Crime Reporting and Victimization Paper

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Author Note

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To develop a deeper understanding of victimization and violence is highly dependent on the accuracy and reliability of crime reporting data. Through information on various factors associated with the crime such as its frequency, affected population, the source of crime, or any relationship between the victim and the perpetrator helps provide deeper insights into victimization. In the paper, two key sources of crime reporting data will be explored along with a discussion of various victimization theories and associated terms along with its impact.

In the U.S., two main sources of crime data include the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) and the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). The NIBRS reports various aspects of crime such as the arrests in each incident, the characteristics of the offender and the victim, the location of the crime or the weapons used. It also includes information on arrests in connection with incidents along with any injuries sustained during the process. The system works to create a better understanding of the crime and the circumstances in which it occurs. The second reporting system, UCR, uses crime data to form policy decision. The various forms of crime reported within the system include burglary, rape, murder, theft and aggravated assault. The UCR is used by the FBI to devise policies, along with nearly 17000 other agencies, yet also has certain limitations which hinder its ability to analyze local crime (UCR Data, 2018).

In criminal justice, victimization plays an important role in developing an understanding of the victim's problems, which not only includes their initial loss, suffering or pain but also the psychological impacts of the crime that bring about certain changes in the victim's life ahead as a consequence. This information is consequential in creating a balance between reparation for the victim and the rehabilitation of the offender within the criminal justice system. Being a victim of a common crime such as being robbed at gunpoint leads to a series of negative consequences in the victim’s life, which may range from physical injuries, financial setbacks, or emotional trauma, such as PTSD, that can leave a lasting impact on their life. The study of victims, the overall impact of the crime, and its associated factors are important for criminologists to devise ways of countering that crime and develop ways of attending to their victims (Bosworth & Hoyle, 2012). The role of the victim is crucial to understanding the nature of various crimes besides offering ways to alleviate their anguish and suffering. It is particularly important because of the nature of the emotional trauma itself that can often stick to the victim for the rest of their life, and permanently alter their mental state. As a consequence, the entire community starts to suffer in some shape or form.

To understand victimization, criminologists rely on a range of theories. Four prominent theories in this regard include the lifestyle theory, victim participation theory, routine activity theory, and the deviant place theory. The lifestyle theory is based upon an understanding of the different lifestyle factors and choices that expose the victim to the crime and the perpetrator, as a result of engaging in a certain behavior or lifestyle choices. The victim’s participation theory relies upon the victim’s own perception and experience during the course of the crime, in order to discern certain behaviors by the victim which may lead to the crime (Meier & Miethe, 1993). Another theory in this regard is the routine activity theory which studies the routine situations that place the victim near a certain place or person thereby increasing their ‘availability’ to the perpetrator. Lastly, the deviant place theory understands victimizations through the victim’s exposure to potentially dangerous places wherein there is a greater likelihood of being subject to a crime, regardless of the victim’s actions or choices. Together, these theories can provide unique insights into the type and nature of the crime when analyzing crime data.

# References

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