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'Between the Policing Pledge {1} and Police Practice: how victim theories can improve the treatment of victims by the police'

Introduction.

This paper owes its origins to the formation of an innovative and ground breaking foundation degree in police studies which was established at the University of Huddersfield in early 2005 and was run in conjunction with West Yorkshire Police Service. {2}

This course was one of the first of its kind in the U.K. and was, in its way, the culmination of a significant review of police training which began in 1999 with a HMIC report in the way police constables were trained. It was the first major review since the Second World War and made several recommendations which were also developed in the review of 2002 Training Matters. Between them these reviews had acknowledged that although the existing Probationer Constable Training Programme{ P.T.P} had certain strengths, a new model needed to be implemented which would, inter alia, embed the values of life-long learning, the need for police training to be 'outward' looking i.e. away from the physical and cultural confines of police training schools and increase the professionalization of the police service. It was in effect , a training programme designed to meet the more complex demands of modern policing by introducing an educational element to training.

A new police training model was implemented in 2004 called the Initial Police and Learning Development Programme {I.P.LD.P}. It was originally comprised of twenty-two National Occupational Standards { NOS},[subsequently revised to 21 in 2008] which provided the national framework of police training in England and Wales. The NOSs were offered descriptions of particular skills and types of knowledge which were essential for newly qualified police officers. In effect the model was designed to test both operational competency and underpinning knowledge supporting the practice skill. The foundation degree was designed to test the underpinning knowledge of trainee police officers with the West Yorkshire Police.{3}

The ideas in this paper were initially developed for a module called 'Assessment, Advice and Support' which focused upon victims of crime and policing.

The relevant NOSs were/are:

2H1 Interview Victims and witnesses
[National Occupational Standards 2002}
.
BE2 Provide initial support to victims, survivors and witnesses and assess their needs for further support.
{National Occupational Standards Revised 2008}
{Pepper and Pepper 2009}

The significance of these NOSs, especially the second one will be discussed later in the paper.

Workshop Objectives

In this workshop we look at victims of crime from a theoretical approach. We will explore three influential theories, in terms of their origins, characteristics and how they can help our understanding about victims of crime. Moreover we will look at the significance of these theories in relation to police practice and professional standards.

There is a view that the theories examined here should actually be regarded as different 'orientations' or perspectives {Newburn 2007}. However for the purposes of this workshop the term theory is used since the main aim is to show how these ideas can be used primarily as a way of assessing victims, either positively or negatively. The assessment process is crucial as it can significantly determine the way advice and support is offered.

By the end of this workshop you should,

> ✍ know why it is important to have an understanding of victim theories;

> ✍ have gained an understanding of the following victim theories:
-Conventional,
-Realist,
-Critical,

> ✍ be aware of how these theories can be used to make an assessment of victims;
> ✍ Recognise how some assessments can lead to victim blaming and other assessments can support a more positive approach

The Benefits of Theories.

Before launching into victim theories it is worthwhile just noting the reasons why the importance of using theories in general but for dealing with victims in particular.

1} It is well documented that developing and understanding a sound theoretical base is the key to promoting good practice. Theories provide a framework or basis on which we can make sense of a seemingly complex set of experiences and events. Victim theories help make sense of the many dimensions connected to being a victim of crime and provide a means by which our own assumptions can be tested and our understanding broadened. For example, consider that every day the victims of crime are reported on in both the national and local news and it can often present as a bewilderingly array of circumstances. Theories can provide a way of making sense of these events.

2} It is well noted that the criminal justice system is becoming increasingly victim focused {e.g. Hall 2009; Bottoms and Roberts 2010} Over the last year there has been the Victims Champion, the establishment of the first commissioner for victims of crime in England and Wales and the establishment of the National Victims Service.{4} The treatment of victims takes on a significant political dimension , especially in financially austere times and value –for money becomes paramount.

The police have a vested interest in treating victims of crime well. They rely upon victims to report crime and so it is important that they ensure the trust and support of victims in order to do their job. Along with other criminal justice agencies, the police are subject to the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime {implemented 01/04/06 and currently under review} which gives victims the opportunity to make formal complaints if they feel that they have not been treated fairly. Furthermore the police have launched a 'Policing Pledge' whereby they are measured against levels of public confidence and satisfaction. Although this has been subsequently abolished the need the political dimension of providing 'customer' satisfaction remains a significant feature for the police.

