CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO VICTIMOLOGY

WHAT IS VICTIMOLOGY?

The term *victimology* is not new. In fact, Benjamin Mendelsohn first used it in 1947 to describe the scientific study of crime victims. Victimology is often considered a subfield of criminology, and the two fields do share much in common. Just as criminology is the study of criminals—what they do, why they do it, and how the criminal justice system responds to them—victimology is the study of victims. **Victimology,** then, is the study of the etiology (or causes) of victimization, its consequences, how the criminal justice system accommodates and assists victims, and how other elements of society, such as the media, deal with crime victims. Victimology is a science; victimologists use the scientific method to answer questions about victims. For example, instead of simply wondering or hypothesizing why younger people are more likely to be victims than are older people, victimologists conduct research to attempt to identify the reasons why younger people seem more vulnerable.

THE HISTORY OF VICTIMOLOGY: BEFORE THE VICTIMS' RIGHTS MOVEMENT

As previously mentioned, the term victimology was coined in the mid-1900s. Crime was, of course, occurring prior to this time; thus, people were being victimized long before the scientific study of crime victims began. Even though they were not scientifically studied, victims were recognized as being harmed by crime, and their role in the criminal justice process has evolved over time.

Before and throughout the Middle Ages (about the 5th through the 16th century), the burden of the justice system, informal as it was, fell on the victim. When a person or property was harmed, it was up to the victim and the victim's family to seek justice. This was typically

achieved via retaliation. The justice system operated under the principle of **lex talionis,** an eye for an eye. A criminal would be punished because he or she deserved it, and the punishment would be equal to the harm caused. Punishment based on these notions is consistent with **retribution.** During this time period, a crime was considered a harm against the victim, not the state. The concepts of restitution and retribution governed action against criminals. Criminals were expected to pay back the victim through **restitution.** During this time period, a criminal who stole a person's cow likely would have to compensate the owner (the victim) by returning the stolen cow and also giving him or her another one.

Early criminal codes incorporated these principles. The **Code of Hammurabi** was the basis for order and certainty in Babylon. In the code, restoration of equity between the offender and victim was stressed. Notice that the early response to crime centered on the victim, not the state. This focus on the victim continued until the Industrial Revolution, when criminal law shifted to considering crimes violations against the state rather than the victim. Once the victim ceased to be seen as the entity harmed by the crime, the victim became secondary. Although this shift most certainly benefited the state—by allowing it to collect fines and monies from these newly defined harms—the victim did not fare as well. Instead of being the focus, the crime victim was effectively excluded from the formal aspects of the justice system.

Since then, this state-centered system has largely remained in place, but attention—at least from researchers and activists—returned to the crime victim during the 1940s. Beginning in this time period, concern was shown for the crime victim, but this concern was not entirely sympathetic. Instead, scholars and others became preoccupied with how the crime victim contributes to his or her own victimization. Scholarly work during this time period focused not on the needs of crime victims but on identifying to what extent victims could be held responsible for being victimized. In this way, the damage that offenders cause was ignored. Instead, the ideas of victim precipitation, victim facilitation, and victim provocation emerged.

■ THE ROLE OF THE VICTIM IN CRIME: VICTIM PRECIPITATION, VICTIM FACILITATION, AND VICTIM PROVOCATION

Although the field of victimology has largely moved away from simply investigating how much a victim contributes to his or her own victimization, the first forays into the study of crime victims were centered on such investigations. In this way, the first studies of crime victims did not portray victims as innocents who were wronged at the hands of an offender. Rather, concepts such as victim precipitation, victim facilitation, and victim provocation developed from these investigations. **Victim precipitation** is defined as the extent to which a victim is responsible for his or her own victimization. The concept of victim precipitation is rooted in the notion that, although some victims are not at all responsible for their victimization, other victims are. In this way, victim precipitation acknowledges that crime victimization involves at least two people—an offender and a victim—and that both parties are acting and often reacting before, during, and after the incident. Identifying victim precipitation does not necessarily lead to negative outcomes. It is problematic, however, when it is used to blame the victim while ignoring the offender's role.

Similar to victim precipitation is the concept of victim facilitation. **Victim facilitation** occurs when a victim unintentionally makes it easier for an offender to commit a crime.

