



PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**END OF SEMESTER EXAMINATION FOR THE DEGREE OF
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN CRIMINOLOGY AND SECURITY
LEADERSHIP**

JANUARY-APRIL 2024 SEMESTER

CAMPUS: ROYSAMBU

DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

COURSE CODE: BSCL 412

COURSE TITLE: PRACTICE OF VICTIMOLOGY

EXAM DATE:

DURATION: 3 HOURS

TIME:

INSTRUCTIONS

- Read the instructions and questions carefully before you write the answers.
- **Answer any TWO questions**
- *ALL PAC University's examination rules and regulations apply*

QUESTION ONE

- (a) Provide a comparative appreciation of Victimology and Criminology (10 Marks)

(b) Citing relevant examples explain the following terms

(i) Victim Trauma (3 Marks)

(ii) Vulnerability (4 Marks)

(iii) Victimization
(3 Marks)

QUESTION TWO

(a) Melvin Lerner discovered that people generally assume that good things happen to good people and bad things to bad people. Drawing examples from Kenya, discuss this 'universal moral balance belief' in relation to reaction to victimization (10 Marks)

(b) Using any FOUR theories of Restorative Justice, appreciate the argument that restorative justice is victim-oriented (10 Marks)

QUESTION THREE

(a) List any SIX characteristics of an Ideal victim according to Christie, (1968) which makes him or her (more often her) the ideal person to be victimised. (10 Marks)

(b) Compare and contrast any FIVE perspectives and theories in victimological phenomena (10 Marks)

MARKING SCHEME

QUESTION ONE

- (a) Provide a comparative appreciation of Victimology and Criminology (10 Marks)

“Victimology” is an academic scientific discipline which studies data that describes phenomena and causal relationships related to victimizations. This includes events leading to the victimization, the victim’s experience, its aftermath and the actions taken by society in response to these victimizations. Therefore, victimology includes the study of the precursors, vulnerabilities, events, impacts, recoveries, and responses by people, organizations and cultures related to victimizations.

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Criminology is simply a science of crime.

Criminology is the body of knowledge regarding crime as a social phenomenon. It includes within its scope the processes of making laws, of breaking laws, and of reacting towards the breaking of laws . . . The objective of Criminology is the development of a body of general and verified principles and of other types of knowledge regarding this process of law, crime and treatment. (Sutherland and Cressey, 1955: 3). As with all scientific disciplines, the goal of criminology is to understand its subject matter and to determine how that understanding can benefit humankind.

Criminology is an interdisciplinary science that gathers and analyzes data on various aspects of criminal, delinquent, and general antisocial behavior. Criminal justice is concerned with how the criminal justice system investigates, prosecutes, and controls/supervises individuals who have committed crime, while criminology wants to know why those individuals committed crimes. In pursuit of this understanding, criminologists ask questions such as;

- Why do crime rates vary across time and from culture to culture?
- Why are some individuals more prone to committing crime than others?
- Why do crime rates vary across different ages, genders, and racial/ethnic groups?
- Why are some harmful acts criminalized and not others?
- What can we do to prevent crime?

(Explanation with comparative aspect (5marks each)=10marks)

- (b) Citing relevant examples explain the following terms

(i) Victim Trauma

(3 Marks)

“Victim Trauma” includes emotional and physical experiences that produce pain and injuries. Emotional injury is a normal response to an extremely abnormal event. It results from the pairing of a painful or frightening emotional experience with a specific memory which emerge and have a long lasting

(Clear explanation (3mark) =3marks)

(ii) Vulnerability

(4 Marks)

Condition in which a person is unable to protect himself or herself from abuse, neglect, or exploitation because of a mental or physical impairment or because of advanced age among other factors.

(Clear explanation (3mark)=4marks)

(iii) Victimization

(3Marks)

Defining victimisation is not as easy as it seems. It highly depends on the context. If two toddlers hit each other, can you call this victimisation? Or if a mother punishes her child? In general, interpersonal victimisation is defined as “harm that comes to individuals because other human actors behave in ways that violate social norms”.

However, some people are still than not perceived as victims, but as sinners – depending on whether they are held responsible for their own victimisation. Sinners receive less public compassion and more stigma. Attention to particular people or problems depends heavily on politics and morality views (Mechanic & Tanner, 2007).

(Clear explanation (3marks)=3marks)

QUESTION TWO

- (a) Melvin Lerner discovered that people generally assume that good things happen to good people and bad thing to bad people. Drawing examples from Kenya, discuss this ‘universal moral balance belief’ in relation to reaction to victimization (10 Marks)

The just-world hypothesis, also known as just-world theory, is a psychological concept proposing that individuals possess a strong belief in the inherent fairness of the world, where people get what they deserve, and deserve what they get.