3} There are, obviously, numerous examples of good practice in relation to victims of crime by the police and in terms of media reporting they are rarely, if ever reported. However it is equally true that there are numerous examples of poor practice and that poor practice can have a very damaging effect for all concerned.

There are regular instances reported in the media where it is recorded certain victims were not treated as well as they could or should have been: the following examples give a flavour of the problems which arise:

- ' Police and Prosecutors apologise to disabled victims of crime{The Guardian 11/05/09}Here the paper reported on two separate cases where disabled victims were not taken seriously by the police and subsequently by the Crown Prosecution Service;

- 'Arrogant Police must visit every crime victim'{ The Daily Telegraph 02/09/09}: The then out-going Chief Constable of Merseyside Police, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, argued the need for all victims to be treated the same rather than the current practice of selective treatment.

- 'Essex Police admit Maria Stubbings murder case mistakes'{www.bbc.co.uk 19/08/10.This reported on the Essex Police taking the unusual step of conceding serious errors had being made prior to the conclusion of the Independent Police Complaints Commission's investigation into the case. The victim's murder occurred within the context of domestic violence and it was acknowledged her reports of threats were not responded to in an appropriate manner.

Each of these examples can be analysed further and given a specific contextual meaning but they are a small part of a growing number of media stories highlighting the differential practice of victims. Other evidence emerges from official statistics on crime.

The findings from the 2004/05 finding showed that although the public had confidence in the police generally they actually declined significantly following actual contact { Gieve et al 2007}.The BCS of 2006/07 indicated that 25% of those who had dealings with the police were less than satisfied. Added to this we could also consider the findings that the complaints against the police have risen by 8%{ www.bbc.co.uk 24/09/09} One of the issues that this kind of finding highlights is that not only is there differential treatment of victims but it could be much more widespread than is often recognised.

Assessment and the Differential Treatment of Victims.

If we return to the relevant National Occupational Standards{ NOS} cited at the start of this paper, the key word is 'assess'. One of the fundamental skills required to treat victims well is the ability to *assess* them. The question is how does a police officer do this? On what basis or by what means does this assessment take place?

It is arguable that following the guidelines and procedures for dealing with victims as indicated above is simply not enough- the examples above show that there is variable practice in the way victims are treated which are not addressed by procedural approaches.

Another possible answer could be located in what is often referred to as 'police culture.' This is the informal but prevalent view of what constitutes 'proper' police practice amongst front-line staff {Mawby 2008; Reiner 2010} There could exist subjective interpretations of what the role of police officer is in relation to treating victims and how they should respond to their particular needs which is not primarily based upon official policy. It is exclusively an individual's personal beliefs and values influencing operational discretion and judgement. In other words it is possible that personal prejudices or values may influence the way the victim is initially assessed. This could account for the differential treatment.

The following fictional case study offers another answer to this question. Although this case study is fictional it is based upon the experience of assessing numerous student police officers' assignments in which they have described their experiences of attending a domestic violence incident. What is described in this case study are recurring characteristic features often associated with domestic violence 'call-outs'. The example of domestic violence has been chosen mainly because it is statistically and anecdotally the most frequently encountered form of victimisation.{5}. It also highlights the significant and influential aspects of feminist thought within victimology.

Case Study: Domestic Violence

The victim is a woman called Nicky. She is 39 years of age and has been in a relationship with Pete for eight years. Pete is 42. They have two children aged five and three respectively. Both adults are long term unemployed and are both in receipt of benefits. Nicky is in receipt of unemployment benefit and has had occasional unskilled work but it has been mostly cash-in hand. She feels limited in her

opportunity to work owing to her children. Pete is in receipt of Incapacity Benefit as he has been assessed with mental health problems. Nicky also receives a care allowance for looking after Pete. He has been in trouble with the police many times throughout his life for a variety of offences including acts of dishonesty and violence. He is often violent when he has been drinking.