A victim may, in this way, be a catalyst for victimization. A woman who accidentally left her purse in plain view in her office while she went to the restroom and then had it stolen would be a victim who facilitated her own victimization. This woman is not blameworthy—the offender should not steal, regardless of whether the purse is in plain view or not. But the victim's actions certainly made her a likely target and made it easy for the offender to steal her purse. Unlike precipitation, facilitation helps understand why one person may be victimized over another but does not connote blame and responsibility.

Photo Credit: © Ilona Habben/Corbis.

PHOTO 1.1

A bar fight breaks out after a man yells an insult at the other. By yelling an insult, the victim is precipitating the victimization.

Contrast victim facilitation with victim provocation. **Victim provocation** occurs when a person does something that incites another person to commit an illegal act. Provocation suggests that without the victim's behavior, the crime would not have occurred. Provocation, then, most certainly connotes blame. In fact, the offender is not at all responsible. An example of victim provocation would be if a person attempted to mug a man who was walking home from work and the man, instead of willingly giving the offender his wallet, pulled out a gun and shot the mugger. The offender in this scenario ultimately is a victim, but he would not have been shot if not for attempting to mug the shooter. The distinctions between victim precipitation, facilitation, and provocation, as you probably noticed, are not always clear-cut. These terms were developed, described, studied, and used in somewhat different ways in the mid-1900s by several scholars.

RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES

On November 5, 2013, two armed robbers entered a Reading, Pennsylvania, convenience store and stole cash, cigarettes, and lottery tickets. They got more than they bargained for! After leaving the store with their loot, a friend of the owner of the store confronted them, and the two robbers then raised their gun at him. In response, the man then pulled out his own weapon and shot both of the robbers in the chest. Both of the robbers were pronounced dead at the scene. What do you think about this incident? Was the man justified in shooting the robbers? Was this victim facilitation? Precipitation? Provocation? What do you think about one of the friends of the robbers who said, "they should have thought about this before going"?

Source: Adapted from Bayliss, K., & Chang, D. (2013, November 5). Man shoots, kills 2 armed robbers: Police. http://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/2-Shot-Killed-in-Attempted-Robbery-230539261.html.

Hans von Hentig

In his book *The Criminal and His Victim: Studies in the Sociobiology of Crime*, **Hans von Hentig** (1948) recognized the importance of investigating what factors underpin why certain people are victims, just as criminology attempts to identify those factors that produce criminality. He determined that some of the same characteristics that produce crime also produce victimization. We will return to this link between victims and offenders in Chapter 3, but for now, recognize that one of the first discussions of criminal victimization connected it to offending.

In studying victimization, then, von Hentig looked at the criminal-victim dyad, thus recognizing the importance of considering the victim and the criminal not in isolation but together. He attempted to identify the characteristics of a victim that may effectively serve to increase victimization risk. He considered that victims may provoke victimization—acting as agents provocateurs—based on their characteristics. He argued that crime victims could be placed into one of 13 categories based on their propensity for victimization: (1) young; (2) females; (3) old; (4) immigrants; (5) depressed; (6) mentally defective/deranged; (7) the acquisitive; (8) dull normals; (9) minorities; (10) wanton; (11) the lonesome and heartbroken; (12) tormentor; and (13) the blocked, exempted, and fighting. All these victims are targeted and contribute to their own victimization because of their characteristics. For example, the young, the old, and females may be victimized because of their ignorance or risk taking, or may be taken advantage of, such as when women are sexually assaulted. Immigrants, minorities, and dull normals are likely to be victimized due to their social status and inability to activate assistance in the community. The mentally defective or deranged may be victimized because they do not recognize or appropriately respond to threats in the environment. Those who are depressed, acquisitive, wanton, lonesome, or heartbroken may place themselves in situations in which they do not recognize danger because of their mental state, their sadness over a lost relationship, their desire for companionship, or their greed. Tormentors are people who provoke their own victimization via violence and aggression toward others. Finally, the blocked, exempted, and fighting victims are those who are enmeshed in poor decisions and unable to defend themselves or seek assistance if victimized. An example of such a victim is a person who is blackmailed because of his behavior, which places him in a precarious situation if he reports the blackmail to the police (Dupont-Morales, 2009).

