

MONITORING VICTIM NEEDS AND VICTIM PROGRAMMES

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In the 1970s and early 1980s, the development of victimisation surveys was dominated by the national victimisation surveys, starting with the National Crime Survey in the USA in the late 1960s. With some initial hesitation, but with growing enthusiasm, national governments established national victimisation surveys to run in parallel with the official criminal statistics from the police, prosecution and/or courts. In some countries, the role of official statistics as an index of the social health of the country has now essentially been displaced by the national victimisation survey, leaving the official statistics to be regarded as a set of performance and workload measures for the criminal justice system.

Today, victimisation surveys have become far more varied in their scope and purposes. They range from the international, comparative survey typified by the International Victimisation Survey², to city surveys, to small-scale surveys of individual residential neighbourhoods, or industrial and commercial estates. Their users and the policies for which they are adopted have also multiplied. Yet it will be argued that the parameters of victimisation surveys are still dominated by those set by national surveys - to the detriment of their use in monitoring and evaluating victim services.

In this paper, an evaluation of the development of national surveys will be made to assess and monitor victim needs and victim programmes, followed by the more recently developed surveys at the local level. Finally, the potential of victimisation surveys to assess, monitor and evaluate victim programmes will be speculated upon in an attempt to set out their limitations and their place in an evaluation strategy.

In all of this, victim services are taken to have a very broad remit. Some will be direct services to those who have become victims, including victim support and assistance, compensation and financial redress, medical services, police services and procedures, crime prevention advice to victims and so forth. Others include the policies and programmes adopted by national and local government, statutory and voluntary agencies, and the commercial and industrial sector in regard to crime awareness campaigns and advice to victims and potential victims, community development and design/architectural programmes for local areas, risk management policies for companies, and the role of insurance. They include the whole of the victim-oriented crime prevention measures set out by van Dijk³, as well as much of what is taught in security, risk management and good auditing practice in business management schools.

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² van Dijk, J.J.M., P. Mayhew and M. Killias (1990) *Experiences of crime across the world; key experiences of the 1989 International Crime Survey*, Kluwer, Deventer, the Netherlands.

³ van Dijk, J.J.M. (1990) "Future perspectives regarding crime and criminal justice" Report to the fourth conference on crime policy, Council of Europe, 9-11 May 1990, Strasbourg.

There is one major problem in attempting to survey current developments and future possibilities over this area. It is that, although national and international survey results are reasonably easily available for many parts of the world, descriptions of initiatives at more local levels are often not published and, if they are, these are very difficult to obtain. The development of victim services, as shall be seen, has suffered as much from the lack of dissemination of good practice (stemming from a corresponding lack of evaluation in many instances), as it has from any intrinsic difficulties in the kinds of programmes being envisaged. Reinventing the wheel, for local development projects, and for commercial risk management, is commonplace.

It is therefore necessary to concentrate largely here upon developments in Western Europe, and in particular in the United Kingdom. The author is well aware that the speed of development of different kinds of victim services varies widely throughout the world, and also suspects that many kinds of services are far better developed elsewhere - or have taken different forms. However, it is believed that some of the difficulties of using victimisation surveys are universal, so, although the examples presented here show a definite Anglo-Saxon bias, hopefully what they highlight will be of wider application.

National surveys - purposes and uses

The original purpose of national victimisation surveys was clearly to count crime⁴. Policy makers - politicians and civil servants - were interested in how much crime there was, where it was, and what kinds of people became victims, in order to work out how to develop a better policy for combatting crime. Victims were the means by which criminal incidents could be explored and policy produced. They were not objects of interest in their own right. This is clearly shown by the base units used in the presentation of results from such national surveys (and although the examples from the British Crime Survey - the national victimisation survey of England and Wales - will be cited here, it is true of all national victimisation surveys).

The major findings from the most recent published sweep of the British Crime Survey⁵ are given in terms of numbers of crimes of each type surveyed that have been revealed by the survey to have occurred over that time period (one year). They hence do not reveal the experience of victims over that time period, including multiple victimisation, and the likelihood (and effects) of being the victim of several different kinds of crime. Where risks of victimisation are given, they are in terms of prevalence of victimisation - the likelihood of becoming a victim for the initial time that year. In other words, current national victimisation surveys atomise the experience of victims by type of crime, and by limited time periods.