The police have been called to the house on numerous occasions in relation to incidents of domestic violence. It is usually Nicky that calls the police but Pete has also called them occasionally, claiming that her behaviour is causing him concern and that he thinks she may pose a threat to the children.

The police have been called out on such a regular basis that they have begun to identify a possible pattern. The drinking usually follows the receipt of their benefits and this often leads to arguments between them. Nicky usually rings the police at some point fearing for her safety or that of her children. When the police arrive there is usually evidence of a disturbance. Both parties often present as having been drinking when the police arrive. On some occasions when they arrive Pete can often behave calmly and co-operative with the police when he is arrested and taken away. Nicky can often act in seemingly aggressive manner and she has, on occasions been charged with breach of the peace offences.

When the police have sought to bring charges against Pete, Nicky has withdrawn her statement and not wanted him prosecuted.
There have been times when she has been temporarily housed in a shelter but she has retuned to the family home as the children found it difficult to cope away from their home and father.

This case study can raise a number of various questions: how could this victim be assessed? What would be the significant issues for your consideration?
How would you respond to this victim?
What are the possible needs of the victim?

In addressing these types of questions one of the first things we need to do is offer a definition of the term victim. What does it mean and how can it inform our assessment?

Definition of Victim: Dictionary Definition

A good starting point is to look at the Oxford English Dictionary. { as does Spalek 2006}

1   A person who is injured or killed as a result of an event or circumstance;
2   A person or thing injured or destroyed in pursuit of an object or in gratification of a passion;
3   A prey, a dupe;
4   A living creature sacrificed to a deity or in a religious rite.

These definitions are not technical, legal definitions but reflect everyday common uses of the term. They allow for a diverse range of interpretations.

The first definition seems to imply that it is a negative experience which imposes itself on an individual in an unwarranted and unfair way. In other words it could mean it is about bad things happening to good people through no fault of their own.

The second definition suggests that the victimization occurs as a result of the person's own character or personality. In other words it is something about the person, their own innate qualities which contributes to their own suffering. They could be seen as blameworthy.

The third definition offers a variation of the second one, namely that someone is a victim owing to their own character trait but it is a more negative view: they are a victim owing to their naivety or stupidity.

The fourth and final variation is perhaps more striking and dramatic. It could be argued that rather than focus on individual or personal qualities it considers social and cultural factors. A more formal way of describing this is that it focuses on structural factors such as religious beliefs, social practices and cultural practices.

Considering the different possible meanings that can be attached to the word victim we perhaps can begin to see how victims can be seen in different ways and treated differently. Some victims could seen as unfortunate, victims of circumstance, others could be seen as having particular personality traits that contributed to their victimisation or others could be seen as victims of broader social and cultural factors.

These interpretations could influence the way victims are responded to either positively or less positively. These are the kind of definitions police officers may tap into when formulating their own treatment of victims We will return to these themes when we look at the specific theories of victimization and how they help us perceive the way victims can be assessed.

Conventional Victimology[Positive}

Although there is some debate around the origins of victimology it is generally accepted that one of the first pioneers of a theory of victimisation was by Hans von Hentig..{ e.g. see Williams and Goodman Chong 2009}

It is argued that this was the first formal study which placed the victim at the centre of criminological study. During the time von Hentig was writing about victims there was a growing interest in studying crime from the perspective of the criminal. The main concern was to identify what made a criminal. The main aim was to identify what separated the criminal from the non-criminal. In his studies on victims Von Hentig sought to undertake a similar approach from the victim perspective. He was interested in examining the possible relationship between the victim and the perpetrator and why certain people could be 'singled' out as victims for certain criminal acts.

The central point of Von Hentig's argument was that although in theory anyone could be a victim of crime there were certain people who more likely than others to be victims owing to particular social and/or social characteristics which raised their risk of victimization. Von Hentig sought to identify these features and placed then into 13

distinctive categories or typologies. This was an attempt to offer an objective scientific approach to our understanding of what makes a victim. This is why the Conventional approach is sometimes referred to as the Positive approach as it seeks to identify empirical or objective, verifiable evidence of victim proneness. The key finding of von Hentig's approach suggested that the key reason why people are likely to be victims of crime was because of their own personal characteristics, behaviour or lifestyle.