Benjamin Mendelsohn

Known as the "father of victimology," **Benjamin Mendelsohn** coined the term for this area of study in the mid-1940s. As an attorney, he became interested in the relationship between the victim and the criminal as he conducted interviews with victims and witnesses and realized that victims and offenders often knew each other and had some kind of existing relationship. He then created a classification of victims based on their culpability, or the degree of the victim's blame. His classification entailed the following:

1. *Completely innocent victim:* a victim who bears no responsibility at all for victimization; victimized simply because of his or her nature, such as being a child
2. *Victim with minor guilt:* a victim who is victimized due to ignorance; a victim who inadvertently places himself or herself in harm's way

3. *Victim as guilty as offender/voluntary victim:* a victim who bears as much responsibility as the offender; a person who, for example, enters into a suicide pact
4. *Victim more guilty than offender:* a victim who instigates or provokes his or her own victimization
5. *Most guilty victim:* a victim who is victimized during the perpetration of a crime or as a result of crime
6. *Simulating or imaginary victim:* a victim who is not victimized at all but, instead, fabricates a victimization event

Mendelsohn's classification emphasized degrees of culpability, recognizing that some victims bear no responsibility for their victimization, while others, based on their behaviors or actions, do.

Stephen Schafer

One of the earliest victimologists, **Stephen Schafer** (1968) wrote *The Victim and His Criminal: A Study in Functional Responsibility.* Much like von Hentig and Mendelsohn, Schafer also proposed a victim typology. Using both social characteristics and behaviors, his typology places victims in groups based on how responsible they are for their own victimization. In this way, it includes facets of von Hentig's typology based on personal characteristics and Mendelsohn's typology rooted in behavior. He argued that people have a functional responsibility not to provoke others into victimizing or harming them and that they also should actively attempt to prevent that from occurring. He identified seven categories and labeled their levels of responsibility as follows:

1. Unrelated victims—no responsibility
2. Provocative victims—share responsibility
3. Precipitative victims—some degree of responsibility
4. Biologically weak victims—no responsibility
5. Socially weak victims—no responsibility
6. Self-victimizing—total responsibility
7. Political victims—no responsibility

Marvin Wolfgang

The first person to empirically investigate victim precipitation was **Marvin Wolfgang** (1957) in his classic study of homicides occurring in Philadelphia from 1948 to 1952. He examined some 558 homicides to see to what extent victims precipitated their own deaths. In those instances in which the victim was the direct, positive precipitator in the homicide, Wolfgang labeled the incident as victim precipitated. For example, the victim in such an incident would be the first to brandish or use a weapon, the first to strike a blow, or the first to initiate physical violence. He found that 26% of all homicides in Philadelphia during this time period were victim precipitated.

PHOTO 1.2

Marvin Wolfgang studied homicides in Philadelphia and found that about a quarter were victim precipitated. He has been recognized as one of the most influential criminologists in the English-speaking world (Kaufman, 1998).

Photo Credit: University of Pennsylvania.

Beyond simply identifying the extent to which homicides were victim precipitated, Wolfgang also identified those factors that were common in such homicides. He determined that often in this kind of homicide, the victim and the offender knew each other. He also found that most victim-precipitated homicides involved male offenders and male victims and that the victim was likely to have a history of violent offending himself. Alcohol was also likely to play a role in victim-precipitated homicides, which makes sense, especially considering that Wolfgang determined these homicides often started as minor altercations that escalated to murder.

Since Wolfgang's study of victim-precipitated homicide, others have expanded his definition to include felony-related homicide and subintentional homicide. **Subintentional homicide** occurs when the victim facilitates his or her own demise by using poor judgment, placing himself or herself at risk, living a risky lifestyle, or using alcohol or drugs. Perhaps not surprising, a study of subintentional homicide found that as many as three-fourths of victims were subintentional (Allen, 1980).

Menachem Amir

The crime of rape is not immune from victim-blaming today, and it certainly has not been in the past either. **Menachem Amir,** a student of Wolfgang's, conducted an empirical

FOCUS ON RESEARCH

Even though the first study examining victim precipitation and homicide was published in 1957, this phenomenon is being examined in contemporary times as well. In recent research examining 895 homicides that occurred in Dallas, Texas, Muftić and Hunt (2013) found that 48.9% (n = 438) were victim precipitated. They further found that homicides in which the victim had a previous history of offending were more likely to be victim precipitated than homicides in which the victim had no such history.