Moreover, national victimisation surveys, in general, concentrate upon certain types of crime (personal and household crimes) and certain types of victim

⁴ Shapland, J. (1987) "Victimisation surveys: towards the future", *Urban renaissance in Europe*, in *Local strategies for the reduction of urban insecurity in Europe* No. 35, Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

⁵ Mayhew, P., D. Elliott and L. Dowds (1989) *The 1988 British Crime Survey*, Home Office Research Study No. 11, HMSO, London.

(residents). Unlike the tendency towards atomisation, this is not a consequence of their main purpose. Rather, it seems to reflect the state of criminology at the time at which these surveys were started and the concentration then upon the major legal categories of personal and residential crime with which the criminal justice system was concerned. Since then, local victimisation surveys have included the more recently dominant issues of domestic and sexual assault, and crimes against public and commercial property⁶ - but the need to retain previous definitions of crime in the national survey in order to be able to give trend data has made it difficult to change national surveys.

Through using victims to count crimes, in fact, those organising and using national surveys fairly quickly became attuned to the potential of such surveys to do more than just count. The more recent purposes for national surveys have in fact tended to eclipse the counting function. They are, first, to obtain the views and experiences of those who have become victims (and indeed the general population) in relation to the effects of the offence, the precautions they took (and will take), and, secondly, to conduct a consumer survey in relation to the agents of the criminal justice system victims encountered as a result of being victimised⁷. The advent of victimisation surveys meant that, for the first time, a means was available to policy makers to find out what consumers and the general public thought about criminal justice policy. No longer did policy have to be produced only using professional groups, the media and experts (such as criminologists). The consumerist ideology had reached criminal policy.

Strangely, however, the consumerist questions included in the surveys, although directed at victims, rarely concerned the needs of victims. Instead, victims were asked to pronounce on the police, the courts, sentencing, crime prevention, safety at work, etc. - in other words, on the policy preoccupations of national policy makers at that time. Again, this is a consequence of the way in which such questionnaires are formulated and, particularly, of the fact that national victimisation surveys are extremely expensive. Almost all such surveys have been done using face-to-face methods (since postal questionnaires have low response rates, and telephone ones are only slightly cheaper). The considerable resource implications mean that space in the questionnaire is limited, has to reflect the major policy preoccupations of the funder (i.e. for national surveys, the government), and that the surveys are only undertaken sporadically (annually, or less often), so that only one set of questions is used.

Essentially, a number of factors have combined to ensure that, although the second and third purposes of national surveys are now the major ones (tapping victim experiences, and consumerism), the corollary - that they might be used as primary tools to explore victim needs and the potential for victim services - has rarely happened.

⁶ Jones, T., B. Maclean and J. Young (1986) *The Islington Crime Survey*, Gower, London; Johnston, V., M. Leek, J. Shapland and P. Wiles (forthcoming) *Crime and other problems on industrial estates*, Crime Prevention Unit Paper, Home Office, London (also currently available Stages 2 and 3 Report from Faculty of Law, Sheffield University); Hibberd, M. and J. Shapland (1993) *Violent crime and disorder in small shops*, Police Foundation, London.

⁷ Shapland, *Victimisation...*, op. cit.

The potential of national surveys to reveal victim needs and guide victim services

In what ways could national surveys be used to reveal victim needs? The Council of Europe Recommendation on Victim Assistance⁸ suggested that victim surveys could be the prime means by which the scope and nature of victim services might be planned. Through their counting crime function (but modified to count numbers of victims and overall victimisation) they could indicate the population which might be in need of such services. Through looking at major demographic variables (urbanisation, sex, socio-economic status, regionalisation), it would be possible to specify the likely maximum take-up rate of such services. Through fine-tuning this through questions on the type of effects people suffer and their likely sources of help, it will be possible to plan how the service should be delivered. Through repeating the questions after the service has started, likely growth rates can be estimated.

