'The extent and importance of repeat victimisation is an understudied area in crime prevention and community safety'. How far do you agree/disagree with this statement.

1. Introduction

Repeat victimisation is an issue which is prevalent in practicality, yet does not appear to have the cannon of literature to match this prevalence. Bridgeman and Hobbs (1997), for instance, in their exploration of repeat victimisation in the United Kingdom, state that the notion is indeed 'firmly on the national agenda' but that there are 'limited resources' available to help paint a clear, useful picture of the reality of repeat victimisation in this country today (Bridgeman and Hobbs, 1997: vi). Despite the lack of breadth in the research and literature on repeat victimisation however there are various studies that have been conducted by different research bodies that have aimed to understand and tackle repeat victimisation in various areas in the UK.

For example, Forrester, Chatterton and Pease (1988) attempted to obtain and analyse a range of information sources on repeat victimisation in Kirkholt, through interviewing offenders, victims and neighbours of victims, and implemented preventative measures such as improving the security of housing, removing major targets for crime (such as coin-operated fuel meters), property marking and neighbourhood watch schemes - measures that involved the local community as well as police officials in Kirkwood. A reduction in 'multiple victimisation' with no signs of displacement resulted (Forrester, Chatterton and Pease, 1988). Thus, some research and investigation does exist concerning repeat victimisation and feasible measures to understand and tackle it, yet the question of whether there are enough studies of this kind - especially studies concerning minority groups such as those with a disability or hate crime - will form the focus of this paper. First, however, it is necessary to understand what the literature depicts repeat victimisation to be.

2. Definition of repeat victimisation

2.1 History of Repeat Victimisation

Repeat victimisation as a prevalent issue became much more prominent in police circles and understanding in the early 1990s, and in 1993 a paper was produced by the Home Office which was distributed to each Chief Constable (Pease, 1998). Various meetings were held to discuss the issue and other papers began to be produced that summarized the evidence for repeat victimisation (e.g. Bridgeman and Sampson, 1994). Tilley (1995) suggested that repeat victimisation became a police performance indicator, suggesting the level of care that victims received after a first crime or attack. Pease (1998) notes that the police in England and Wales were required throughout 1996 and 1997 to create a strategy which demonstrated:

- How they identified repeat victimisation
- How repeat victimisation could be reduced
- How their intervention could be evaluated and appraised

This strategy was required to be implemented in 1998/9, to create a set of standard definitions and understanding of repeat victimisation.

2.2 Current definitions and descriptions of repeat victimisation

Since repeat victimisation was first discussed as a phenomenon, various definitions of repeat victimisation have been created. The Home Office definition as given by Bridgeman and Hobbs (1997: 1) is that repeat victimisation 'occurs when the same person or place suffers from more than one incident over a specified period of time'. Pease (1998: 3) suggests that repeat victimisation can be described as 'the recurrence of crime in the same places and/or against the same people.' There are a variety of incidents that a person or place may experience, such as domestic and commercial burglary, car crime, domestic violence, racial attacks, armed robbery, bullying, assaults and criminal damage (Bridgeman and Hobbs, 1997), and the same person may be victimised for the same crime more than once, or may experience a variety of offenses.

It has been found that 4% of people experience 44% of crime (Farrell and Pease, 1993), but of course precise figures vary due to place and time, and some authors suggest that there are problems with recognizing repeat victimisation and crimes in some instances (Anderson, Chenery and Pease, 2007). The Home Office (2008) found that 32% of vandalism victims experienced repeat victimisation, followed by assault with no injury (28%) and minor injury (24%). The crime least likely to result in repeat victimisation is theft from a person (7% of people experience repeat victimisation). The severity of repeat victimisation can be seen in the media, Pease (1997) argues, as many victims struggle to cope with repeated crimes (Shaw, 1997) as it can have a profound impact on the victims' lives (Anderson, Chenery and Pease, 2007).

3. Factors and patterns of repeat victimisation

Various factors have been found to affect the likelihood of repeat victimisation of crime. These will be discussed below.

3.1 Demographic - age, gender, class, ethnicity

Throughout the United Kingdom, 1 in 4 people (around 24%) experience crime (either personally or within their household) every year (Home Office, 2008). This is significantly lower than the 40% of people experiencing crime in 1995. The Home Office (2008) found that those individuals most at risk of crime are young men (aged between 16-24), full-time students and unemployed people. Furthermore, one's lifestyle also dictates how much crime may be experienced - for example, those individuals who visit pubs, bars and clubs are more at risk of violence than those individuals who do not. Lone parent households were also found to be at greater risk of repeat victimisation (Tseloni and Pease, 1998), with the elderly being the least likely to experience repeat victimisation.