Source: Adapted from Muftić, L. R., & Hunt, D. E. (2013). Victim precipitation: Further understanding the linkage between victimization and offending in homicide. *Homicide Studies, 17,* 239–254.

investigation into rape incidents that were reported to the police. Like Wolfgang, he conducted his study using data from Philadelphia, although he examined rapes that occurred from 1958 to 1960. He examined the extent to which victims precipitated their own rapes and also identified common attributes of victim-precipitated rape. Amir labeled almost 1 in 5 rapes as victim precipitated. He found that these rapes were likely to involve alcohol, the victim was likely to engage in seductive behavior, likely to wear revealing clothing, likely to use risqué language, and she likely had a bad reputation. What Amir also determined was that it is the offender's interpretation of actions that is important, rather than what the victim actually does. The offender may view the victim—her actions, words, and clothing—as going against what he considers appropriate female behavior. In this way, the victim may be viewed as being "bad" in terms of how women should behave sexually. He may then choose to rape her because of his misguided view of how women should act, because he thinks she deserves it, or because he thinks she has it coming to her. Amir's study was quite controversial—it was attacked for blaming victims, namely women, for their own victimization. As you will learn in Chapter 8, rape and sexual assault victims today still must overcome this view that women (since such victims are usually female) are largely responsible for their own victimization.

■ THE HISTORY OF VICTIMOLOGY: THE VICTIMS' RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Beyond the attention victims began to get based on how much they contributed to their own victimization, researchers and social organizations started to pay attention to victims and their plight during the mid-1900s. This marked a shift in how victims were viewed not only by the public but also by the criminal justice system. As noted, scholars began to examine the role of the victim in criminal events, but more sympathetic attention was also given to crime victims, largely as an outgrowth of other social movements.

FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Even though the field of Victimology has moved beyond the early typologies put forth by von Hentig and others, victimology still is concerned with victim precipitation, provocation, and facilitation. Consider the case of Ahmed Hassan, a 24-year-old man, who was shot and killed at a Toronto, Canada, shopping mall on June 2, 2012. Christopher Husbands, aged 23, shot him and injured six others. Although the exact motives behind the murder are not known, it is believed that Husbands and Hassan were members of a gang, known as Sic Thugs. Husbands had previously been attacked by Hassan and other members of Sic Thugs. He was tied up with duct tape and tortured in a bathtub in an empty public-housing apartment. According to the typologies you have learned about, how did Hassan contribute, if at all, to his own victimization?

Source: Adapted from Mertl, S. (2012, June 12). Toronto Eaton Centre shooting shines light on Canada's gang problem. *The Daily Brew.* Retrieved from http://ca.news.yahoo.com/blogs/dailybrew/toronto-eaton-centre-shooting-shines-light-canada-gang-202058661.html.

During the 1960s, concern about crime was growing. This time period saw a large increase in the amount of crime occurring in the United States. As crime rates soared, so too did the number of people directly and indirectly harmed by crime. In 1966, in response to the growing crime problem, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice was formed. One of the commission's responsibilities was to conduct the first-ever government-sponsored victimization survey, called the **National Crime Survey** (which later became the National Crime Victimization Survey). This survey is discussed in depth in Chapter 2. Importantly, it showed that although official crime rates were on the rise, they paled in comparison with the amount of victimization uncovered. This discrepancy was found because official data sources of crime rates are based on those crimes reported or otherwise made known to the police, whereas the National Crime Survey relied on victims to recall their own experiences. Further, victims were asked in the survey whether they reported their victimization to the police and, if not, why they chose not to report. For the first time, a picture of victimization emerged, and this picture was far different than previously depicted. Victimization was more extensive than originally thought, and the reluctance of victims to report was discovered. This initial data collection effort did not occur in a vacuum. Instead, several social movements were underway that further moved crime victims into the collective American consciousness.

The Women's Movement

One of the most influential movements for victims was the **women's movement.** In recognition that victimizations such as sexual assault and domestic violence were a byproduct of sexism, traditional sex roles, emphasis on traditional family values, and economic subjugation of women, the women's movement took on as part of its mission helping female victims of crime. Feminists were, in part, concerned with how female victims were treated by the criminal justice system and pushed for victims of rape and domestic violence to receive special care and services. As a result, domestic violence shelters and rape crisis centers started appearing in the 1970s. Closely connected to the women's movement was the push toward giving children rights. Not before viewed as crime victims, children were also identified as being in need of services, as they could be victims of child abuse, could become runaways, and could be victimized in much the same ways as older people. The effects of victimization on children were, at this time, of particular concern.

Three critical developments arose from the recognition of women and children as victims and from the opening of victims' services devoted specifically to them. First, the movement brought awareness that victimization often entails emotional and mental harm, even in the absence of physical injury. To address this harm, counseling for victims was advocated. Second, the criminal justice system was no longer relied on to provide victims with assistance in rebuilding their lives, thus additional victimization by the criminal justice system could be lessened or avoided altogether. Third, because these shelters and centers relied largely on volunteers, services were able to run and stay open even without significant budgetary support (Young & Stein, 2004).

