintain our current course, continuing victim policy and research that largely reflect a conservative, law and order ideology.

But we can do much better. What is utopian is not endorsing alternatives but rather believing that we can continue to survive the violence that is generated by our current, repressive crime and social policies. The only realistic route is to find alternative policies, to create a new, more ambitious vision for ourselves, and to launch a very different victimology than the one we now have. To do so, we also would have to find alternative ideologies that could provide the intellectual models for generating new crime and victim policies and research.

Politics And Science

Too much ideology?

Science versus humanism. Some believe that this would be making political choices that would compromise us as scientists. To return to Donald Cressey's

(1992) concerns, rather than choosing between conventional and alternative politics, he would have us shun politics entirely. He argues that humanistic victimology has inappropriately politicised the field, undermining scientific victimology. Victimology has become too dominated by victim advocates whose zeal for promoting victim policy has biased our ability to conduct objective scientific research.

Ezzat Fattah (1992) echoes Cressey's concerns, arguing that victimology has strayed too much from theory and science, and become too ideological, activist and policy oriented. Victim advocates are sometimes so concerned with painting a grim picture that they distort crime, its impact, its frequency, and its victims.

Fattah illustrates the dangers of the missionary zeal often practised by victim advocates: child-abuse crusades have produced false accusations, presumptions of guilt, premature child removals, and unnecessary fear and suspicion among parents, childcare workers and children. Victim advocacy also risks stigmatising crime victims as helpless, and securing unwarranted special treatment for them, whereas in a just society, all victims would be entitled to assistance (Fattah 1992).

Victimology conferences, Fattah argues, are no longer scholarly meetings to exchange scientific research but rather pedestals for political rhetoric. Victimology is becoming more the practice of social work than of science. Victimology has helped push criminal justice further toward inappropriate right-wing crime policies that use victim programs as vehicles for social control (Fattah 1992).

Like Fattah and Cressey, Richard Harding (1994) argues that a politicised victimology has distorted criminal justice, with harmful consequences for both. He warns us about the victimisation industry, comprised of 'special-interest pleaders' who hijack the victimisation debate on behalf of their favoured victim group.

The victim rights movement, Harding argues, has promoted rights selectively¾for certain victims, and also the unwarranted assumption that victim rights are more important than competing rights or values in society. It perpetuates a false, zero-sum contest between victim and offender interests that promotes ineffective, conservative crime policies.

Inevitability of politics. Cressey, Fattah and Harding offer persuasive critiques of victimology, which should be taken very seriously. Nevertheless, we might well draw some different conclusions from the concerns they have raised.

First, special-interest pleading has dominated victimology and the victim movement, as Harding has suggested, and even shown up in specific victim policies for groups such as women, children, and the elderly. But while this pleading may have 'hijacked the debate', its policies have barely been implemented: it has had little impact on reducing the victimisation or improving the treatment of these groups by criminal justice. It is not the tangible success of these policies that has been damaging but rather their symbolic cooptation as fuel for law and order crusades.

Second, Cressey claims that scientific victimologists should limit themselves to criminal victimisation. Yet doing so would narrow victimological research to

officially endorsed boundaries and definitions, thus undoing what little progress victimology has made in broadening the kinds of victimisation it takes seriously. In limiting ourselves to criminal victimisation, Cressey does not compensate by asking victimologists to broaden our crime definitions beyond official boundaries to take more seriously, for example, corporate and state wrongdoing, repression, and crimes against humanity. Thus, rather than being apolitical, Cressey's recommendations would seem to have us even more explicitly endorse the prevailing politics.

Third, these critics suggest that victimology and victim advocacy have promoted ineffective law and order crime policies. They at least imply that more progressive, even radical crime policies would be better for victims. If so, then if we had more progressive policies, would they still be concerned that victimology and victim advocacy were too political? Would victimology still be too humanistic and unscientific?

If the point of their criticism is that victimology should be politically neutral, then it should not matter to critics whether it is the politics of the left or the politics of the right that is tainting our science. But what if we tried to be neutral on politics? Cressey assumes, for example, that victim advocates mobilise victim policies. Thus, if advocates—or the humanistic victimologists—were forced out of victimology, as he suggests, scientific victimology could presumably remain neutral. That way, victimology would be lending no support to crime policies of either the right or the left.

But, to the contrary, it is not victim advocates but rather public officials who mobilise victim policies. Officials sponsor only those victim policies that promote their objectives and ideologies: this has been central to the political manipulation of crime victims over the past few decades (Elias 1993). Thus, if we rid ourselves of victim advocates, as Cressey suggests, so that victimology can remain neutral, our research will nevertheless still be coopted, and still be used selectively to rationalise prevailing crime policies: that is, law and order crusades. Quite apart from victim advocacy, officials already manipulate our research for political purposes.

In other words, politics is inevitable. Trying to be neutral in our research does not negate the political uses to which it will be put. To the contrary, only by not being neutral will we avoid having our research being used inappropriately. This fits uncomfortably with our conventional notions of objective science, where politics is viewed as a threat to our findings and our credibility. Yet notions of a value-free science have long since been laid to rest.

