

# VICTIMOLOGY TODAY

## RECENT THEORETICAL AND APPLIED DEVELOPMENTS

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Criminology today is very different from criminology at the end of the 19th century or the first half of the 20th century. And victimology is very different from victimology in the 1950's or the 1960's. Scientific disciplines undergo constant evolution, though the pace of change may vary from one discipline to the other. Victimology has undergone not only a rapid, but also rather fundamental, evolution in the last two decades.

Twenty years ago, in 1978 at the International Congress of Criminology held in Lisbon, Portugal, I presented a paper entitled "*Some Recent Theoretical Developments in Victimology*". The paper was published in the only victimological journal available at the time (*Victimology: An International Journal*, Vol.4, no.2, pp.198-213). In the paper, I pointed to the discipline's transformation from a 'victimology of the act' to a 'victimology of action'. I explained how in its beginning, victimology was essentially the victimology of specific crimes: victimology of violent crimes, i.e, homicide; victimology of sexual offences, i.e, rape; victimology of property crimes, i.e, burglary and fraud. These pioneer theoretical studies of early victimology were soon overshadowed by major developments in the applied field, well-intentioned and persistent endeavours aimed at alleviating the plight of crime victims, and at providing them with the services, aid and assistance that

would help them cope with, and recover from, the harmful and traumatic effects of victimization. The paper also made an attempt to explain the reasons for this transformation and the forces that played a vital role in bringing about the change.

So what has happened in victimology since that scientific meeting twenty years ago? The decades of the 1980's and 1990's could easily be described as a period of consolidation, data gathering theorization, new legislation, victim compensation, redress and mediation, assistance and support.

### II. CONSOLIDATION

In the last few years, the discipline of victimology firmly established itself on the academic scene. There was a substantial increase in the number of universities and colleges offering courses in victimology and related subjects. A large number of books and articles were published in different languages, and in addition to several periodicals published in local languages, an International Review of Victimology, in English, was put out by AB Academic Publishers in Britain. A number of national and regional societies of victimology were established. Japan has been one of the leaders in this respect, thanks to the tireless efforts of Professor Koichi Miyazawa, the world renowned victimologist, and a dynamic group of his students and followers.

The World Society of Victimology continued to hold its international symposia once every three years. The last one, the ninth in the series, was held in

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Amsterdam in August 1997, and drew a record number of participants. All in all, victimology is no longer a subject of bewilderment or curiosity but is slowly becoming a household name. This is being facilitated by the extensive coverage crime news and victim issues are receiving in the mass media; by the wide publicity victims' programs are getting and by the proliferation of victim services and victim assistance programs in many countries.

The last twenty years saw the creation and extremely rapid expansion of victim services. Victim assistance programs, totally non-existent a couple of decades ago, have mushroomed all over the globe from Australia to Europe, from South America to Asia, and from the large Islands of Japan to the relatively small Canary Islands.

One of the most important developments in the field of victimology in the last twenty years was the formal approval by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 11, 1985 of the "UN Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power". In adopting it, the General Assembly stated that it was "*Cognizant that millions of people throughout the world suffer harm as a result of crime and abuse of power; and that the rights of these victims have not been adequately recognized*".

### III. DATA GATHERING AND THEORY FORMULATION

One of the primary tasks of theoretical victimology is to collect empirical data on crime victims. The main instrument used at present to collect this information is victimization surveys. They are conducted at the local, regional, national and international level. Notable among these surveys are the ones that are carried out on a regular basis, at regular intervals, in England and the US: the British Crime

Survey and the National Crime Survey in the United States. Each of these surveys yields a wealth of information on crime victims. Both of them allow a thorough analysis of the temporal and spatial patterns and trends in various types of victimization. The original goal of these surveys, namely counting victimization, has been largely expanded and several new questions were added in recent years to the instrument to explore various areas such as the levels of fear of crime, the levels of satisfaction with police action, the reasons for not reporting the incident to the police, the consequences of victimization, etc.

Another area that was examined was the measures taken by the respondents to prevent certain types of offences, or to minimize the chances of future victimization. Some surveys tried to establish whatever link may exist between offending and victimization by including questions requesting respondents to self-report acts of delinquency they might have committed. These latter questions led to some very interesting findings.