This methodology was developed and applied by subsequent researchers.

- in 1958 Mendelsohn, a lawyer, promoted the concept of victim culpability to identify the extent to which victims contribute to their own victimisation;

- also in 1958 a study by Wolfgang looked at murder victims 'types' and identified the characteristics that had contributed to their own demise and

- in 1971 a very controversial study by Amir had applied to the same methodology to victims of rape. Certain character and behavioural traits were identified to explain why some women were more likely to be raped than others.

- A number of other studies undertaken in the 1970s to the current day looking at lifestyle and routine activities as contributory factors to victimization. These have been influenced by the emergence and use of victim surveys which are looked at in the next chapter.

This attempt to identify victim proneness is an attempt to develop a crime prevention model. It could be argued that if certain particular behavioural and/or personality traits can be identified which heighten the risk of victimization then potential victims could be advised as to how they could protect themselves.

So, for example, it may be possible to see how someone was a victim of burglary may have unwittingly contributed to their own victimization by not securing their property properly. Or they could have left an item of value in their car whilst it was unattended. In the spirit of Conventional victimology advice could be given to these victims as to how they could protect their property and reduce the risk of further victimisation.

<u>Applying Conventional Victimology to the Case Study</u>

In applying Conventional Victimology to Nicky you need to assess Nicky and identify what features about her or her situation could contribute to her own victimisation,

- Nicky continues to stay in the relationship despite, it seems some opportunities to leave;

- It could be argued that Nicky may have provoked at least some of the arguments which led to abusive behaviour. She has been under the influence of alcohol herself and has been warned for violent behaviour;

- Nicky does not appear to help herself as she does not co operate with the police in securing a conviction.

You may have identified other factors in addition to the ones listed above The kind of advice that could be offered to Nicky is that she must either leave this man, she must change her own behaviour and not provoke a violent confrontation or she must co-operate with the police. It might even be all three.

However in identifying the above features we are focusing almost exclusively on what appear to be her limitations and failures whilst overlooking the behaviour of the perpetrator of the crime. The emphasis is all on what Nicky must do, or not do, and Pete is completely ignored in this scenario. This leads us to one of the key criticisms and pit-falls of Conventional victimology.

Criticism of Conventional Victimology

Victim blaming is in effect, blaming the victim for being a victim of their crime. This is an unintended but very easy pitfall of applying Conventional victimology. By taking an approach which focuses on how the victim may have played a part in their own victimisation it can allow value judgements to be made about the victim which can lead to unfair assessments.

In the case of Nicky we have seen how she could be assessed as not helping herself because she does not leave Pete. We might be overlooking other factors which prevent her from leaving, such as financial, practical and emotional issues. This might to relate to financial and practical issues as well as emotional ones. We have seen how she could be judged for provoking the behaviour but we are taking the responsibility off Pete for his own actions. We have offered an assessment which could hold Nicky responsible for not fully co-operating with the police but this could be down to fear of reprisal.

From this perspective we can begin to see how some victims of crime may be treated less favourably than others.

Realist Victimology

The Realist or Radical approach to victimology emerged during the 1970s and 1980s.This approach emphasised the significance of the economic and social context in which victimisation occurs.

The 'realist' approach involved a broad range of criminologists who were united in having a self professed 'left wing' agenda in the analysis of crime and victimisation. In brief they sought to locate both the causes of crime and the consequences of victimisation as arising from economic and social inequality. Their answer to this was to challenge the economic and social order that created this unfairness and allowed this victimisation to occur in the first place. In this regard they were also referred to as 'radical'.

They were partly influenced by the implementation of crime surveys from the late 1970s onwards which revealed that a great deal of victimization was not officially reported to the authorities. Furthermore their own analysis of these figures indicated that the main bulk of victimisation was experienced by the marginalised and disempowered figures in society. Connected to this they were also influenced by the emergence of campaigning groups seeking support for specific victims {e.g founding the first Refuge for 'battered' wives in 1971}, and most notably the pioneering work of Russell and Rebecca Dobash in the 1970s.{1979}.