For example, doing science forces us to make choices, whether or not we acknowledge them. As the victimologist Emilio Viano (1983) has suggested:

> *The problems researched, the way in which the research is conducted, and the strategies devised to reach a solution either tend to support and reinforce society's status quo or undermine it. In this sense, social research is inescapably political.*

Choosing our politics. Not only is our research susceptible to political uses, and not only do we at least implicitly make political choices when we conduct research, but we should be making those choices. Why do science if it

has no humanism, if it makes no contribution to human development? How can we be neutral about how to best use our science in society? Those decisions are all a matter of politics and ideology.

As the sociologist Howard Becker warned us many years ago, 'the question is not whether we should take sides, since we inevitably will, but rather whose side are we on?' (Becker 1967). Victimologists typically take the victim's side yet often countenance policies in the name of victims that actually contradict victim interests.

This is because we typically take the victim's side against the offender when instead we should be taking the victim's side against a much more serious barrier to the victim's well-being: officials and the state. This does not mean we are faced with some sort of intentional, state conspiracy against victims; rather it only suggests that official priorities necessarily lie elsewhere, buried under the rhetoric. As the sociologist Barrington Moore (1978) once suggested:

In any society, the dominant groups are the ones with the most to hide about how a society works. Very often, therefore, truthful analyses are bound to have a critical ring, to seem like postures rather than objective statements. . . For all students of human society, sympathy with the victims of historical processes and skepticism about the victor's claims provide essential safeguards against being taken in by the dominant mythology. A scholar who tries to be objective needs these feelings as part of his working equipment.

The criminologist Michael Hallett (1994) has recently argued that:

Conceding that no combination of human genius or discipline has ever come close to solving the 'crime problem', criminology has instead endorsed approaches that serve the interests of established power, not the interests of those who are continuously victimised by crime. The problems of crime and violence are obviously too big for criminology.

Are crime and violence too big for victimology, too? Put another way, if our science is not intentionally put to positive use, if we are not consciously seeking its productive application, then do we not risk actually obscuring social problems? As the anthropologist Marvin Harris (1989) has argued:

A proportionate relationship such as has existed for some time now between the volume of social research and the depth of social confusion can mean only one thing: the aggregate social function of all that research is to prevent people from understanding the causes of those things that determine their social existence.

Has victimology allowed this to happen to victims?

Victimological research has helped us tremendously to understand victimisation but in our preoccupation with an increasingly detailed, descriptive micro research, we may have obscured the bigger picture. Have we been too influenced in our research by official definitions and perspectives? Are we allowing our research to be distorted into politically exploited misconceptions about victimisation?

The writer John Jay Chapman has suggested that: 'The world of politics is always twenty years behind the world of thought.' Does this happen because we

spend too much time in our ivory towers, failing to get the 'word out' into society? Is it because our research is not in a form that can be used by the political system? Or is it because we victimologists allow ourselves to be coopted, letting our mediocre thoughts be used, rather than our farsighted ones?

Science and humanism. If victimology has been going in the wrong direction as a science, then should it be abandoned, as Harris and Cressey seem to imply? Or should we instead think about doing it differently? We cannot separate our science from our humanism or from the ideologies we believe will make the most humanistic use of our science. Instead, as the economist Albert Hirschman has suggested:

> *It is . . . possible to visualize a kind of social science very different from the one most of us have been practising: a moral social science where moral considerations are not repressed or kept apart, but are systematically commingled with analytic argument, without guilt feelings over any integration* . . . (quoted in Hoffman 1980)

For example, Lee Ann Hoff (1990) has drawn upon the sociologist C. Wright Mills in her research on women victims. Mills once wrote that:

> *It is the task of the social scientist . . . of any educator . . . to continually translate personal troubles into public issues, and public issues into the terms of their human meaning for a variety of individuals.*

As Jane Mugford observes, social scientists often ignore Mills in their effort to achieve an allegedly more 'objective' quantification of their theories about human behaviour. But feminist research has shown us that objectification is usually an illusion. If what we want is to know about 'human meaning', then research must be more qualitative and context-specific. Hoff has done precisely this, by converting the personal traumas of battered women into a public issue (Mugford 1993) that carries a particular politics about how the society should respond. Hoff is not neutral about women victims or about the policies that will best serve them; does that mean her research is not objective?

In other words, it is not a matter of whether we are more scientists or more humanists; hopefully we will be some combination of both. Victimologists and victim advocates should be working together. And it is not a matter of whether science is influenced by politics (either our own or that of others), or whether we will inevitably make political choices in our work. Rather, it is a matter of making the right choices. The problem is not one of victimology having too much ideology or politics but rather the wrong ideology and politics: philosophies that have failed miserably in reducing victimisation and helping victims. Overcoming this problem relies not on rejecting ideology but rather on devoting ourselves more fully to finding a politics that works. If we do not choose our politics, a politics will be chosen for us; indeed, it already has.

Alternative Ideologies

Victimology can and should do better than the prevailing law and order or 'right realist' ideology of crime control. But what alternative ideologies are available to guide it? We can identify at least seven possibilities. Briefly, they include:

First, 'critical/liberal ideology' takes a somewhat critical stance toward right realism. It endorses less harsh, more social approaches to crime policy. It views victim assistance as a matter of entitlement, and questions the 'labelling' process that conventional criminal justice uses to inappropriately focus more attention on some victimisations than on others (Miers 1989, 1990).