For example, take the case of residential burglary and compare it with robbery. The numbers of residential burglary victims and robbery victims can be estimated from the survey. Their concentration in different parts of the country, cities, rural areas etc. can also be ascertained. Through asking questions about effects of the offence, the proportion of victims suffering emotional, financial and practical difficulties over different periods of time can be estimated. It will be found that burglary victims are relatively numerous and, although concentrated in urban areas, are sufficiently prevalent in rural areas that it may be sensible to set up services all over the country. On the other hand, the effects of the offence are less serious and long-lasting than those on robbery victims (who are smaller in number and, until recently in Britain, were concentrated in urban areas). A city-based service of automatic referral with more professional input may be needed for robbery victims (together with liaison with employers, since many are victimised at work), whereas a more generalist service, employing volunteers and reaching out to inform the proportion of burglary victims that would benefit, may be more suitable for burglary victims.

This direct use of national victimisation surveys to inform policy development for victim services is relatively rare, though Maguire and Corbett's evaluation of victim needs and victim support schemes used questions in the British Crime Survey⁹.

More common is the use of victimisation surveys to inform policy makers about the general parameters of victimisation and so indirectly influence the setting-up of victim services. In fact, much victim service development has stemmed directly from this kind of expose research, though victimisation surveys have, to date, been less influential than more targeted studies involving interviews. However, the extent of racially motivated crime, and the astonishing amount of crime at work where individuals are victims has been demonstrated by the British Crime Survey¹⁰. The

⁸ Council of Europe (1987) Recommendation No. R (87) 21 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on Assistance to Victims and the Prevention of Victimisation, Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

⁹ Maguire, M. and C. Corbett (1987) *The effects of crime and the work of victim support schemes*, Gower, Aldershot.

¹⁰ Mayhew et al., *The 1988...*, op. cit.

only national victimisation survey for business crime has been done in the Netherlands¹¹, which found that around 50% of the costs of crime was falling on business.

More localised surveys

In contrast to the national picture, there has been a recent explosion of victimisation surveys at a more localised level, most specifically designed to inform policy making on victim services. We can distinguish three major purposes for such surveys (though most such studies are not quite so clear about why they are using them!):

- to provide information about the extent of the problem in general in order to consider whether there should be any policy started;
- to provide information in order to assist the setting up of the service;
- to evaluate a service which has already commenced.

This can be allied to what has been found to be the most effective model of service delivery for services to the public. It can be expressed colloquially as aim - ready - fire. The first element, aim, involves realising that such a service is needed, and then (ideally, though often this does not happen) researching the need for the service, and formulating its goals so that clear, need-related aims are established, the performance of which can be measured. The second, ready, encompasses working out exactly how those aims can be realised, including how it is possible to evaluate what is happening, to see whether the aims have been achieved, and to document how the service was set up, so that it can be replicated elsewhere if successful. The third, fire, is the process of actually making the service occur (project management), including (again ideally, and often not in practice) carrying out the evaluation and periodically reviewing the usefulness of what has been done.

All too often, those instituting services have jumbled up these stages, moving straight from realising there is a problem to instituting something - anything - to try to help. The aims of the service have never been formulated precisely and no evaluation occurs, so that when, sometime later, the service hits some crisis (funding changes or dries up, the nature of the need changes, the service needs to undertake a major territorial or organisational expansion), it is extremely difficult for the service (and its funders) to know what it has done or where it is going. This process, unfortunately typical in the victim services field (including crime prevention and community development generally) can be described as aim - fire - ready!

To assess the need for a service

Many agencies have used small, local victimisation surveys to assess the need for a particular service they offer. So, for example, community development and crime prevention/community safety agencies have used victimisation surveys to find out what kinds of crime affect the area in which they are thinking of working, and to

¹¹ van Dijk, J.J.M. and P. van Soomerom (1988) *Bedrijfsleven en criminaliteit*, WODC, Ministry of Justice, The Hague.

help them to draw up their action plan. The government-financed Safer Cities Programme and Priority Estates Programme in Great Britain have, as part of their recommended structure for developing work in each city, the need to carry out a small victimisation survey in the area. The major evaluations of each of these programmes (which will include the initial victimisation survey data) are yet to be published. NACRO, however, has used small victimisation surveys, together with discussion groups, on several of its projects, for example in Leicester, when presenting to the project's steering group the information necessary for that multi-agency group to decide what to do about the difficulties of the area¹². This type of enquiry, of which this is a typical example (though better written up and presented than many), involved questioning 216 people living in a small area of some 2,808 households as to their views of the problems of the area, their worry about crime, their experience of crime, their views on policing, their views on local agencies, their ideas of measures to reduce crime and their own demographic characteristics (age, employment, etc.).