The term 'Realist 'arose through the stated aims of one of the significant pioneers in this field, Jock Young, who said that there was a need to 'get real' with crime and the effects it has on victims, especially those marginalised socially, economically and politically. Young stated that, in order to understand the experience of victims of crime and crime which involves engaging with victims directly.{1996}

The means to do this was to undertake a series of surveys themselves. These surveys were used to provide a window on the reality of victims' lives. They uncovered experiences of crime which affected minority ethnic groups, the elderly and women. Moreover they were able to record not just specific instances of crime but the daily experiences of living with crime. In other words they began to tap into the reality that victimisation is not just about dealing with a specific event but can affect the quality of life. They also asked victims about their confidence in the police and the criminal justice system generally to support their needs as victims. They began to open the prospect of assessing police efficacy and reliability for victims of crime.

This approach offered a very different view of victims than the Conventional one. Rather than be seen as complicit participants, they were victims owing to economic and social inequality arising from an unfair society. Victims could be assessed by their economic and social status: the more disadvantaged one is the more likely one is to be a victim.

Applying this theory, victims of burglary may not be able to afford to secure their property If someone has an item stolen from their car it might be because they struggle to afford the appropriate security. For those who are subject to physical assault or forms of intimidation it might be that they live in a socially deprived area and cannot afford to move to a place of safety. People are victims because they have little or no resources to protect themselves from victimization.

{B}Applying Realist Victimology to the Case Study.

Using this theory Nicky would be assessed in terms of her economic and social situation. In particular there might be relevant issues as to why Nicky struggles to leave this relationship as a means of protecting herself and her children. What are the practical factors which may expose or increase Nicky's risk of victimisation
Some possible issues could be:

- Nicky and her partner are both on benefits and are long term unemployed. They could reasonably be classed as poor. The benefits are not only for themselves but they have two young children. If Nicky were to leave, bringing the children with her, she would, on a practical level, have even less money

with which to cope. There could be a financial dependency which keeps her in the relationship.

- If Nicky does leave you could consider the practical implications for herself and her children. Where do they live? Do they have to re organise their benefit arrangements? One child is of school age and so would the children need to be re schooled? Would Nicky lose contact with any other family or friends she has established? The key point here is to highlight the fact that the practicalities of moving might be far more daunting than the possibility of staying .

- This is speculative but not unduly unfeasible: it is not uncommon in abusive relationships for men to control access to the finances and so it is another practical reality that Nicky may not have access to any money in order to facilitate a move. It is a way of controlling a partner. There is also an emotional reality which is that Nicky may be scared to leave her partner. Research shows women who affect permanent separation from their partner place themselves and their children at higher risk of harm.{Barnish 2004}.

Assessed Nicky from the perspective of her economic and social status promotes a more sympathetic approach. Rather than see Nicky as playing a part in her own victimization she is seen as subject to recurrent victimization, owing to her financial situation. Rather than not wanting to help herself it could be that she is constrained by her practical circumstances.

 This approach also influences the support and advice that could be given. If it is judged that a significant issue is the economic and social context then perhaps a possible solution lies in providing social support. This might mean utilising victim support agencies such as Refuge or other similar agencies.

Criticism of Realist Victimology

However useful one may find this approach it is not without criticism or limitations. The main criticism against the Realist approach is what is often referred to as its ideological approach. What this means is that it looks at victims and victimization from a particular left wing view, namely economic inequality and deprivation. The interest on victimization is as evidence of social oppression and inequality. As a consequence it may well overlook or downplay other possible issues and characteristics which could be equally relevant.

So, for example, in the case study involving Nicky and Pete it could be reasonably argued that the lack of money Nicky had was a significant factor in her continued victimization. However, how far does it explain why she is victimized? For example domestic violence does not just occur in poor families. It can and does occur in comfortably well off families as well. Also, while Pete himself is relatively poor and part of a socially disadvantaged group: he is though, the main perpetrator of the crime rather than the victim. The point here is that there may well be other factors than just economic ones which explain the causes of victimization for both domestic violence and other forms of victimization. This leads on to the third victimological theory.