This theory was first introduced by Melvin Lerner in the 1960s, suggesting that the belief in a just world can lead to negative attitudes towards innocent victims, as individuals attempt to rationalize their suffering and maintain their faith in a fair and orderly universe.

This desire for moral balance can influence how people perceive political leaders, personal beliefs, and the events they encounter in their daily lives. When faced with evidence of injustice or suffering, individuals may engage in prosocial behavior to restore their belief in justice or, conversely, blame the victim for their plight, assuming that they must have engaged in dishonest behavior or made poor choices to justify their situation.

The just-world hypothesis has significant implications for understanding social attitudes, prejudice, and victim-blaming. By acknowledging the role of this cognitive bias in shaping our perceptions of others, educators can encourage students to critically evaluate their beliefs and foster empathy towards those facing adversity.

(Clear explanation of the theory (10mark) and a relevant example (2arks)=10marks)

- (b) Using any FOUR theories of Restorative Justice, appreciate the argument that restorative justice is victim-oriented (10 Marks)

There are several theories which underlie restorative justice:

- a. Abolitionism (Louk Hulsman): sometimes called the civilisation theses. According to Hulsman, criminal justice is a curse of mankind. He has two reasons to argue this:
 - i. There is too much focus on punishment, and punishment makes people worse, not better humans. Thus, a constructive alternative is needed.
 - ii. Crime is a social construct: crime is not an ontological of human behaviour, but it is socially constructed. Some non-criminal acts are more damaging than criminal acts, yet the first is not criminalised, while the latter is.Therefore, Hulsman wants justice to be civilised. Prison should be abolished. Instead, Hulsman wants to apply measures that are used to deal with non-criminal conflicts and wrongdoing in general to solve criminal conflicts.
It is not too difficult to criticise this theory if we look back to the distinction between harm and wrong in lecture 4 (subject 1). Non-criminal behaviour can often be solved by non-judicial measures because there is only harm, not a wrong involved. However, how objective can people be if they try to achieve justice while a major wrong has taken place? Furthermore, society sometimes has to be protected for certain people, and imprisonment is than the only way to do so.
- b. Conflict as property (Nils Christie): this is a community-oriented theory. Christie has argued that crime is a conflict, rather than a breach of law. This gives opportunities, because people can learn from conflicts. However, the state has 'stolen' these conflicts by confiscating criminal justice. Therefore, Christie claims that these conflicts should be given back to the people, with active involvement of the victim, the offender, the community and laymen. Professionals and the state should back off, and informal means of conflict resolution should be implemented.
However, if Christie's theory would be implemented, this would mean that there is no longer one measure to punish certain crimes. Punishment and consequences of crime would be highly subjective and influenced by the community: there would be no equality in similar cases. Also, there is a high risk of private revenge, while the monopoly of violence should be the state's.
- c. Moral discourse (John Braithwaite): nowadays, the people who commit a crime are stigmatised. The state frames persons as *wrong people*, not as someone who committed a wrongful act. This also means that there is no discussion with criminals: we only talk *about* them, not *with* them. This is destructive shaming. Braithwaite argues that reintegrative shaming should be more helpful. Communication should help the offender to learn about the errors he made. This will, contrary to destructive shaming and stigmatisation, give the offender the possibility to take responsibility and make amends. Unfortunately, Braithwaite forgets the victim in his theory. Victims are *used* to make offenders better persons, which can increase the risk of experiencing secondary victimisation. Also, in his theory, he separates the offender from his criminal act (is this always possible?) and argues that at least *most* of them will show responsibility and remorse.

- d. Changing Lenses Theory (Howard Zehr): Zehr argues that we should transform the reaction to crime (now: punishment) into repair. He argues that there are three major problems with criminal justice:

- i. The blame game: nowadays, the justice system focuses on establishing guilt en assigning blame. This is related to a massive societal stigma: someone is called a criminal. Offenders do not want to be perceived to be a criminal and will therefore deny their involvement in the criminal act.
- ii. The pain game: after the blame game, punishment follows. This causes further damage and reinforces the legitimacy of using violence as a means to an end.
- iii. Because of the blame game and the pain game, the victims are forgotten. This leads to secondary victimisation.

Restorative justice, Zehr states, should be used as an alternative for criminal justice. It starts from the needs of the victim for repairs. It is a more clear victimological perspective than the three theories above.