3.2 Community

The community that one lives in also provides an indicator of and higher risk of repeat victimisation , with higher crime areas showing a higher level of repeat victimisation (Trickett et al., 1992). A British Crime Survey (as set out in Pease, 1998) shows that for property offenses, the 2% of victims who experience the most property crime actually suffer 41% of all such crime, and this is a pattern that is much more prominent for personal crime. Anderson, Chenery and Pease (2007) found that the risk of repeat burglary of the same house is much higher than the risk of burglary of a nearby house, and that repeat crimes often occur fairly quickly after the previous offense. The Home Office (2008) found that during 2006/2007, households that have no security measures, were headed by someone aged 16-24, or by an unemployed person were at a significantly higher risk of being burgled repeatedly.

The Gloucester Crime Reduction Strategy (2005) suggest that it is important to map crimes so that the areas that are most affected by crime can be pinpointed. This study found that there was a correlation between the level of deprivation and the level of crime, and thus work is required to

build community spirt and to combat social exclusion and antisocial behaviour. This work forms part of the national vision which outlines that within the next 5 to 15 years, no individual should be largely disadvantaged due to where they live (Gloucester Crime Reduction Strategy, 2005).

3.3 Other Patterns of Repeat Victimisation

Pease (1998) suggests that there are a variety of reasons which may lead to higher levels of repeat victimisation, outside of the community or the demographic of the individual. As has already been found, poverty was found to be a factor affecting the likelihood of repeat victimisation, as well as a lack of motivation to prevent crime (such as owners of small businesses), lack of awareness of the crime (especially if it is a crime such as fraud), and the idea that crime is something to endure, such as in the case of domestic violence.

3.4 Hate Crime

Hate crime is a specific area of repeat victimisation that does not reap an extensive literature base. It is described by the Cross-Government Action Plan on Hate Crime (2009-11) as, 'a criminal offense which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice on a person's race or perceived race'. The word 'race' in this instance can be replaced by religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. Hate crime was brought to the attention of the police and the media after the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 (Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report, 1999) which failed to prosecute any of the suspected offenders. Despite the fact that the prosecution rate between 2005-2008 of all the hate crimes reported improved from 62% to 71% (with 200,000 convictions), many incidents of hate crime go unreported, due to fear of repeat victimisation, or police prejudice.

The Pilkington case is one such case that details the suicide of Fiona Pilkington (38) after she had murdered her profoundly disabled daughter, Francesca Hardwick (18). These acts were motivated by a continued case of hate crime attacks perpetrated by teenagers, and after 30 calls to the police, Fiona was told to 'ignore them' by police officials in her final call before she committed suicide. This suggests that cases of repeat victimisation involving hate crime are not taken seriously or acted upon (Bingham, 2010).

4. Prevention and Solution

4.1 Victimisation as an Indicator of Repeat Victimisation

Pease (1998) suggests that prior victimisation is one of the more useful predictors of later crime, and evidence for this abounds in studies conducted by Ellingworth et al. (1995) and Sherman (1989; 1992). Pease (1998) notes that when a crime or victimisation has occurred, it tends to reoccur quickly, as has been found in other studies (Polvi et al., 1990; Farrell and Pease, 1993). Crime is evident of those people and places where crime is likely, and Pease (1998) suggests that there are flag accounts and boost accounts of crime. Flag accounts are those where repeat victimisation is an enduring level of risk (for instance, in areas of high crime, a house with no security, and so on) and boost accounts are those wherein a home may be randomly broken into, and the criminal is educated as to the outcomes of the crime (for instance, a house containing lots of valuables). Pease (1998) suggests that whilst flag accounts (crimes) are recognized, boost accounts are often dismissed, despite evidence suggesting their validity (Spelman, 1995a; Osborn et al., 1995; Ellingworth et al., 1995). Other evidence for this is found in offender accounts. Hearnden and Magill (2004) for instance, found that the ability to yield results (usually goods) was the burglar's main concern when deciding which house to target, and that 67% of offenders had returned to the

same property since they knew that they could yield from it. This suggests the validity of boost accounts, as posited by Pease (1998).