But this ideology might not provide much of an alternative to right realism. It seems to treat the labelling process more as an inadvertent by-product of criminal justice rather than the predictable result of conservative ideologies, and thus remains well within the boundaries of conventional law (Mawby & Walklate 1994).

Some of our victim advocacy reflects this perspective yet despite its liberal face it usually gets coopted into right wing strategies. Liberal feminist initiatives, for example, that rely on government benevolence and reforms, have been routinely diluted or blocked in practice (Elias 1993).

Second, 'fundamentalist feminist ideology' is promoted by a small group of feminists who have largely narrowed the causes of patriarchy and women's criminal victimisation to pornography and prostitution. It suggests that men are inherently violent against women, and are provoked in particular by the proliferation of pornography. Some proponents even suggest that all heterosexual sex in any patriarchal society is tantamount to the sexual assault of women. To better protect women, this ideology endorses get-tough penalties against men, and the outlawing of pornography and prostitution (Dworkin 1981; MacKinnon 1987).

Obviously we should all be outraged by sexism in our societies, and men should be held responsible for the violence they commit against women. But this ideology promotes historically unsuccessful, right realist initiatives against sexist victimisation whose implementation relies almost entirely on sexist men. This gives even more power to patriarchal institutions that thrive on right-wing, anti-feminist policies (Segal & McIntosh 1993).

Third, 'radical feminist ideology' also attributes victimisation to patriarchal institutions (Radford & Stanko 1994). But unlike fundamentalist feminism, radical feminism believes that male violence comes more from their sexist socialisation than from their inherent characteristics. Unlike liberal feminism, it rejects piecemeal reforms as an effective check against sexism and male violence. Radical feminism opposes crime wars and draconian punishments, instead favouring appropriate penalties or alternatives to imprisonment (Harris 1991; Snider 1990; Caulfield & Wonders 1994). It blames violence against women on structural forces far broader than the sex industry.

Radical feminism provides a much more formidable challenge to right realism (Hanmer & Stanko 1985). It diagnoses social conditions as the source of most victimisation, advocates feminist alternatives to the adversarial model of justice, and promotes a serious but more balanced, feminist response to crimes

against women, and against men (Stanko 1985, 1988; DeKeseredy & MacLean 1991; Messerschmidt 1986).

Fourth, 'critical/radical/socialist ideology' diagnoses the sources of victimisation in economic and political systems—especially state capitalism. It views conventional crime policy more as the social control of forces that threaten capitalists than as merely the control of crime. It views prisoners largely as the surplus labor of an unequal, unjust and dysfunctional society. It rejects crime wars and harsh punishments as racist and classist. And it views victim policies as the political manipulation of victims to bolster state power and law and order crusades.

In response, this ideology argues that corporate criminals commit the most victimisation, and should be held accountable. It claims that crime can be reduced only by transforming social conditions, which can occur only by eliminating repressive capitalism in favour of democratic socialism. And it implores victims to stop being pawns in conventional criminal justice, and instead to radically challenge official policies (Elias 1986; McShane & Williams 1992; Menzies 1992; Phipps 1986; Stenson & Cowell 1991).

Fifth, 'left realist ideology' also believes that ultimately only democratic socialism will fundamentally curb victimisation. But this ideology is 'realist' in pushing radicals to pay more attention to crime in the short run. It tries to take back the crime issue from the right realists by dealing with victimisation less as an abstraction and more as a concrete reality for citizens.

Rather than abandoning the political process, left realism tries to use it. It promotes social programs to prevent crime but it also pitches itself toward victims, supporting punishments in the short run to help allay public fears. It advocates decentralised, community strategies for curbing crime, emphasising public involvement, motivated by more progressive diagnoses of crime's causes and its solutions (Lowman & MacLean 1992).

But in practice, this ideology may be far more realist than leftist, harbouring a naive faith in the gains that can be made through the conventional political process (Phipps 1988; Walklate 1989). Its retrenchment seems to push it away from social policies toward exclusively crime policies; in the end, it may be endorsing a far more conservative politics than is necessary, diluting the progressive challenge right realism ought to be facing.

Sixth, 'peacemaking ideology' blames social institutions for most victimisation (Elias 1994a, 1994b). But rather than merely patriarchy or capitalism, it emphasises cultures of violence: from the violence of war and militarism to the structural violence of poverty, punishment and injustice (Pepinsky 1991; Turpin & Kurtz 1995). Thus, peacemaking ideology rejects draconian policies in favour of less violent, if not nonviolent, alternatives ranging from decriminalisation to decarceration. Rather than fighting wars on crime and drugs, it supports peace movements against victimisation. Instead of imprisonment, it endorses alternatives such as mediation and reconciliation (Caulfield 1991; Quinney & Wildeman 1991). To prevent crime, it advocates a radical strategy of human rights enforcement (Elias 1991b), promoting not only political and civil rights but also economic, social and cultural rights.