In their London (England) survey, Sparks, Genn, and Dodd (1977) found victims of violent crime to be significantly more likely than non-victims to self-report the commission of violent crimes. Gottfredson (1984) analysed the 1982 British Crime Survey data and was struck by the relatively strong inter-relationship between offending and victimization. For persons with at least one self-reported violence offence, the likelihood of victimization was 42 percent, or seven times the likelihood of personal victimization for persons reporting no self-reported violent offences. The British Crime Survey of Scotland (Chambers and Tombs, 1984), revealed that 40 percent of respondents admitting an assault were themselves assault victims during that period.

Despite the methodological and practical problems of victimization surveys and despite their limitations, they have allowed researchers to collect a huge amount of data on victims of crime that is extremely rich in variety and detail. Thanks to victimization surveys we now know that criminality and victimization are clustered within certain groups and certain areas, and that there is much greater affinity between offenders and victims than is commonly believed. This is not to say that all victims of crime share the attributes of their victimizers. It is only to stress that the two populations have several common characteristics. Whether in Europe, the US, Canada or Australia, research showed that offenders involved in the types of crimes covered by victimization surveys are disproportionately male, young, urban residents, of lower socio-economic status, unemployed (and not in school), unmarried, and in the US, black. Victimization surveys revealed that victims disproportionately share these characteristics and that the demographic profiles of crime victims and of convicted criminals are strikingly similar (Gottfredson, 1984).

Several researchers (Hindelang et al., 1978; Singer, 1981) discovered that, particularly in crimes of assault, victims and offenders were related in their demographic characteristics and in terms of certain shared responses to perceived situations of physical or psychological threat. It is understandable that the frequency with which some individuals become involved in violence-prone situations will affect both their chances of using violence and of being recipients of violence, of attacking and being attacked, of injuring and being injured, of killing and being killed. Who will end up being the victim and who will be legally considered the offender depends quite often on chance factors rather than deliberate action, planning, or intent. Thus, victim/offender

roles are not necessarily antagonistic but are frequently complementary and interchangeable (Fattah, 1994d).

This situation is particularly true of brawls, quarrels, disputes, and altercations. In many instances, dangerousness and vulnerability may be regarded as the two sides of the same coin. They often coexist since many of the factors that contribute to dangerousness may create or enhance a state of vulnerability. One such factor is alcohol consumption, which may act simultaneously as a criminogenic and as a victimogenic factor, enhancing the potentiality of violent behaviour in one party and of violent victimization in the other (see Fattah and Raic, 1970).

An important step on the road to comparative victimology was achieved with the conducting of International Crime Surveys. The surveys are a useful attempt to collect standardized victimization data from a number of countries using the same questionnaire in each country. The main purpose was to avoid the problems of comparing data collected by means of different instruments, using different methodologies. Field data for this international crime survey were gathered in January 1989 and published in 1990 (Van Dijk, Mayhew and Killias, 1990). The size of each nationally representative sample varied between 1000 and 2000, though most participating countries opted for the larger size sample; the Federal Republic of Germany even chose 5000 interviews.

Telephone interviewing was chosen because of its relatively modest costs, and it was decided to use the computer-assisted telephone interviewing method (CATI method), which allows for much tighter standardization of questionnaire administration. Respondents were asked

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about their victimization experience with nine types of crimes over the previous five years, though victimization in 1988 was highlighted to give up-to-date annual risks. The nine crimes covered were theft of motor vehicles (cars, motorcycles and mopeds); theft from motor vehicles; vandalism to motor vehicles; burglary and attempted burglary; robbery and attempted robbery; other thefts of personal property; sexual assault (women only); and assault. Victims were then asked short questions about the nature and material consequences of crime; whether the police were involved (and if not, why not?); and their satisfaction with the police response and any victim assistance given.

A second round of the International Crime Survey was carried out in 1992. Some of the countries that participated in the first survey such as Switzerland, Norway and Northern Ireland did not take part in the second one. But the survey included some countries from Eastern Europe which did not participate in the first one, such as Poland and the former Czechoslovakia (see Del Frate et al., 1993).