4.2 Profiling of Offenders

Various studies suggest that an analysis of who is most likely to commit crimes enables police forces and researchers to adjust their priorities to the right areas and people (Gloucester Crime Reduction Strategy, 2005). This study found that 64% of offenders are between the ages of 15 and 29, and that over 75% of these offenders are male. Some crimes, such as criminal damage, for example, appear more likely to be committed by individuals that are, on average, 10 years younger than those individuals that are more likely to commit a burglary. This knowledge presents opportunities for teaching and discussion at schools, colleges and community centres so as to enable specific targeting of those that demographically are more likely to commit vandalism, for example. Assessing the needs of those likely to offend (e.g. for an artistic means of expression) means that provision can be made (for instance, specific areas where graffiti is allowed). Moreover, this knowledge enables authorities to monitor previous offenders, which ensures that, as Kershaw, Goodman and White (1999) found, reconviction of previous offenders is more easily accomplished.

4.3 Practical Measures

Various steps have been and are being taken to reduce repeat victimisation. The Crime and Disorder Act of 1998 was amended by the Police Reform Act of 2002 which states that local authorities and the Police must work together in order to reduce crime and the instances of repeat victimisation (Gloucester Crime Reduction Strategy, 2005).

Marshall, Smith and Tilley (2004) detailed a report of some of the measures used in certain areas of the West Midlands to reduce repeat victimisation. These included frequently used situational measures, such as lighting upgrades and CCTV, despite mixed findings about these measures. Painter (1995) claims that despite the associations of a reduction in crime, increased lighting seems to have created this effect in other ways rather than simply increased illumination. Painter and Tilley (1999) and Welsh and Farrington (2003) claim that CCTV can be beneficial in reducing crime, this is not always the case, and did not reduce repeat victimisation. Therefore, more planned, strategic methods for reducing repeat victimisation are needed.

4.4 Involvement of the Community

Marshall, Smith and Tilley (2004) claim that the involvement of the community is crucial in crime reduction yet how it can be applied to repeat victimisation requires more research. It is hypothesized however that involving the community in mini neighbourhood watch schemes, and creating a greater feeling of community pride and spirit is a useful means of reducing anti-social behaviour, crime and repeat victimisation, as was found in the Kirkholt research project (Forrester, Chatterton, and Pease, 1988).

5. Conclusion

Despite the fact that some literature exists which details the validity and seriousness of repeat victimisation (e.g. Pease, 1998; Home Office, 2008), most of this literature is produced by the Home Office or other government-funded research groups. The amount of research conducted by independent individuals and researchers in this area remains limited, which results in a variety of issues. Repeat victimisation is discussed in detail as to what it is and what can be done to prevent it - however, certain demographic groups and their experiences of repeat victimisation are all too easily left out. For example, the issue of hate crime is vast and topical, yet the literature relating to

repeat victimisation of hate crimes is sparse. Most literature on repeat victimisation concentrates on burglaries, and considered the location of the crime to be paramount to the individual that suffers the crime. The ways in which an individual may change as a result of hate crime, for instance, so as to attract further hate crime, is not known, although a publication by the Home Office (2008) does state that a change in an individual who has suffered a crime may make them more susceptible in the future.

Hate crimes, such as bullying, intimidation and violence towards those of an ethnic or religious minority, or those with a disability, for instance, have been found to be an underreported incident group (Gloucester Crime Reduction Strategy, 2005). Pease (1998) suggests for instance that homophobic incidents may be underreported due to the fact that homosexual individuals are simply 'used to' crime and victimisation.

Pease (1998) suggests that whilst research on repeat victimisation has become much more prolific over the previous two decades, studies and papers on the topic have not been made widely available to police officers or other individuals and groups that may have a hand in reducing repeat victimisation. Pease (1998: 23) writes that,

> 'Striking a balance between establishing a firm technical foundation for claims about [repeat victimisation] and informing practitioners about it has proven difficult. With hindsight, too little has been written in periodicals specifically for police audiences. The reports published by the Police Research Group for a police readership include only a fraction of the relevant research. Moreover, what has been written has tended to concentrate on the specifics of particular projects and perspectives.'

It becomes clear that more, widely accessible research into repeat victimisation is required so as to ensure that the people that may be able to help reduce instances of repeat victimisation are able to access the necessary, and most up-to-date research and literature on the topic. Papers such as the Kirkholt study have been useful in highlighting means for reducing repeat victimisation, but given that this paper was produced in 1988, the strategies and mechanisms used to reduce repeat victimisation in this study may not be the most effective today. Therefore, updated research studies investigating repeat victimisation in 2010 are required. Furthermore, targeted studies that specifically investigate the incidents of repeat victimisation of those individuals from a minority group, such as those with a disability, or ethnic, religious or sexual minority, for instance, is essential so as the full picture of repeat victimisation can be clearly seen and understood, and appropriate intervention strategies implemented.

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