The Civil Rights Movement

Also integral to the development of victims' rights was the **civil rights movement.** This movement advocated against racism and discrimination, noting that all Americans have rights

protected by the U.S. Constitution. The civil rights movement, as it created awareness of the mistreatment of minorities, served as a backdrop for the **victims' rights movement** in that it identified how minorities were mistreated by the criminal justice system, both as offenders and victims. The ideologies of the women's movement and the civil rights movement merged to create a victims' rights movement largely supported by females, minorities, and young persons who pushed forward a victims' agenda that concentrated on making procedural changes in the operation of the criminal justice system (Smith, Sloan, & Ward, 1990).

■ CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE VICTIMS' RIGHTS MOVEMENT

We will discuss the particulars of programs and services available for crime victims today in Chapter 6, but to understand the importance of the victims' rights movement, its contributions should be outlined.

Early Programs for Crime Victims

In the United States, the first crime victims' compensation program was started in California in 1965. Victim compensation programs allow for victims to be financially compensated for uncovered costs resulting from their victimization. Not long after, in 1972, the first three victim assistance programs in the nation, two of which were rape crisis centers, were founded by volunteers. The first prototypes for what today are victim/witness assistance programs housed in district attorneys' offices were funded in 1974 by the Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. These programs were designed to notify victims of critical dates in their cases and to create separate waiting areas for victims. Some programs began to make social services referrals for victims, providing them with input on criminal justice decisions that involved them, such as bail and plea bargains, notifying them about critical points in their cases—not just court dates—and going to court with them. Victim/witness assistance programs continue to provide similar services today.

Development of Victim Organizations

With women and children victims and their needs at the forefront of the victims' rights movement, other crime victims found that special services were not readily available to them. One group of victims whose voices emerged during the 1970s was persons whose loved ones had been murdered—called secondary victims. After having a loved one become a victim of homicide, many survivors found that people around them did not know how to act or how to help them. As one woman whose son was murdered remarked, "I soon found that murder is a taboo subject in our society. I found, to my surprise, that nice people apparently just don't get killed" (quoted in Young & Stein, 2004, p. 5). In response to the particular needs of homicide survivors, Families and Friends of Missing Persons was organized in 1974 and Parents of Murdered Children was formed in 1978. Mothers Against Drunk Driving was formed in 1980. These groups provide support for their members and others but also advocate for laws and policy changes that reflect the groups' missions. The National Organization for Victim Assistance was developed in 1975 to consolidate the purposes of the victims' movement and eventually to hold national conferences and provide training for persons working with crime victims.

Legislation and Policy

In 1980, Wisconsin became the first state to pass a Victims' Bill of Rights. Also in 1980, the National Organization for Victim Assistance created a new policy platform that included the initiation of a National Campaign for Victim Rights, which included a National Victims' Rights Week, implemented by then president Ronald Reagan. The attorney general at the time, William French Smith, created a Task Force on Violent Crime, which recommended that a President's Task Force on Victims of Crime be commissioned. President Reagan followed the recommendation. The President's Task Force held six hearings across the country from which 68 recommendations on how crime victims could be better assisted were made. Major initiatives were generated from these recommendations.

1. Federal legislation to fund state victim compensation programs and local victim assistance programs
2. Recommendations to criminal justice professionals and other professionals about how to better treat crime victims
3. Creation of a task force on violence within families
4. An amendment to the U.S. Constitution to provide crime victims' rights (yet to be passed)

As part of the first initiative, the Victims of Crime Act (1984) was passed and created the Office for Victims of Crime in the Department of Justice and established the Crime Victims Fund, which provides money to state victim compensation and local victim assistance programs. The Crime Victims Fund and victim compensation are discussed in detail in Chapter 6. The Victims of Crime Act was amended in 1988 to require victim compensation eligibility to include victims of domestic violence and drunk-driving accidents. It also expanded victim compensation coverage to nonresident commuters and visitors.

Legislation and policy continued to be implemented through the 1980s and 1990s. The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, passed in 1994 by Congress, included the Violence Against Women Act. This law provides funding for research and for the development of professional partnerships to address the issues of violence against women. Annually, the attorney general reports to Congress the status of monies awarded under the act, including the amount of money awarded and the number of grants funded. The act also mandates that federal agencies engage in research specifically addressing violence against women.