¹² NACRO (1988) Leicester Spinney Hill Crime Survey: report to the steering committee, NACRO Inner Cities Community Safety Unit, London.

- *Local surveys: difficulties and solutions*

The major difficulties of using victimisation surveys in local crime reduction/community development projects are their cost and the skills that those designing, administering and analysing them need to have. It is necessary to survey a minimum of at least four to five households per road to illustrate street-level and design-based variation in crime, and total samples must be sufficient to produce enough victims to establish victimisation rates for the crimes being surveyed. Hence, in Great Britain, it is necessary to survey around 400 households to obtain reliable data on residential burglary rates. The problem becomes worse if the survey is to be used in a before-and-after evaluation of the success of the measures taken, when one is attempting to show changes in crime rates¹³.

As far as very localised services are concerned (for example, many victim support services and those delivering crime prevention advice to victims), the numbers problem reaches a critical level. Essentially, it is impossible to gain an adequate count of victimisation by sampling the population, because it is so small, and the only way is to look at victimisation over long-term periods. Here victimisation surveys may not be so useful as police or other records to count crime - because people's memories will not be reliable that far back, or because it is a mobile, rapidly changing population. However, victimisation surveys still have their place - but now their primary purpose must be as means of fleshing out the bare numerical crime/victimisation data provided by other sources. They are still essential to consider how victimisation took place, who is being affected and what effects there were, who is thought to have been responsible, and what reactions there will be to different solutions. If they are being used for these means, however, the numbers of people sampled can be smaller - just enough to provide this qualitative input for each street or population group important to the proposed service. It may be best to mix these geographically-determined samples with interviews of those in crucial positions in the community. As far as community safety plans are concerned, pilot studies to discover the most useful methods have been undertaken by Shapland et al. on targeted crime reduction and Skogan and Lurigio on community antidrug initiatives¹⁴.

Even having solved the numbers and financing problems, victimisation surveys remain a problematic method for many local groups because of the skills required to do them. Designing and analysing surveys of samples beyond 100 people requires some training and access to computers - both of which are not often prevalent amongst local groups and agencies. One solution attempted in several countries is to mount one demonstration project, for which the national agency/government provides the funding for a professional researcher/evaluator, and then to write this up fully so that other groups can use that experience. This obviously helps considerably with the major questions of whether there is any need for such a service at all, and whether the mode adopted is at all beneficial - but it

¹³ For a discussion on these methodological factors see: Bennett, T. (1987) An evaluation of two neighbourhood watch schemes in London, Institute of Criminology, Cambridge.

¹⁴ Shapland, J., P. Wiles and P. Wilcox (forthcoming) "Targetted crime reduction for local areas" *Crime Prevention Unit Paper*, Home Office, London; Skogan, W. and A. Lurigio (1992) "The correlates of community antidrug activism" *Crime and Delinquency* 38:510-21.

does not solve the problem for the local group of how to analyse their own local conditions and how to modify the demonstration project to cater for them. It is wishful thinking to suppose that finance will be available to provide trained help to all worthy local groups, even supposing that enough trained researchers/evaluators (i.e. action researchers) exist in the country.

It is now essential to set up a structure to enable local groups to gain sufficient skills to be able to use small-scale victimisation surveys themselves. This would involve the construction of "how to do it" packs, including sample questionnaires of different types (for the most common victim services), and hot-line support from national/sub-national centres of expertise on sample selection and analysis (including low-cost training workshops)¹⁵. Local groups need to be empowered to use victimisation surveys, rather than holding the mystique solely within professional research groups. Yet it is also necessary for the professional researchers to develop the technique and to consider its effectiveness for different topics - to continue to develop standards. This development of structures is necessary both at the stage of assessing the need for victim services and at the stage of evaluating them (see below).