Zehr's theory has been criticised because in his theory, the victim should always be willing to involve. However, this is not necessarily the case

Is restorative justice victim-oriented? It depends. As can be read in the answer to the question above, Zehr has a strong victimological perspective on restorative justice. However, others focus more on the offenders. Restorative justice is often more perceived to have a symbolic value. It makes a tribute to the victims and recognises them. You can discuss whether this is enough to make it truly victim-oriented, but victims often feel like the process itself was very important to them. The restorative justice method should however always match with the victim. The extent to which victims want to participate is depending upon the impact of the crime, whether they are related to the victim, and the victim's personal characteristics.

Is the outcome of restorative justice processes helpful for victims? The outcome of restorative justice is focused more on compensation and repair than on punishment. This can result in monetary compensation (which is a better fit to harm than for wrongs), but also in symbolic compensation measures like apologies. The symbolic measures play a major role in value restoration, as long as they are perceived to be sincere (not manipulative). A restorative justice process can help to reduce the victim's anxiety and fear when he starts to understand the offender's act and account. Also, the victims often experience high levels of respect, information and participation.

(Clear explanation of the theory (10mark) and a relevant example (2marks)=10marks)

QUESTION THREE

- (a) List any SIX characteristics of an Ideal victim according to Christie, (1968) which makes him or her (more often her) the ideal person to be victimised. (12 Marks)

1 The victim is weak in relation to the offender – the 'ideal victim' is likely to be either female, sick, very old or very young (or a combination of these).

2 The victim is, if not acting virtuously, then at least going about their legitimate, ordinary everyday business.

3 The victim is blameless for what happened.

4 The victim is unrelated to and does not know the 'stranger' who has committed the offence (which also implies that the offender is a person rather than a corporation; and that the offence is a single 'one-off' incident).

5 The offender is unambiguously big and bad.

6 The victim has the right combination of power, influence or sympathy to successfully elicit victim status without threatening (and thus risking opposition from) strong countervailing vested interests.

(Any six points a explanation (2mark each) =12marks)

(b) Compare and contrast any FOUR perspectives and theories in victimological phenomena (8 Marks)

a. Ideal victim (Christie, 1968): the ideal victim has certain characteristics which makes him or her (more often her) the ideal person to be victimised:

- i. The victim is weak in relation to the offender;
- ii. The victim is legitimate;
- iii. The victim is blameless;
- iv. The victim is unrelated to and does not know the offender;
- v. The offender is big and bad;
- vi. The victim has the right combination of power/influence/sympathy to successfully elicit the victim status.

b. Lifestyle exposure theory (Cloward & Ohlin): this theory argues that certain lifestyles increase the chance someone will become a victim. There are four major characteristics:

- i. Exposure to potential offenders (because of geographical and social proximity);
- ii. Attractiveness of the potential victim;
- iii. Accessibility of victims (social and technical);
- iv. Reactions to crime.

c. Routine Activities Theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979): according to Cohen and Felson, victimisation results from the interaction of everyday factors. Three factors are of importance:

- i. The presence of motivated offenders;
- ii. The availability of suitable targets (due to value, physical visibility, accessibility, inertia);

- iii. The absence of capable guardians.
- d. Repeat Victimisation Theory: according to this concept, individuals who have been a crime victim have a significant higher chance to be victimised in the future, because they have certain boots and flags:
 - i. Flags: these are red flags, like physical characteristics, which make you an easier target.
 - ii. Boots: being a victim once increases the chance you will be victimised again.

Victims often belong to a high risk group. Also, there can be event dependency, meaning that offenders try to victimise the same victim, or that victims develop certain symptoms which make them more vulnerable to be revictimised. Repeated victimisation often occurs soon after the initial victimisation (possible also due to the insurance effect in cases of burglary).

Major approaches in victimology? There are three major approaches:

- a. Positivist victimology: this traditional approach has a focus on the patterns of victimisation and how these relate to crime prevention and reduction. However, positivist victimology has been criticised because it could underplay structural inequalities, forget victimless crimes and is based on conventional definitions of crime and harm.
- b. Radical victimology: radical victimology takes one of the major critiques on positivist victimology in account, by focussing on the vulnerability of particular groups and the structural inequalities that can shape victimisation. Yet, this approach is criticised too, because it asks for a narrow preoccupation with social class relationships, and because it shapes victimisation as a system of oppression.
- c. Critical victimology: critical victimology is based on the labelling theory. It argues for an ideological role of the state, and therefore, it has been criticised.

(Any four points with clear explanations (2mark each)=8marks)