In 1998, a publication called *New Directions From the Field: Victims' Rights and Services for the 21st Century* was released by then attorney general Janet Reno and the Office for Victims of Crime. This publication reviewed the status of the recommendations and initiatives put forth by President Reagan's task force. It also identified some 250 new recommendations for victims' rights, victim advocacy, and services. Also integral, during the 1990s, the federal government and many states implemented victims' rights legislation that enumerated specific rights to be guaranteed to crime victims. These rights will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6, but some basic rights typically afforded to victims include the right to be present at trial, to be provided a waiting area separate from the offender and people associated with the offender during stages of the criminal justice process, to be notified of key events in the criminal justice

process, to testify at parole hearings, to be informed of rights, to be informed of compensation programs, and to be treated with dignity and respect. These rights continue to be implemented and expanded through various pieces of legislation, such as the Crime Victims' Rights Act, which is part of the Justice for All Act of 2004 signed into law by then president George W. Bush. Despite this push among the various legislatures, a federal victims' rights constitutional amendment has not been passed. Some states have been successful in amending their constitutions to ensure that the rights of crime victims are protected, but the U.S. Constitution has not been similarly amended. Various rights afforded to crime victims through these amendments are outlined in Chapter 6.

■ VICTIMOLOGY TODAY

Today, the field of victimology covers a wide range of topics, including crime victims, causes of victimization, consequences of victimization, interaction of victims with the criminal justice system, interaction of victims with other social service agencies and programs, and prevention of victimization. Each of these topics is discussed throughout the text. As a prelude to the text, a brief treatment of the contents is provided in the following subsections.

The Crime Victim

To study victimization, one of the first things victimologists needed to know was who was victimized by crime. In order to determine who victims were, victimologists looked at official data sources—namely, the Uniform Crime Reports—but found them to be imperfect sources for victim information because they do not include detailed information on crime victims. As a result, victimization surveys were developed to determine the extent to which people were victimized, the typical characteristics of victims, and the characteristics of victimization incidents. The most widely cited and used victimization survey is the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

From the NCVS and other victimization surveys, victimologists discovered that victimization is more prevalent than originally thought. Also, the "typical" victim was identified—a young male who lives in urban areas. This is not to say that other people are not victimized. In fact, children, women, and older people are all prone to victimization. These groups are discussed in detail in later chapters. In addition, victimologists have uncovered other vulnerable groups. Homeless individuals, persons with mental illness, disabled persons, and prisoners, all have been recognized as deserving of special attention given their victimization rates. Special populations vulnerable to victimization are discussed in Chapter 11.

The Causes of Victimization

It is difficult to know why a person is singled out and victimized by crime. Is it something he did? Did an offender choose a particular individual because she seemed like an easy target? Or does victimization occur because somebody is simply in the wrong place at the wrong time? Perhaps there is an element of "bad luck" or chance involved, but victimologists have developed some theories to explain victimization. Theories are sets of propositions that explain phenomena. In relation to victimology, victimization theories explain why some

people are more likely than others to be victimized. As you will read in Chapter 2, the most widely utilized theories of victimization are routine activities theory and risky lifestyles theory. In the past two decades, however, victimologists and criminologists alike have developed additional theories and identified other correlates of victimization both generally and to explain why particular types of victimization, such as child abuse, occur.

Costs of Victimization

Victimologists are particularly interested in studying victims of crime because of the mass costs they often incur. These **costs of victimization** can be tangible, such as the cost of stolen or damaged property or the costs of receiving treatment at the emergency room, but they can also be harder to quantify. Crime victims may experience mental anguish or other more serious mental health issues such as posttraumatic stress disorder. Costs also include monies spent by the criminal justice system preventing and responding to crime and monies spent to assist crime victims. An additional consequence of victimization is fear of being a victim. This fear may be tied to the actual risk of being a victim or, as you will read about in Chapter 4, with the other consequences of victimization.

Recurring Victimization

An additional significant cost of victimization is the real risk of being victimized again that many victims face. Unfortunately, some victims do not suffer only a single victimization event but, rather, are victimized again and, sometimes, again and again. In this way, a certain subset of victims appears to be particularly vulnerable to revictimization. Research has begun to describe which particular victims are at risk of recurring victimization. In addition, theoretical explanations of recurring victimization have been proffered. The two main theories used to explain recurring victimization are state dependence and risk heterogeneity. Recurring victimization is discussed in Chapter 5.