{A} Critical Victimology

This approach to victimisation emerged in the 1990s One of the key texts was a book published in 1994 called '*Critical Victimology* by Rob Mawby and Sandra Walklate. Further studies and developments in victimology have added to this approach{ Goody 2005; Spalek 2006; Walklate 2007 and Newburn 2007}.Critical in this sense means thoughtful, analytical and questioning. Rather than seek to apply universal, one-size-fits all theories to victims as the other two do, this approach promotes a more reflective and analytical approach to understanding victims.

For example, one aspect of Critical victimology raises questions about how victims are defined. Who has the power or authority to define them? How do victims see themselves? It has been argued that the term 'victim' can often convey a sense of weakness and helplessness. Some may prefer to define themselves not as victims but more positively as survivors and/or witnesses There are connections with feminist victimology which is referred to below..

This approach can also highlight the way victims can be categorised as 'deserving' or not. This can relate to media and popular presentations of victims which can shape our understanding of victimization. A 'critical' approach would suggest that there is no one single definition of a victim but a variety of interpretations, with an interest in looking at what possible meanings could be applied and by whom.

An important study in this field was undertaken by the Norwegian criminologist , Nils Christie, who developed the concept of the 'Ideal Victim'{1986 cited in Dignam 2005}.Christie argued that some victims attracted more sympathy than others and that the ones who gained the most sympathy were those who fitted our idea of the 'ideal'.

The ideal victim had several characteristics. They were:

- vulnerable {young, female, either young or old};

- virtuous or beyond reproach{ they were respectable, could not be blamed in any way and had no connection with the perpetrator}

- the offender can clearly be presented as 'big and bad'.

This is what Walklate refers to as the 'Little Red Riding Hood' concept: this is a fairy story which can fit the above characteristics of the 'Ideal Victim.'.If the victim fits the 'ideal' criteria we could view them as more deserving of sympathy than those who do not. The 'Ideal victim' concept is a very narrow one and it is arguable that not many victims fit this model. If someone does not fit the 'Ideal model' is it right to treat them less favourably? It might be a way in which victims can be judged in a negative way which could lead to unsympathetic treatment.

Another feature of critical victimology is that it encourages a greater debate and understanding about victims in terms of their needs as well as their rights. This also promotes a more informed and knowledgeable approach towards victims. We can develop a better understanding of victims partly from talking and engaging with them directly as well as drawing upon an understanding of research, analysis and discussion

around particular types of victims. In other words we can begin to appreciate that victims and victimisation can be varied , complex and sometimes contradictory. For instance we tend of think of victims and perpetrators as two distinct groups but they can also overlap: someone who is the victim of a crime one week can be the perpetrator another week. In brief this approach suggests that the more we know and learn about victims and their specific needs the better we are to help and serve them.

Applying Critical Victimology to the Case Study

A possible application could be along the following lines:

- One of the things 'critical 'victimology asks us to consider is both how victims are defined and by whom. In regard the case study it initially seems very straightforward: when Nicky telephones the police and seeks help she is defining herself as the victim and, by implication, Pete as the primary aggressor. However it can also be applied the other way round as when Pete telephones the police he can define himself and the children as victims.. It is possible that the victim status may shift according to the circumstances. However the definition could simply be based on who manages to gain access to the telephone first, thereby possibly influencing the response of the police.{Miller 2001}

- Does Nicky fit the 'Ideal' victim model. Although she is female she would not be classed as young or old; it is highly debatable if she could be considered s beyond respectable and beyond reproach and it questionable if she would attract sympathetic media attention, if any at all. In short, she does not fit the 'ideal Victim' model so she could be viewed as an 'undeserving' victim. This creates a negative image of the victim and has similarities with Conventional victimology in that it can promote victim blaming.

- We could also consider relevant research and information to help understand the needs and experiences of Nicky. It is wrong to always assume that women actually want to leave and terminate the relationship Some women want the abuse to end but the relationship to continue. This might be why Nicky continues in the relationship. Studies show that women cope with abuse in different ways and develop their own strategies of coping{Barnish 2004}.For Nicky this might be calling the police in times of acute stress. Once their presence has alleviated the problem Nicky may be viewed as a 'survivor' of domestic violence rather than just a victim.