Despite the proliferation of victimization surveys and their unquestionable utility, it is not yet clear what exactly they do measure and what are their long term objectives. Victimization is a personal subjective and relative experience. The feeling of being victimized does not always coincide with the legal definition of victimization. So what exactly are victimization surveys trying to measure? It is far from clear whether their objective is to measure those criminal victimizations that meet the criteria set by the criminal code, or whether they are meant to measure the subjective victimizations experienced by the respondents. These, needless to say, are two different realities. Or to put it bluntly, are the surveys designed to measure crime or

victimization? The titles 'crime survey' and 'victimization survey' continue to be used interchangeably (Fattah, 1997).

Rape is good case in point because of the enormous gap that may exist between the legal definition and the subjective experience of the female. Also because the sexual act can be experienced in very different ways by different women.

#### **A. Theoretical Models**

The wealth of data collected mainly through victimization surveys has led to various theoretical formulations. Models were developed to offer plausible explanations for the variations in victimization risks, for the clustering of victimization in certain areas and certain groups, and to unravel the intriguing phenomenon of repeat victimization. The different models are presented and summarized in my introductory victimology book entitled '*Understanding Criminal Victimization*' (Prentice Hall, 1991).

One of the first and more important models explaining the differential risks of victimization is the *Lifestyle Model* developed by Hindelang, Gottfredson and Garofalo (1978). To develop this explanatory model, the authors used empirical data gathered from an eight-city survey conducted by the United States Bureau of Census in the cities of Atlanta, Baltimore, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Newark, Portland (Oregon) and St. Louis in 1972. Hindelang et al. (1978) synthesized the findings and put forth some propositions to account for variations in risk and consequences of personal victimization. Their model posits that the likelihood an individual will suffer a personal victimization depends heavily on the concept of lifestyle.

Using lifestyle to explain variations in risk is neither a novel nor a unique approach. It has been known for a long time that the probability of accidental death or injury is, in many respects, related to people's lifestyle and the kind of activities in which they are involved. Physicians have repeatedly stressed the close link between lifestyle and routine activities, and the risk of suffering certain diseases such as cancer, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular ailments. As a matter of fact, the lifestyle concept permeates the explanations of a higher or lower susceptibility to a wide variety of diseases. We refer to lifestyle when we maintain that those who smoke have a higher risk of lung cancer than those who do not; that those who expose themselves, unprotected, to the sun have a greater probability of skin cancer; that those who drink heavily have a greater susceptibility to liver disease. Lifestyle is also the central concept in explanations linking dietary habits, the lack of exercise and a sedentary way of life, to heart disease. More recently, lifestyle has been identified as a major risk factor in contracting Aids. The belief that lifestyle can influence the probability of victimization by increasing or decreasing people's chances of becoming victims of certain crimes may be seen as a simple, and in many ways logical, extension of the concept to the social sphere.

Another explanatory model is the *Routine Activity Approach* developed by Cohen and Felson (1979). The focus in Cohen and Felson's approach is on "*direct-contact predatory violations*," which are those "*involving direct physical contact between at least one offender and at least one person or object which that offender attempts to take or damage*" (Cohen and Felson, 1979, p.589).

Cohen and Felson (1979) argue that the occurrence of these types of victimization

is the outcome of the conference in space and time of three minimal elements: motivated offenders, suitable targets, and absence of capable guardians. The central factors underlying the routine activity approach are opportunity, proximity/exposure, and facilitating factors. For example, the abundance of goods that can be stolen leads to higher rates of property victimization (opportunity). The dispersion of routine activities in the United States since the end of World War II has led to a substantial increase in predatory crime. This shift of routine activities away from the home, and the greater interaction between people who are not members of the same household results in greater exposure of people to potential offenders outside the home, and thus, increases the risk of direct-contact predatory crime (proximity/exposure). Concomitantly, the increasing absence from home leaves the residences insufficiently protected and renders them suitable and easy targets for common types of household victimization (facilitating factors : the absence of capable guardians).

These are by no means the only models. There is also the *Opportunity Model* (Cohen, Kluegel and Land, 1981) and the *Dutch Model* (Steinmetz). The opportunity model incorporates elements from both the lifestyle and routine activity perspectives and posits that the risk of criminal victimization depends largely on people's lifestyle and routine activities that bring them and/or their property into direct contact with potential offenders in the absence of capable guardians. The Dutch model was developed by Van Dijk and Steinmetz who identified three main factors: proximity, attractiveness and exposure, as important determinants of differential victimization risks.