The Crime Victim and the Criminal Justice System

Another experience of crime victims that is important to understand is how they interact with the criminal justice system. As is discussed in detail in Chapter 4, many persons who are victimized by crime do not report their experiences to the police. The reasons victims choose to remain silent, at least in terms of not calling the police, are varied but often include an element of suspicion and distrust of the police. Some victims worry that police will not take them seriously or will not think what happened to them is worth the police's time. Others may be worried that calling the police will effectively invoke a system response that cannot be erased or stopped, even when the victim wishes not to have the system move forward. An example of such a victim is one who does not want to call the police after being hit by her partner because she fears the police will automatically and mandatorily arrest him. Whatever the reason, without a report, the victim will not activate the formal criminal justice system, which will preclude an arrest and also may preclude the victim from receiving victim services explicitly tied to reporting.

When victims do report, they then enter the world of criminal justice, a world in which they are often seen as witnesses rather than victims, given that the U.S. criminal justice system

recognizes crimes as harms against the state. This being the case, victims do not always find they are treated with dignity and respect, even though the victims' rights movement stresses the importance of doing so. The police are not the only ones with whom victims must contend. If an offender is apprehended and charged with a crime, the victim will also interact with the prosecutor and perhaps a judge. Fortunately, many police departments and prosecutors' offices offer victim assistance programs through which victims can receive information about available services. These programs also offer personal assistance and support, such as attending court sessions with the victim or helping submit a victim impact statement. The experience of the crime victim after the system is put into motion is an area of research ripe for study by victimologists. It is important to understand how victims view their interactions with the criminal justice system so that victim satisfaction can be maximized and any additional harm caused to the victim can be minimized. The criminal justice response will be discussed throughout this text, especially since different victim types have unique experiences with the police.

The Crime Victim and Social Services

The criminal justice system is not the only organization with which crime victims may come into contact. After being victimized, victims may need medical attention. As a result, emergency medical technicians, hospital and doctor's office staff, nurses, doctors, and clinicians may all be persons with whom victims interact. Although some of these professionals will have training or specialize in dealing with victims, others may not treat victims with the care and sensitivity they need. To combat this, sometimes victims will have persons from the police department or prosecutor's office with them at the hospital to serve as mediators and provide counsel. Also to aid victims, many hospitals and clinics now have sexual assault nurse examiners, who are specially trained in completing forensic and health exams for sexual assault victims.

In addition to medical professionals, mental health clinicians also often serve victims, as large numbers of victims seek mental health services after being victimized. Beyond mental health care, victims may use the services of social workers or other social service workers. But not all persons with whom victims interact as a consequence of being victimized are part of social service agencies accustomed to serving victims. Crime victims may seek assistance from insurance agents and repair and maintenance workers. Crime victims may need special accommodations from their employers or schools. In short, being victimized may touch multiple aspects of a person's life, and agencies, businesses, and organizations alike may find themselves in the position of dealing with the aftermath, one to which they may not be particularly attuned. The more knowledge people have about crime victimization and its impact on victims, the more likely victims will be satisfactorily treated.

Prevention

Knowing the extent to which people are victimized, who is likely targeted, and the reasons why people are victimized can help in the development of prevention efforts. To be effective, prevention programs and policies need to target the known causes of victimization. Although the offender is ultimately responsible for crime victimization, it is difficult to change offender

behavior. Reliance on doing so limits complete prevention, since victimization involves at least two elements—the offender and the victim—that both need to be addressed to stop crime victimization. In addition, as noted by scholars, it is easier to reduce the opportunity than the motivation to offend (Clarke, 1980, 1982). Nonetheless, offenders should be discouraged from committing crimes, likely through informal mechanisms of social control. For example, colleges could provide crime awareness seminars directed at teaching leaders of student organizations how to dissuade their members from committing acts of aggression, using drugs or alcohol, or engaging in other conduct that could lead to victimization.

In addition to discouraging offenders, potential victims also play a key role in preventing victimization. Factors that place victims at risk need to be addressed to the extent that victims can change them. For example, since routine activities and lifestyles theories identify daily routines and risky lifestyles as being key risk factors for victimization, people should attempt to reduce their risk by making changes they are able to make. Other theories and risk factors related to victimization should also be targeted (these are discussed in Chapter 2). Because different types of victimization have different risk factors—and, therefore, different risk-reduction strategies—prevention will be discussed in each chapter that deals with a specific victim type.