Peacemaking ideology would intensify the United Nations initiatives that not only set international standards for victim treatment but that link victimisation to 'abuses of power' by the state (Fattah 1989; Johnston 1989; Lamborn 1987), such as the victimisation that results from government repression or criminality (Barak 1991, 1994a; Bierma 1994; Churchill & Vander Wall 1992; Cleaver 1993; Griffiths et al. 1989; Stone 1993), and from state-generated social and economic environments that victimise people directly (such as the structural violence of poverty and its symptoms) and indirectly (by providing the breeding grounds for criminal victimisation committed by others). In other words, governments that generate other victimisation are not likely to be very concerned with criminal victimisation.

Seventh, 'critical/radical/feminist ideology' tries to overcome the short-comings of some of these alternatives. From critical/radical/socialist ideology it takes its concerns about race, class and capitalism. From radical feminist ideology it takes its greater sensitivity to patriarchy and women's victimisation. From left realist ideology it takes its concerns about the immediate impact of crime and the need for short-term responses. From peacemaking ideology it draws its concerns about violence and social injustice. Its formula for ending victimisation goes well beyond crime policies: to establishing a radical economic and feminist democracy that would eliminate the structural sources of violence (Elias 1993).

This ideology lays out a more active and politically sophisticated role for victims that could help develop a victim movement that challenges rather than acquiesces to state policies. It recognises both the limits (Smart 1989) but also the possibilities of the law for curbing crime and helping victims. It recognises how individualised, victim rights can be coopted, recommending instead rights claims that focus on collective, structural inequities for certain groups—such as classes, genders and races. By focusing on substantive and not merely procedural rights, this ideology could be the basis for a justice-based, rather than merely a rights-based, victimology (Mawby & Walklate 1994).

Making Choices

Thus, obviously alternative ideologies exist; there are no doubt others. The question is whether we will embrace them, and translate them into alternative crime and victim policies. To illustrate the possibilities, let's consider the following five case studies. Each one poses choices for victimology between mainstream and alternative ideologies.

Case Study 1: The contradictions of patriarchal justice

Victimology should be making choices about women's victimisation. Women have been the focus of considerable victim policy and research in the last dozen years (Vaughan-Evans & Wood 1989). Some older concerns have been addressed, and some newer issues have been considered.

For example, on the issue of sexual assault (Resick 1990), we know more now about the factors that influence whether women will report and otherwise pursue the crime (Lizotte 1985; Winkel & Vrij 1993). We have new research on

the trauma of rape (Denno 1993; Herd 1985), on medical needs and services (Bruyere 1994; Franks 1991; MacKenzie 1993; Manley 1990), and on the transmission of AIDS through sexual assault (Eid 1990; Guccione 1988; Laszlo & Smith 1991). We remain concerned with the continuing victimisation of women caused by media and judicial maltreatment. There's growing interest in holding negligent third parties at least partially liable for sexual assaults (Moran 1989). And the shocking and extensive rapes in the Bosnian civil war have also captured our attention.

Similarly, extensive work has been done on domestic violence (Campbell 1990; Dutton 1989; Friedman & Schulman 1990; Markesinis 1985; Quinn 1985). We know more about the consequences of this violence for individuals and families (Hotaling et al. 1988a), and about coping (Hotaling et al. 1988a, 1988b; Mahoney 1992) and defensive (Finkelhor et al. 1988) strategies. We have learned about domestic violence in new cultural and geographical (Avni 1992; Feinman 1992; Jain 1992) settings, and about international strategies being used to combat it (Walker & Corriere 1991). The increasing tendency for women to fight back against domestic violence was highlighted in particular by the Lorena Bobbitt case in the United States, where she cut off her husband's penis.

Victimologists have also been exploring new territory in women's victimisation. We have seen an upsurge in research on sexual harassment, for example, especially in light of the Anita Hill case in the United States (Almony 1992; Barickman et al. 1992; Harper 1991). New attention has also been paid to stalking and hate crimes, date rape (Pirog-Good & Stets 1989), and the victimisation caused by pornography (including the Pornography Victims Compensation Act) (Teepen 1992; Whicher 1993). And besides new research, women have been the apparent beneficiaries of new victim policies, including laws that purportedly crack down on crime against women.

Nevertheless, there are good reasons for concern. On the one hand, the new revelations of women's victimisation far outpace the measures we pursue against it. On the other hand, anti-battering initiatives sometimes include sweeping assumptions that all men are violent and that leaving the home is a women's only real solution against domestic abuse (Harding 1994). Victim-impact statements (Morgan 1992), anti-stalking laws (Attinello 1993; Bernstein 1993; Seager & Jordan 1990), and rape and battering reform legislation have been widely celebrated (Horney & Spohn 1991; Lambert 1981; Tocchio 1987), but have had minimal impact in practice. Instead, they have produced a rhetoric of protection, and the illusion of change (Coutts 1988; Ghent 1982; Hanmer & Stanko 1985; Hinch 1991; Maher 1989; Parloff 1992).

For all our increased concern, women's victimisation remains undercounted: crimes against women are still underrepresented in crime statistics (Stanko 1988) and corporate harms—which disproportionately victimise women—are barely treated as crimes in the first place (DeKeseredy & Goff 1992; Peterson & Runyon 1994; Vickers 1990; Wickramasinghe 1993). Arguably, victim policy has little to do with the real causes of violence against women; nor does it prevent it. Unfortunately, most of these shortcomings are also reflected in mainstream victimological research.