In an attempt to integrate the various models into a comprehensive scheme I used ten different components. There are :

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- (1) *Opportunities*: which are closely linked to the characteristics of potential targets (persons, households, businesses) and to the activities and behavior of those targets.
- (2) *Risk factors*: particularly those related to socio-demographic characteristics such as age and gender, area of residence, absence of guardianship. Presence of alcohol and so forth.
- (3) *Motivated offenders*: this is because offenders, even non-professional ones, do not choose their victim/targets at random but select their victims/targets according to specific criteria.
- (4) *Exposure*: this is because exposure to potential offenders and to high-risk situations and environments enhances the risk of criminal victimization.
- (5) *Associations*: the homogeneity of the victim and offender populations suggests that differential association is as important to criminal victimization as it is to crime and delinquency. Thus individuals who are in close personal, social or professional contact with potential delinquents and criminals run a greater chance of being victimized than those who are not.
- (6) *Dangerous times and dangerous places*: the risks of criminal victimization are not evenly distributed in time or space - there are dangerous times such as evenings, early night hours and on weekends. There are also dangerous places such as places of public entertainment where the risks of becoming a victim are higher than at work or at home.
- (7) *Dangerous behaviors*: this is because certain behaviors, such as provocation, increase the risk of violent victimization while other behaviors such as negligence and carelessness enhance the chances of property victimization. There are other dangerous behaviors that place those engaging in them in dangerous situations where their ability to defend and protect themselves against attacks is greatly reduced.
- (8) *High-risk activities*: also increase the potential for victimization. Among such activities is the mutual pursuit of fun, as well as deviant and illegal activities. It is also well known that certain occupations such as prostitution carry with them a higher than average potential for criminal victimization.
- (9) *Defensive/avoidance behaviors*: as many risks of criminal victimization could be easily avoided, people's attitudes to those risks can influence their chance of being victimized. It goes without saying that risk-takers are bound to be victimized more often than risk-avoiders. It also means that fear of crime is an important factor in reducing victimization, since those who are fearful take more precautions against crime, even curtailing their day and night time activities, thus reducing their exposure and vulnerability to victimization.
- (10) *Structural/cultural proneness*: there is a positive correlation between powerlessness, deprivation and the frequency of

criminal victimization. Cultural stigmatization and marginalization also enhances the risk of criminal victimization by designating certain groups as 'fair game' or as culturally legitimate victims.

#### IV. NEW LEGISLATION

There has been a flurry of victim legislation in recent years in a large number of countries. Following the adoption of the UN Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims, so-called Victims' Charter of Rights or Victims' Bills of Rights were passed by the legislative bodies in various societies.

In the United States there was an attempt by the victim lobby to bring about a change to the Sixth Amendment of the US Constitution to provide a legal basis for protecting the rights of crime victims, but it did not succeed. However, as Karmen (1995, p339) reports, since 1980, in almost every American state, legislatures passed various statutes acknowledging basic rights for victims: to be notified about and to participate in judicial proceedings, to promptly get back stolen property that was recovered, to be protected from intimidation and harassment, and to receive restitution or compensation.

Similar legislation was passed in Canada, Australia, Britain and some other European countries. Also in Europe, victims received a considerable boost from a number of important initiatives in the mid-1980s, including a Convention and two important Recommendations by the Council of Europe in 1983, 1985 and 1987 (on, respectively, state compensation, the position of the victim in the criminal justice system, and assistance to victims) (Maguire and Shapland, 1997, p212).

While legislative initiatives and/or changes acknowledging victims rights were generally well received and encountered little or no opposition in parliaments and legislative assemblies, they are not without critics. In a seminal article entitled 'The Wrongs of Victim's Rights' Lynn Henderson (1985, 1992) outlined many of the weaknesses inherent in the notion of victim's rights and many of the dangers of victim's rights legislation.

One particular initiative that has received a great deal of criticism is 'victim impact statements'. VIS, designed to allow victims some input in the court's decision in their case (by providing a statement of the impact the victimization has had on their lives and their families), was singled out for particular criticism and encountered a lot of resistance from some quarters. In Australia, for example, after reviewing the arguments for and against victim impact statements, and after noting that many victims do not wish to be involved by giving evidence on the impact of offences on their lives, the Victorian Sentencing Committee concluded that the case against the introduction of VIS was more compelling than the case for them. Consequently, the Committee (1988) recommended that VIS not be adopted in Victoria (p.545) (Fattah, 1992, p416; see also Kelly and Erez, 1997, p236-7).