- It is also argued that there is a difference between the way men and women use violence: men use violence to control women whereas women use it in response to violence {Miller op.cit.}.Pete's use of violence has been used as a means to control Nicky. If Nicky has a record of arrests against her name it could hamper her future chances for a successful prosecution against Pete. When Nicky has demonstrated violent behaviour it is when the police have arrived and it could be that that she feels safe enough to release her anxiety and stress.

- Having a greater knowledge of these issues can allow a more informed awareness of the needs of the victims. We can begin to understand the possible contradictory behaviour of requiring police help but not wanting to seek a prosecution and why Nicky behaves less like the 'ideal' victim and demonstrates aggressive behaviour towards the police.

{B}Criticism of Critical Victimology

The critical approach to victimization can be seen as a much more sophisticated and analytical approach to victimization than the other two theories. For those seeking a more practical and pragmatic application of ideas it might feel a bit abstract. It may seem a bit remote or too theoretical for day-to-day policing practice.

However it is about developing a wider and broader knowledge of victims' experiences, needs and rights. The more knowledge one has about victims the better the assessment of them.

Summary

In this chapter we have looked at three key theories of victimization as a means of assessing victims of crime. The key points of each theory are as follows

Conventional

Focuses on how victims may have contributed or played a part in their own victimisation.
Application: This approach can be used to develop crime prevention strategies as potential victims can be advised as to how they can reduce their risk of victimisation.
Criticism: it can allow victim-blaming as the victim is seen as partly, or wholly, responsible for their own misfortune.

Realist

Focuses on the economic and social factors in which the victim finds themselves and identifies this as the main cause of their victimisation.
Application: it is argued that victimisation is a product of social inequality and oppression. It may encourage the use of victim support networks to alleviate lack of social care.
Criticism: it can be too ideological as it tries to see all forms of victimisation as arising from social injustice.

Critical

Tends to promotes a more questioning, analytical approach to victimisation.
It raises questions around the meaning and use of the term victim- what are the different labels that can be attached to victims and who has the power to apply them?
 It advocates a broader understanding of the needs and experiences of victims.
Application: it can identify whether a victim fits the 'Ideal' model and promotes an awareness of the complex needs of victims.

<u>Criticism</u>: it could be argued it can be a more abstract, philosophical approach to victims and as such it may not be obvious how it can have practical application.

Postscript

In looking at Realist and Critical Victimology we have also noted the nascent influence of feminist analysis in developing our understanding victims. Its significance has been noted elsewhere { e.g. Harne and Radford2008 and Wykes and Welsh 2009} but it, to briefly identify three key areas, it has highlighted the extent of gendered crime and the disproportionate impact on women, successfully campaigned for legislation and policy changes and finally, explained victimization as a process rather than an event.

Notes

1} Events have overtaken the title of this paper since the Policing Pledge was abolished with immediate effect by the Home Secretary Theresa May on 29th June , several weeks after the submission of this proposal. I have retained it as it captures the spirit of this article which is to show a gap between policy and practice and how it can be bridged.

2} Acknowledgement should be made to Michelle Hayles and Kevin Gorman who were the architects of the Police Studies course at Huddersfield University and were instrumental in both delivering and facilitating an innovative teaching programme. They are no longer involved in the programme and it has since being re validated.

2} There are, surprisingly, relatively few academic texts focusing on the recent developments in police training but one notable contribution is Selina Copley's Reflective Practice in Policing [Forthcoming February 2011]. Learning Matters Limited.

4] The National Victims' Service was created in January 2010 and aims to guarantee a better service for victims of crime and anti-social behaviour. This was created in response to a report 'Redefining Justice' by Sara Payne, who was appointed the Victim's Champion in 2009 for a twelve month period to review victim services. In March 2010 Louise Casey was appointed as the new, independent Victims' Commissioner which builds on the work of Sara Payne.{ www.justice .gov.uk/news/re;ease. Accessed 30/03/10}

5} The Fawcett Society and Women's Aid websites provide valuable and salutary information on domestic violence statistics as well its broadest effects. For further information see www.fawcettsociety.com and www.womensaid.com
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