For example, the Anita Hill case has not produced the revolution in sexual harassment cases that many predicted. Similarly, the Nicole Simpson murder case has been hailed as a tragic but nevertheless valuable turning point against domestic violence. But the way it has been covered is unlikely to produce a lasting effect. Quite apart from whether O.J. Simpson's race and celebrity status have either helped or hindered his case, Nicole Simpson has remained largely invisible. In both sexual harassment and domestic violence cases, women are still routinely blamed for their victimisation, or substantially ignored (Douglas 1994).

Even worse, we can see an increasing criminalisation of women: drug-dependent pregnant women treated as drug dealers to their offspring (sometimes even before they are born), criminal penalties for abortions, and murder convictions against women who kill their violent, battering husbands or partners (Chadwick & Little 1987; Thomas & Stein 1990; Walker 1989). Women are taken more seriously for their actual or purported crimes (and no less so than men) (Daly 1994) than for their far more extensive victimisation.

Why does the victimisation of women persist; why are policies more symbolic than real in their impact? Arguably, it is because taking women's victimisation seriously would significantly challenge the status quo, including much of our research. Usually, we wrongly assume, given certain adjustments, that the criminal justice system can promote women's concerns (Snider 1990). Likewise, we have unrealistic expectations for the law's role in reducing women's victimisation (Smart 1989). In both instances, we have ignored the contradictions of our typically patriarchal legal and criminal-justice systems (Messerschmidt 1986; Radford & Stanko 1994).

Cracking down with get tough policies against women's victimisation typically does more to empower the state than to protect women. It also strengthens sexist institutions, which will do little to reduce the sexism that typically motivates violence against women. Women's victimisation is still not taken as seriously as men's. Feminism is blamed for luring women outside the home, where they are increasingly victimised in the streets (Faludi 1990). Sexist men are still primarily the ones making and enforcing our laws. Women's initiatives—even a few backed by some 'fundamentalist' feminists (that is, anti-pornography campaigns or initiatives that define as rape all heterosexual sexual intercourse if it occurs in a patriarchal society)—typically subscribe to ineffective, and often counterproductive, law and order crusades.

In our policy and our research, a truly feminist agenda (that avoids the extremes of right-wing, fundamentalist feminism on the one hand and watered-down, liberal feminism on the other hand) is marginalised (Walklate 1992): we largely ignore the root causes of women's victimisation, and the structural changes necessary to significantly reduce it (Stanko 1985; Wilson 1985).

The research for developing what could become a more non-sexist victimology is being done (Stanko 1988), but almost entirely by people who probably do not think of themselves as victimologists (Carignella-McDonald & Humphries 1991; Caulfield & Wonders 1994; Chapman 1990; DeKeseredy et al. 1992; Gregory 1986; Thomas & Beasley 1993). Unless we have some unexpected reason to trust patriarchal, criminal-justice institutions, we need an

alternative model for taking women's victimisation seriously. This kind of research should become part of the mainstream of victimology. It is simple, if not controversial: if our work is not really feminist, then it will not really help women. Those are the kinds of sides we should be choosing.

Case Study 2: Do victims want revenge?

Victimology must make choices about the role of punishment in criminal justice. Generally it assumes that if criminals are not made to suffer harsh punishments, then somehow victims have been deprived by criminal justice, perhaps even denied their rights. But do victims really want revenge? Should they want it?

Victims advocates often argue that only tough penalties for offenders will show victims that they are being taken seriously by the criminal justice system. This corresponds to the general notion that victims can only have their rights protected if suspects are denied their rights. This creates a zero-sum game based on the dubious proposition that victims can gain only if offenders lose. But there is little evidence to support this notion, and indeed, offenders already lose quite routinely: the vast majority of prosecutions in the US, for example, end in convictions. And as the nation with the world's highest incarceration rate and length of punishments, most of those convictions result in tough sentences.

According to mainstream victimology, victims 'need' revenge for psychological reasons. Victimisation generates pent up rage that can be satisfied only through the stiff penalisation of criminals. Harsh punishments such as 'three strikes' laws will also put criminals away for longer periods, perhaps forever, thus eliminating any further victimisation those offenders might cause. And the prospect of these penalties will deter potential offenders from victimising in the first place.

But these assumptions are wrong. Our criminogenic societies always generate new criminals to replace the offenders we put away, no matter how many new prisons we build to hold them (Carignella-McDonald & Humphries 1991). Victimisation does not decline; instead it continues to rise.

But what about victim rage? Some victims do seem to want revenge. But is revenge really the 'natural' reaction of someone who has been victimised, as victimology and victim advocates often assume? We spent years hearing that aggression and violence were also 'natural' to humans. But in the late 1980s, dozens of the world's leading scientists issued the Seville Statement on Violence that found just the opposite: the urge to aggression is not natural but rather socially constructed (Adams 1994). The same is likely true of revenge.

How could we expect victims not to believe they want revenge when law and order ideology and the mainstream victims movement have repeatedly told them that severely punishing offenders is what they need: for their rage and for their own self-protection? In our 'culture of violent solutions' (Elias 1995a), we have given victims no other model but revenge.