In the US, the Supreme Court barred victim impact testimony in capital cases as violating the Eight Amendment of the American Constitution (*Booth v. Maryland*, 1987, and *South Carolina v. Gathers*, 1989) and then in *Payne v. Tennessee* (1991) the court upheld the use of victim impact testimony at the sentencing stage of a capital case (Kelly and Erez, 1997, p235-6).

## V. VICTIM COMPENSATION

Redress to crime victims in the form of monetary compensation by the state is the first attempt in recent history to alleviate the plight of victims and to improve their lot. In the 1960s, a British magistrate, Margery Fry, and others called for State compensation to crime victims, and their pleas led to the creation of government indemnification programs in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, North America, Europe and elsewhere. These programs have been operating for more than a quarter of a century and many have been the subject of varying kinds of assessments and evaluation (Burns, 1980; Miers, 1978; Doerner, 1978; Elias, 1983).

This is without doubt an area where action has not matched the political rhetoric. Economic hardships and budgetary restraints have greatly limited the scope of compensation and the number of victims who receive it. The evaluations suggest that the amounts victims get from the schemes are, for the most part, token amounts, and that the programs in reality fulfill no more than a symbolic function. A very tiny proportion of victims end up receiving any compensation, and for those who do, it is, more often than not, too little and too late. Ironically, researchers (Elias, 1983a, 1983b) found that victims who apply for and go through the process of compensation, even those who end up receiving some funds, are less satisfied than those who do not apply. In England, David Miers (1983, 1990), quoted by Maguire and Shapland (1997, p218) argued that state compensation is essentially a symbolic act by governments to show their concern for victims, but with little real intention of following it through with hard cash.

Most victims of property crime, who are excluded from state compensation

schemes, do not have and cannot afford private insurance. In four out of five cases in these property crimes, the culprit is neither identified nor caught. And the few who are arrested, charged and convicted are, more often than not, poor or insolvent, so that nothing could be obtained from them through a civil judgement. And to add insult to injury, in most countries the collection of criminal fines continues to have priority over the payment of civil damages or of restitution/compensation orders.

In recent years, several governments decided to transfer the financial burden of victim compensation to offenders through a levy called 'a victim fine surcharge' imposed on those who are sentenced to a fine even if the sentence is for so-called victimless crime (Fattah, 1997).

## VI. OFFENDER RESTITUTION

Restitution by the offender to the victim is one of the earliest forms of redress to those who suffer injury or harm through the actions or negligence of another. This was the composition or *wergeld* paid to the victim or the victim's kin. Parker (1977, p28) describes the historical development that led to the emergence of the criminal law:

*At this stage of legal development there was no differentiation between what we know as crime or criminal law and tort or civil liability for damage inflicted. All injuries to persons or property were considered as 'wrongs'. The seriousness of the wrong depended upon the disruption caused to the community or the actual or perceived affront to the injured parties. Slowly, a distinction emerged between wrongs which were private disputes and required payment to the injured party or his kin and wrongs*

*which had a public quality and required compensation to the whole group.*

Since state compensation programs are often strictly limited to victims of violence, restitution by the offender has reemerged as a means of redress in property offences as well as in violent crimes. The problem is that the vast majority of offenders are either unemployed or do not have the financial means that would make it possible for victims to collect restitution. Added to this problem is the fact that in many countries the collection of the penal fine takes priority over restitution orders.

There are different models of restitution. Maguire and Shapland (1997, p219) outline three models that are common in Europe:

*The 'partie civile' procedure, the award of a compensation order as part of a sentence against the offender, and restitution made informally or as part of a diversion arrangement by the prosecution. The first two models have tended to be seen as mutually exclusive in jurisprudential terms, so that one country has favoured one and another; though the Netherlands is currently considering introducing compensation orders while retaining the possibility of using 'partie civil'.*

Citing the results of evaluation of a number of local schemes conducted in different countries, Maguire and Shapland (1997, p221) write:

*The conclusions seem universal. Financial restitution figures in only a small proportion of the cases sent for mediation (the majority ending with an apology or in some contract concerning the offender's behavior). Mediation cases themselves remain very much a minority disposal in*