- *Finding out about new victim needs*

The other major use of victimisation surveys at the stage of researching the need for the service is when an entirely new problem has arisen and its size and characteristics must be ascertained. This is a relatively common use of victimisation surveys - not surprisingly, given that if the problem affects the public, the public will probably have useful information as to its nature and what they are already doing to try to combat it (and what their expectations of official action are).

These studies are usually specially designed for this purpose and are carried out by professional researchers (often funded by governments). They are, therefore, usually published and relatively available - indeed they are part of the process of thinking about and informing solutions, motivating agencies to consider what they should do.

There are many examples, of which space permits only one major one (though others would be the effect of architectural design on victimisation, arson, crime in schools, effects of drugs and drug-related crime). In Britain, for instance, the whole question of victimisation of companies, victimisation of employees at work, and the health and safety issues surrounding violence at work has recently been opened up by victimisation surveys. The Home Office Standing Conference on Crime Prevention's Working Group on the Costs of Crime pioneered the issue through a survey of the 114 large companies listed as the major stocks in the financial markets, together with a number of public utilities, to find out the cost of crime to them¹⁶. A number of trade unions have undertaken surveys of their members as to

¹⁵ Shapland et al., *Targetted...*, op. cit.

¹⁶ Home Office (1988) *Standing conference on crime prevention: report of the working group on the costs of crime*, Home Office, London.

the amount of violence at work¹⁷. A major survey of crime on industrial estates funded partly by government, partly by a major landlord, showed the high extent of victimisation through burglary of such industrial premises (higher per unit than the figures for residential burglary per household), though also the very low rate of violent crime in manufacturing and wholesaling, as opposed to retail, premises¹⁸. Another survey showed the extremely high rates of robbery, till-snatches and threatening behaviour towards employees in small retail premises¹⁹. Similar work has been done in the Netherlands. Taken together, these surveys have started to reveal our astonishing ignorance of the extent of crime committed in commercial and industrial premises, its economic costs, and the effects on people in their working lives (as opposed to our much greater understanding of their experiences of crime in their domestic lives).

- *Working out the type of service to be offered*

Victimisation surveys have rarely been used specifically at the design stage of victim services, although often a preliminary survey, the major aim of which is to consider the need, contains some questions to inform the choice of the type of service. Community development projects are perhaps the best at realising the need for such questions, since they have learned that unless the service caters for the needs of residents as they experience them, and meets their priorities, then it may well be rejected. In other words, they have learned that there needs to be consultation with the potential users of the service. Unfortunately, it is the local groups who are most likely to realise the need for consultation who are most afflicted by financial difficulties and lack of skill in carrying out such a survey (as discussed above). Therefore, not many published examples exist of surveys used in designing services.

It is now, however, becoming more common for national programmes to realise that it is wise to take into account potential users' expectations before setting up new services (or making major changes). Though the political timescale between realising the need (aim!) and instituting the service (fire!) is still extremely short, there is sometimes enough time to put into place some element of design including a survey (ready!), at least before the whole national programme is irretrievably under way and fixed in one form. More often, however, surveys occur at the re-design stage, after an evaluation has shown some lack in the current service being provided (low take-up, or aims not achieved). This is currently taking place in Britain in several police forces, for example, in relation to Neighbourhood Watch. Neighbourhood Watch is the formal setting up of residents' groups in a neighbourhood, allied to police input, to encourage residents to report to the police suspicious activities by potential burglars. Although a very large number of schemes have been set up and the public is well aware of its existence and supports it (as shown in British Crime Survey results), the amount of police resources needed to

¹⁷ USDAW (1989) Violence to staff: report of a survey by the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, USDAW Legal Services, Manchester.

¹⁸ Johnston et al., Crime..., op. cit.

¹⁹ Hibberd and Shapland, Violent crime..., op. cit.

support it and the lack of measurable results in a number of evaluations of crime rates and public levels of fear of crime²⁰ have resulted in new surveys and activity to work out what is the best way to proceed. The difficulty lies in encouraging and directing it in the most effective way in the high crime areas, without allowing lower crime areas to demand too much from scarce police resources (and without really annoying those areas by withdrawing police support completely).