Yet as Richard Harding has argued, victim groups like VOCAL worry that not enough victims are joining them, ignoring the possibility that most victims may 'prefer to cope, to deal with their experience and move on, and that joining a punitive, ideologically motivated single-issue organisation does not strike them as a particularly productive way of trying to do so' (Harding 1994). As

interviews with the United States victim group Save Our Sons and Daughters (SOSAD) indicate: 'Parents demand justice but their secret craving is more for a validation of their grief, an acknowledgment that what they have lost is precious (Editors 1994)'.

Candy Lightner, the founder of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), has now abandoned the group, arguing that in its missionary zeal for punishment, MADD has lost its direction and does victims a disservice (Griffin 1994). As she argues: 'MADD helps you deal with anger, but I think it really prolongs denial'.

Despite the enormous pressures encouraging victims to 'want' revenge, it is remarkable that many victims, nevertheless, do not seek revenge in practice, and are far less punitive than we might imagine (Baker 1992; Elias 1983, 1993; Henderson 1985; Hough & Mayhew 1983; Karmen 1986; Maguire 1982; Shapland et al. 1985; van Dijk et al. 1991).

Consider, for example, the tragic and highly publicised rape, kidnapping and murder of Polly Klaas in northern California. While some of Klaas's supporters have endorsed harsh penalties, her grandfather has instead called for social programs to eliminate the conditions that generate criminals like Polly's assailant —a man, by the way, who was criminally victimised repeatedly during his own life (Dougan 1994). One victim recently opposed, publicly, the new 'three strikes' legislation in California (Finney 1994), and another victim refused to testify in her own case, because 'three strikes' legislation would have been applied against her victimiser; now she is leading a ballot measure against the legislation (O'Connor 1994).

Families Against Mandatory Minimums, based in Austin, Texas, now has 25 000 members and 40 chapters nationwide. They oppose harsh punishments, and instead favour measures more tailored to the offence, preferably using alternatives to traditional punishments. Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation, based in Liberty Mills, Indiana, opposes the death penalty and other methods of revenge (Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation 1993). Some judges have refused to apply three strikes laws in cases that have come before them (Sonenshine 1994). Why do these kinds of groups rarely appear in the victimological literature?

Victimology and victim advocacy have a choice. Will we continue encouraging victims to support harsh punishments, or will we encourage them instead to consider penal alternatives such as restitution, reconciliation and social change? Victims clearly do not need revenge; with our help, fewer and fewer of them will even want it.

Case Study 3: Police as victims of law and order

A second case study examines the impact of law and order crime policies on law enforcement officials. Police officers have expanded their powers by virtue of victim initiatives that curb suspects' rights and give officers a freer hand in enforcement. To protect against a growing criminal victimisation, police have even been encouraged to use greater force and violence. Nevertheless, their gains do not outweigh their losses.

The greatest benefits of law and order policies accrue to political forces in society far higher in the hierarchy than police officers. Political and economic leaders gain new powers of social control, and new capital for profitable criminal justice 'industries' (Christie 1993), while staying well outside the line of fire of the violence and tensions their policies unleash. Police officers, in contrast, are on the front lines of battles planned elsewhere, such as in Congressional backrooms and corporate boardrooms. The police are the foot soldiers of our repeated wars on crime and drugs, and are a large part of the casualties each time these wars fail.

The police often treat victims poorly, partly because officers view themselves as also being victimised. They believe they are unappreciated, and that their own victimisation is unrecognised. They're right. Most police officers, of course, do not view themselves as victims of law and order. To the contrary, most of them strongly endorse law and order policies, hoping they will give police more power and resources, even in societies like the United States, which are already committing overwhelming resources to law enforcement. But the problem is not a lack of resources or power; the problem is that we are implementing the wrong policies.

Although the dangers of being a police officer can sometimes be exaggerated, the costs are nevertheless significant. Police officers are subject to fear and extensive stress on the job. They are more susceptible to being afflicted by drug and alcohol abuse, suicide, accidents and disease. They have shorter life spans than the general public. They suffer social and personal isolation in their private lives, and have a high divorce rate.

Police officers are more likely to experience violence, resulting in physical and psychological wounding, or death. The pressures and temptations of their work lure them into corruption, brutality, crime, and rights violations—as revealed again by the recent Mollen Report in New York City (Mollen Commission 1994). Police are subjected to public scorn when citizens unfairly but routinely hold them responsible for increasing crime rates (Seager 1992). And their immersion amidst the dregs of society give most police officers a lowly and cynical view of human nature, often leading to racist attitudes they might not have otherwise developed (Kroes 1985).

It may seem strange treating police officers as victims since law enforcers in the United States, for example, have recently received so much attention for the victimisation they themselves produce (Salholz 1992; Witkin 1990). The videotaped, police beating of Rodney King in Los Angeles, for example, starkly illustrated police violence. Rather than an exception, coming from a few, rogue officers, police brutality is the natural and systematic result of failed, law and order policies: harsh tactics are endorsed amidst the rage—often mixed with racism—felt by many police officers from the frustrations, trauma, and violence of their work. Police officers' own victimisation, of course, does not justify police violence in response: brutality should be seriously resisted. But rather than being discouraged, it is instead encouraged by current policies predicated on war, where brutality is treated as a necessary evil.