*terms of the flow of criminal justice cases overall. The dominant model is still prosecution, or some form of discontinuance (such as a formal caution in England and Wales), sometimes accompanied by work with the offender - but rarely involving the victim.*

## VII. VICTIM SERVICES

The last twenty years have witnessed an unprecedented development in the field of victim services. Victim services have been called the growth industry of the decade. The expansion of service programs for victims of crime in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and many other countries has been nothing short of phenomenal. During the 1980s and the 1990s, legislation was passed, services were created, and programs were set up, all aimed at helping crime victims and improving their often unhappy lot (Fattah, 1992, p260). In the UK, it is considered the fastest developing voluntary movement (see National Association of Victims Support Schemes, 1984). In 1990, Davis and Henley estimated the number of victim service programs in the United States to be in excess of 5,000, whereas 20 years earlier there had been none (p157).

Most assistance programs, particularly those housed in police departments, refer victims, according to their needs, to existing services within the community. Some, in addition, provide victims with urgently needed help: replacing the broken window, the damaged lock, fixing the vandalised car, driving, cleaning, shopping, helping with the children and so forth. There are also various programs that provide special assistance to certain categories of victims, for example, victims of rape, child victims of sexual assault, victims of family violence, etc. Rape crisis centres and shelters for battered women

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are currently operating in many places. Overall, however, the two most important services provided to crime victims by victims assistance programs are information and moral support.

Despite enormous strides, a great deal remains to be done. Maguire and Pointing (1988, p37) note that victim support remains essentially a 'grassroots', low budget enterprise which relies upon the good will and hard work of volunteers. Shapland, Willmore and Duff (1985, p178) maintain that the major projects aimed at fulfilling victims' needs were set up without regard to, or even investigation of, victims' expressed needs. Rock (1990, p408) insists that victims' interests were never the motivating or mobilizing force behind the new initiatives to help victims. Mawby and Gill (1987, p228) detected a right wing, law and order focus among victim support scheme volunteers. They expressed concerns that crime victims might become 'the victims of political expediency'. While Elias (1993, p120) affirms that victims' services really serve official needs, not victims' needs.

### IX. CONCLUSION

I have tried to present a bird's eye view of recent developments in victimology, both theoretical and applied. Victimology has made enormous strides in the past twenty years. As a result of ongoing studies and research, we now possess a better knowledge than ever before of the phenomenon of victimization and of those who are occasionally, frequently or repeatedly victimized. We have adequate knowledge of the distribution of victimization in time and space, of the dynamics of victimization, of the process of victim/target selection, and we have several theoretical models that are meant to explain the variations in victimization risks.

More progress has even been achieved at the applied level. The victim movement has been very successful in sensitizing politicians, policy makers, the criminal justice system and the general public to the plight of crime victims. This has resulted in a flurry of legislation aimed at improving the sad lot of crime victims and at recognizing and implementing some basic rights for crime victims. Many steps have been taken to increase victim participation in criminal justice proceedings, to improve the treatment of victims by criminal justice personnel, and to allow the victims some input in criminal justice decisions.

There have been many other developments at the applied level. In many countries, state programs to compensate crime victims were set up. Restitution by the offender is being ordered in a growing number of cases, particularly in cases of economic crimes, white collar crime, and property victimization. A paradigm shift is slowly shaping up in criminal justice and the growing realization of the futility of punitive/retributive justice is facilitating the acceptance of the new paradigm of restorative justice. Restitution by the offender (to the victim) is increasingly becoming one of the primary conditions of diversion and of probation, both in the juvenile and adult systems.

Programs for victim-offender mediation both in serious as well as in minor offences have been established in many countries and in most cases, making amends by repairing the harm done to the victim is one of the primary conditions of successful resolution of the conflict.

Victim services, practically non-existent two decades ago, are becoming widespread not only in the wealthy countries of the industrialized world, but also in many developing countries. Assistance, in various forms, though mostly by well-

intentioned volunteers, is being offered to victims who desire it. Special assistance to certain categories of victims, such as victims of rape, child victims of sexual assault, and victims of family violence is now available in many places. Shelters for battered women and children have been opened to help victims avoid the repetition of victimization. Special counselling programs are also made available to the families of victims of homicide.

It can thus be concluded that the achievements have been many and in some instances nothing short of spectacular. But the road remains long and paved with obstacles. A great deal remains to be done in order to meet the challenge to victim services in the next millennium.