As victimology today focuses on the victim, the causes of victimization, the consequences associated with victimization, and how the victim is treated within and outside the criminal justice system, this text will address these issues for the various types of crime victims. In this way, each chapter that deals with specific types of victimization—such as sexual victimization and intimate partner violence—will include an overview of the extent to which people are victimized, who is victimized, why they are victimized, the outcomes of being victimized, and the services provided to and challenges faced by victims. The specific remedies in place for crime victims are discussed in each chapter and also in a stand-alone chapter.

SUMMARY

- The field of victimology originated in the early to mid-1900s, with the first victimologists attempting to identify how victims contribute to their own victimization. To this end, the concepts of victim precipitation, victim facilitation, and victim provocation were examined.
- Hans von Hentig, Benjamin Mendelsohn, and Stephen Schafer each proposed victim typologies that were used to classify victims in terms of their responsibility or role in their own victimization.
- Marvin Wolfgang and Menachem Amir conducted the first empirical examinations of victim precipitation. Wolfgang studied homicides in Philadelphia, and Amir focused on forcible rapes. Wolfgang found that 26% of homicides were victim precipitated. Amir concluded that 19% of forcible rapes were precipitated by the victim.
- The victims' rights movement gained momentum during the 1960s. It was spurred by the civil rights and women's movements. This time period saw the recognition of children and women as victims of violence. The first victim services agencies were developed in the early 1970s.
- The victims' rights movement influenced the development of multiple advocacy groups, such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Families and Friends of Missing Persons, and Parents of Murdered Children.

- Important pieces of legislation came out of the victims' rights movement, including the Victims of Crime Act, the Violence Against Women Act, and the Crime Victims' Rights Act. Many states have victims' rights amendments and/or legislation that guarantee victim protections.
- Victimology today is concerned with the extent to which people are victimized, the different types of victimization they experience, the causes of victimization, the consequences associated with victimization, the criminal justice system's response to victims, and the response of other agencies and people. Victimology is a science—victimologists use the scientific method to study these areas.
- As victimologists become aware of who is likely to be victimized and the reasons for this, risk-reduction and prevention strategies can be developed. These should target not only offender behavior, but also opportunity. In this way, victims can play an important role in reducing their likelihood of being victimized.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Compare and contrast victim precipitation, victim facilitation, and victim provocation.
2. Why do you think the first explorations into victimization in terms of explaining why people are victimized centered not on offender behavior but on victim behavior?
3. What are the reasons behind labeling crimes as acts against the state rather than against victims?
4. How does the victims' rights movement correspond to the treatment of offenders and rights afforded to offenders?
5. Does examining victim behavior when attempting to identify causes of victimization lead to victim blaming? Is it wrong to consider the role of the victim?

KEY TERMS

victimology
lex talionis
retribution
restitution
Code of Hammurabi
victim precipitation
victim facilitation
victim provocation
Hans von Hentig
Benjamin Mendelsohn
Stephen Schafer
Marvin Wolfgang
subintentional homicide
Menachem Amir
National Crime Survey
women's movement
civil rights movement
victims' rights movement
costs of victimization

INTERNET RESOURCES

An Oral History of the Crime Victim Assistance Field Video and Audio Archive (http://vroh.uakron.edu/index.php)

This website contains information from the Victim Oral History Project, intended to capture the development and evolution of the crime victims' movement. You will find video clips of interviews with more than 50 persons critical to this movement, in which they discuss their contributions to and perspectives of the field.

Crime in the United States (http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2013/crime-in-the-u.s.-2013)

The Federal Bureau of Investigation compiles all the information for both the Uniform Crime Reports and National Incident-Based Reporting System. The information is then put into several annual publications, such as *Crime in the United States* and *Hate Crime Statistics*. The data for these statistics are provided by nearly 17,000 law enforcement agencies across the United States. This website provides the crime information for 2013.

Crime Prevention Tips (http://www.crimepreventiontips.org/)

This website provides many tips on how to reduce your chances of becoming a crime victim. There is also a section to help you determine whether you have been a crime victim. Some of the prevention tips specifically address how to be safer when you use public transportation and on college campuses.

The American Society of Victimology (http://www.american-society-victimology.us)

This organization advances the discipline of victimology by promoting evidence-based practices and providing leadership in research and education. The website contains information about victimology and victimologists. This organization looks at advancements in victimology through research, practice, and teaching.