Some police officers have begun to reconsider conventional law enforcement. They have concluded, for example, that wars on crime and drugs

are doomed to failure, and put police officers unnecessarily in the line of fire (Levine 1990). But powerful forces such as career, hierarchy, cynicism, and ideology make it difficult for many police officers to question law and order crime policies and their own work. To do so, police officers need more support.

Victimology could help provide that support. We have a choice: we can continue supporting both police victimising and police victimisation or we can help police officers find a new way of understanding law enforcement, the causes of their own job frustrations, and viable alternatives. Doing the latter would help not only the police, but also crime victims, avoid the continued victimisation of law and order crusades.

Case Study 4: Corporations as victimisers

Victimology must make choices about who it recognises as victims and as victimisers. Do we confine ourselves only to officially sanctioned categories of crime and victimisation, or should we recognise a broader array of significant harms? So far, we have largely limited ourselves to official definitions. With the adoption of the UN Declaration on Victims of Crime and Abuses of Power, however, at least a small part of victimology has broadened its definition of victimisation beyond what many nation-states, including the United States, would readily accept.

That is, 'abuses of power' implicate states as criminals, or at least as victimisers. Unfortunately, abuses of power seem very marginalised within victimology; most victimologists either do not accept or fully appreciate their implications for the study of victimisation. This prevents us from second guessing nation-states the way we should be—as genuine victim advocates: after all, why should we trust with the protection of crime victims nation-states that practice widespread victimisation elsewhere, that commit their own serious crimes, and that help promote the conditions that generate crime committed by others?

Nevertheless, despite this neglect, the Declaration does provide an opening for broadening how we define victimisation. Even if we did so, we would still largely be excluding from victimology another significant source of victimisation: that produced by corporations. As non-governmental organisations, they may not be included within the conventional definitions of 'abuses of power', even though corporations have enormous power, sometimes even exceeding nation-states themselves. Moreover, corporations produce extensive harms, and far more victimisation—measured in terms of injuries, deaths, and financial losses—than common crimes (Elias 1986; Reiman 1986; Frank & Lynch 1992).

That victimisation ranges from dozens of different kinds of corporate grand theft to improper medical care to workplace diseases and 'accidents' to environmental pollution to the promotion of unnecessary economic destitution (DeKeseredy & Goff 1992; Mokhiber 1992). Corporations are far bigger drug pushers than even the drug cartels yet instead of provoking a 'war on drugs' against them, nation-states are more likely to protect their crimes—often times even promoting them by subsidies or other favourable legislation—or at least not seriously restricting their activities (Cotts 1992; Henry 1989).

While we are appalled at the property crime that often occurs during riots or other domestic disturbances, we almost completely ignore the massive corporate looting that happens every single day (Rothstein 1992). And besides victimising individuals, corporations often harm entire communities. A good example of this is the increasing environmental devastation produced by corporate policies, and lax regulations (Schwartz 1993).

Most corporate harms have been ignored by victimology. Since most of this victimisation has not been officially designated as crime, it falls outside conventional victimological boundaries. Thus, implicitly or deliberately, we have made a choice about the kind of victimisation we take seriously.

There are defenses, of course, for our narrow choice. It has been argued, for example, that expanding our concept of victimisation would make victimology too unwieldy: where would we draw the line once we go beyond the formal definitions of crime? Focusing on crime victims is a manageable project. Others argue that we cannot focus on corporations because we would not know who to hold responsible for any victimisation they might cause. Do we blame workers, mid-line bosses, top executives, or the entire corporation?

But these kinds of objections all have answers: most we have now, others could be devised from precisely the kind of new research that victimology could be doing. There's no reason why we cannot devise new boundaries; the sign of a mature field is the ability to make paradigm shifts. More important, we delude ourselves if we think that corporate behaviour is irrelevant even to the narrow crime definitions that we already accept. In many ways, corporate wrongdoing is far more premeditated than most of the street crime that we commonly accept as crime, and as victimisation.

In addition, corporations—like states—are substantially responsible for creating the environments in which common crime flourishes. They help generate the economic conditions—for the poor, and even for the rich, for example, that generate most crime. In other words, on both a micro and a macro level, corporations contribute substantially to worsening the crime problem, and to increasing victimisation. Thus, we in victimology have no choice but to focus on corporate harms, even if we confine ourselves to fairly narrow definitions of crime.

Corporate harms are not unlike state abuses of power for another reason. Nation-states largely immunise corporations from the criminal label; this is no accident. Corporations lobby hard to earn this exemption for their harmful behaviour; even where they are not completely successful in convincing state officials, corporations are often exempted anyway by the rampant nonenforcement against the few areas where corporate behaviour is officially defined as criminal.

But nation-states protect corporations not merely by inaction but also by action: that is, by pursuing initiatives that affirmatively block corporate accountability for the victimisation they produce (McQueen 1992). Commercial law in nations like the United States and Canada, often directly support corporate harms—endorsing, for example, 'buyer beware' policies that victimise consumers, or labour policies that exploit workers, or housing policies that gouge tenants.