Evaluation of victim services

Local services have rarely evaluated the service they offer - and have even more rarely used victimisation surveys. This is part of the general culture which, in Britain and in many other countries, has produced a gulf between practitioners running such services and academics/researchers capable of doing the evaluations. In Britain, through major governmental pressure for "value for money" and "effectiveness and efficiency", the culture is now changing relatively rapidly. Agencies now have to evaluate themselves and their services in order to justify further funds in many instances, and are beginning to feel that evaluation might be of benefit in any event. Academics/researchers are becoming more interested in taking on such work. The impression is that this is culture change is not confined to Britain (though it may be taking a more extreme form there). At this point in time, however, it is often still not "the done thing" for agencies to publish their own evaluations - and so there are almost no published examples. Moreover, due to the skills/finance gaps identified above, the trend in evaluation is to use performance indicators, rather than user surveys (the use of user surveys as a performance indicator is now being identified by the police, but few have been carried out and published²¹).

Evaluations of specimen or national programmes which use surveys are also beginning to appear. An early example was Maguire and Corbett's evaluation of the service being offered by Victim Support to individual victims²². This provided powerful evidence of the perceived benefit to individual victims, though it found it much more difficult to quantify the extent to which victim support improved the "recovery" time of victims. It also evaluated different methods of service delivery, finding that outreach personal visits to people's houses were the best method to overcome the diffidence victims felt in bothering someone else with their problems, and any misapprehensions they had. Telephone calls could be resented, whereas letters had a much lower take-up.

More recently, Maguire and Corbett have also evaluated users' (victims') perceptions of the police complaints system, finding widespread disenchantment with both the delays (as they experienced it) in processing complaints and the lack of information about what was happening, and the result²³.

²⁰ Bennett, An evaluation..., op. cit.

²¹ Joint Consultative Committee (1990) Operational policing review, Police Federation, Surbiton; Shapland, J., P. Wiles and M. Leek (1990) Policing in Sussex: a public survey, Faculty of Law, Sheffield.

²² Maguire and Corbett, The effects..., op. cit.

²³ Maguire and Corbett, The effects..., op. cit.

Shapland et al. and Newburn and de Peyrecave have evaluated the methods for compensating victims, including compensation orders from offenders, ordered as part of the offender's sentence by the court and the state Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme²⁴. Victims were generally positive about both methods at the time, though compensation orders were found by Shapland et al. to be perceived as being more appropriate and preferred, as indicating the offender's responsibility for the injury/loss caused. In both cases, there was a perceived lack of information from the official agencies, which, combined with some bureaucratic procedures, caused dismay and concern.

The first results from the community safety project, Priority Estates, which incorporates design and management changes for high crime run-down housing estates, have been provided by Hope and Foster²⁵. They show how such changes, which are appreciated by residents, can have complicated effects on the patterns of crime and victimisation on the local area. They can cause changes in population such that the improved areas become more stable (and have lower crime rates and happier residents), whereas the "next-door" unimproved areas can acquire more labile, criminogenic populations, and a more criminal culture (and higher crime rates, though not necessarily, overall, a more unhappy population).

There are many other examples of victimisation surveys being used as essential tools in evaluating victim service programmes. The surveys go far beyond simply monitoring take-up rates; they indicate the effects of programmes and the ways in which their clients/users see them as operating. Indeed, unless they are seen as two-way communication and as having the potential for modification of the programme, it is increasingly unlikely that the sophisticated and empowered consumers of the 1990s will agree to participate in them. Victimisation surveys are one of the most powerful tools for evaluating victim services - but they also allow the voice of the user to be heard. And, once expressed, that voice can usually not be silenced - it has to be answered. If victimisation surveys are used, then services can no longer be designed or managed by governments, practitioners or experts alone: the user is a partner too. No one has yet fully explored or realised the ramifications of this on the nature and design of victim services.

²⁴ Shapland, J., J. Wilmore and P. Duff (1985) Victims in the criminal justice system, Gower, Aldershot; Newburn, T. and H. de Payrecave (1988) "Victims attitudes to courts and compensation" *Home Office Research Bulletin* 25:18-21.

²⁵ Hope, T. and J. Foster (1992) "Conflicting forces: changing the dynamics of crime and community on a 'problem' estate" *British Journal of Criminology* 32:4.

PART THREE

Discussion