Likewise, the United States Bankruptcy Reform Act of 1978 allows corporations to file for temporary bankruptcy as a way of avoiding responsibility for fraud and other consumer rip-offs (Duffy 1986). On the other hand, when corporations are themselves victimised by crime, nation-states pamper them far more than common, individual victims, ensuring corporations 'justice', both inside and outside the courts, at far higher rates than usual (Hagan 1983).

Again, there has been considerable research done on corporate victimisation. A small amount of it has been done within victimology (Walklate 1989), but most of it has come from people who do not identify themselves as victimologists (Cullen et al. 1990; Frank & Lynch 1992; International Meeting of Experts 1994). So again, we have a choice. We can continue to ignore corporate harms or we can begin to take them seriously. If we choose the latter, then victim research and policy must devote itself to holding corporations responsible for the victimisation they generate, including initiatives that impose formal criminal liability for this behaviour. We should help demonstrate the devastating impact of these harms. We should expose the double standards and favouritism in state laws and policies toward corporate victimisation. And we should clarify the connection between unrestrained corporate power and the criminal victimisation it helps generate even at the hands of people not directly involved in the corporate sector.

Case Study 5: Newsmaking victimology

A final case study focuses on the mass media and victimisation. Arguably, the media illuminate the realities of crime and punishment very poorly in nations like the United States. News coverage distorts victimisation's causes and impact, individualising crime and ignoring its social sources. It emphasises some criminals while downplaying others—often displaying racial and class biases. It promotes get-tough crime policies and undermines alternative strategies, encouraging public retaliation and vigilante crusades. It endorses each new war on crime and drugs, ignoring all the others that have been fought and lost before (Elias 1994c; Jackson & Naureckas 1994). Its bias toward official and corporate perspectives on criminal justice are so strong that some regard crime news as essentially propaganda (Leiper 1994).

The media often present victimisation out of focus: child neglect, for example, is a far more prevalent victimisation than child abuse. Shoddily manufactured automobiles produce more highway victims than drunk drivers. Most missing children are runaways not child abductions (Kappeler et al. 1993). News stories deplore the mugging of the elderly as a vicious crime yet ignore old people who are victimised by landlords who maintain inhumane living conditions or by corporations who cheat them out of their pensions (Burch 1986). Crimes committed at the workplace have become big news (Solomon & King 1993), yet the far more frequent victimisation caused by the workplace receives no media attention at all (Reiman 1986).

These distortions are further reproduced in media dramas and entertainment shows. And their steady and escalating diet of violence exaggerates reality and heightens the fear of crime (Gerbner 1993). So-called 'reality' television programs about the police (such as 'Cops') are anything but realistic (Seagal

1993); instead, they seem more designed to legitimise police brutality (Andersen 1994).

Media treatment of victims is generally simplistic, promoting stereotypes such as the 'helpless, innocent victim'. The coverage is often condescending and insensitive (Viano 1992). Television programs run by former crime victims or their survivors, such as 'America's Most Wanted' blindly plug into ineffective get-tough crusades, giving viewers the false impression that their tips significantly affect the crime problem. Talk shows such as 'Geraldo' often feature victims and survivors, using their anguish to whip up new public support for harsh measures, with virtually no consideration of alternatives.

Again, victimology has a choice. It can continue being either passive, or supportive, toward a mass media that promotes counterproductive crime policies, or it can instead more aggressively challenge media misconceptions. Comparable to the 'newsmaking criminology' proposed by the criminologist Gregg Barak (1994b), we could pursue a 'newsmaking victimology' that actively uses the media to promote victim interests.

We could provide new stories, new perspectives and especially new themes and categories of analysis for the media coverage of victimisation. We could challenge distortions and stereotypes such as those that filled the Reagan administration's shameful Presidential Task Force Report on Crime Victims. We could encourage the media to endorse alternative victim policies that mobilise social and economic strategies rather than merely law and order strategies against victimisation. We could act as media commentators and consultants, respondents and debaters. We could write articles and letters. In other words, we could assume our public and not merely our private role as scientists.

Which Victimology?

These examples illustrate the different directions victimology could move in the coming years. Charting a new direction would not be easy. Since some groups benefit from law and order policies, change would be strongly resisted. We would have to think of ourselves as radicals, if not politically then at least in the sense of 'going to the root' of the problem of victimisation.

If we make no conscious choice of ideologies or if we specifically decide to maintain our current course and remain wedded largely to a right-wing realist ideology, then continued victimisation and limited help for victims will likely persist. Such a choice should necessarily also force us to consider whether victimology—if it has that little energy and that little to offer, has outlived its usefulness as a field.

If, however, we decide we must change, then we must choose which one or more alternative ideologies will guide us. We must also commit ourselves to a new level of responsibility. As Czech playwright and president Vaclav Havel (1990) has argued:

> *If the hope of the world lies in human consciousness, then it is obvious that intellectuals cannot go on forever avoiding their large share of responsibility for the world, and hiding their distaste for politics under an alleged need to be objective. The intellectual should constantly disturb, should bear witness to the*

> *misery of the world, should be provocative by being independent, should rebel against all hidden manipulations, and should be the chief doubters of power and its incantations.*

If we make a choice for change, then victimology will have a great deal of usefulness, indeed.

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