GENDER, CRIME AND VICTIMISATION

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Gender, Crime and Victimisation

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⑤SAGE

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THE GENDER AGENDA TO CRIME AND VICTIMISATION

GLOSSARY TERMS

Primary victimisation	Masculinity
Tertiary victimisation	Gender-neutral
Indirect victimisation	Gender-free
Victimology	Gender myopia Gender-blindness
Gender	Gender-bias
Sex	Gender specificity
Feminism	'Doing-gender'
Crime victim	Doing-difference'

CHAPTER AIMS

- Outline the parameters and the major frames of reference for the book
- Specify the aims and objectives of the book
- Establish the benchmarks for exploring gender, crime and victimisation
- Introduce the key research, theory and policy agendas

Introduction

Students of criminology and related disciplines can now be pointed towards a growing body of authoritative texts that feature the word 'gender' in their titles. Words in addition to gender such as *crime, criminal justice, violence* and *imprisonment* are connected in titles belonging to several of the more 'criminologically' focussed publications. The title and content of this book is therefore original and different from any of these in that it connects the word gender to both of the additional words, *crime* and *victimisation*. The latter constitute the two major frames of reference for this book's gendered journey.

Within one frame of reference, gender – *and crime* a detailed examination of gender patterns to offending and more broadly to the committing of crime are examined. How these patterns are variously established and represented, researched, explained, theorised and responded to by policy makers and criminal justice intervention methods are all examined through a gendered lens. Within the other frame of reference, gender – *and victimisation* is a detailed examination of gender patterns to victimisation including criminal victimisation, **primary, tertiary and indirect victimisation** and other forms of social harm. How these patternings of victimisations in society are variously established and represented, researched, explained, theorised and responded to by policy makers, criminal justice and other intervention strategies and support networks are simultaneously examined through a gendered lens. Using these two major frames of reference, which are given roughly equal weight, this book explores a comprehensive range of gender issues in the study of crime and victimisation.

The remainder of this introductory chapter outlines the scope, aims and objectives of this book. It includes a preliminary discussion on the gender agenda to crime and victimisation drawing on key developments within the discipline of criminology and its sub-discipline **victimology**. It justifies why gender is central to this book's content and it outlines a number of gendered themes and threads that are prioritised within its pages. It is initially important to clarify what is meant by **gender** as there is confusion evident in some criminological and victimological literature. This clarification of meaning is best achieved by reference to what gender does not mean as well as what it does mean.

The most appropriate way to explain how gender is commonly used throughout this book is to refer to it as a sociological term where there is specific distinction between sex and gender. The word gender is sometimes inappropriately used as a substitute for the word **sex** and this changes the original meaning. To clarify the sex/gender confusion Walklate's observation is useful: 'sex differences, i.e. differences that can be observed between the biological categories, male and female: they are not necessarily a product of gender. Gender differences are those that result from the socially ascribed roles of being male or being female, i.e. masculinity and femininity' (Walklate, 2004: 94).

When teaching these terms the following simple schema helps not only clarify but also complicate our understanding of gender:

SEX   GENDER
Male/Female   Masculine/Feminine

This simple schema raises oppositional associations of male/female and of masculine and feminine. These are often referred to as 'gender dichotomies' and a number of these are illustrated later in this introductory chapter.

Glossary

Above you will have noted how some words/terms/concepts – for example 'primary', 'tertiary' and 'indirect victimisation', 'victimology' and 'gender', have been highlighted in bold. When you see emboldened terms like this you should refer to the comprehensive glossary at the end of the book. There these terms are listed in alphabetical order and a succinct meaning of each is provided.

The scope of this book

This book will challenge and equip a range of readers including undergraduate, postgraduate, PhD students and other academic scholars and researchers as well as crime and justice sector workers, policy makers, crime journalists and other critical commentators to understand more comprehensively and to debate critically gender issues in the study of crime and victimisation. The book brings together research issues, theoretical developments and policy matters connected to the study of gender, crime and victimisation in a clearly sign-posted and uniquely structured way. It adopts a broadly historical approach to this project of combining academic and mediated knowledges and perspectives on the study of criminology with those of victimology. It draws particularly on the influences of **feminism** and on the author's experiences of teaching, researching and writing within the fields of crime and criminology and on the subject of the **crime victim** and victimology. A case study, entitled 'Women and Crime for Economic Gain', was concerned with critically examining women's motives for doing economic crime, forms a key point of reference, exemplification and illustration throughout this book. The aims of the particular research study which is referred to here as the main case study are briefly outlined later in this introductory chapter.

The broad aim of this book then, is to offer a detailed critical appreciation of how crime is a gendered phenomenon, how crime and risks to criminal

victimisation and other forms of harm can be known about more fully and how gender impacts upon and influences the experiences and recovery from crime and victimisation in society. The book explores the changing understandings of femininity and **masculinity** through an examination of offending, the committing of crime more broadly and experiences of victimisation in society. It focuses on the importance of gender in part by drawing attention to areas of scholarship and practice where the woman and/or man in question is absent. Thus **gender neutrality** and **gender myopia** as well as **gender bias** are all considered within a broader appreciation of the social constructions of deviance, crime and offending, victimisation and social harm. This focus upon a gender/crime/victimisation nexus is original and this book represents one of the first efforts to do this. In this way the book will consolidate the knowledges that inform the gender agenda to crime and victimisation in society, yet it will explore more fully, explain, illustrate, exemplify, debate and critically analyse these knowledges, in its ambition to be innovative and forward looking with its arguments. As part of this task the book aims to explore and explain how a gendered approach variously informs understanding of each of the following –

- definitions of: deviance, crime, offending, criminal victimisation, social harm;
- patterns to: crime, types of crimes, offending, criminal victimisation and social harm;
- the above as socially and unequally distributed;
- processes of criminalisation and social control and their structural (gender) biases;
- visible and invisible: crimes, types of crimes, offending, criminal victimisation and social harm;
- the above as 'locationally' biased;
- fears, anxieties, worry and concern about: crimes, types of crimes, offending, criminal victimisation and social harm;
- risks to crime, criminal victimisation and social harm;
- the above as socially and unequally visited;
- crime prevention, community safety and control strategies and their structural (gender) biases;
- state, voluntary and other responses to populations experiencing criminal victimisation and social harm;
- familial, local, community, regional, national, international and global responses to crime, disorder, deviance and offending, criminal victimisation and social harm.

In order to ensure that all of the above are catered for within the pages of this book, a particular way of organising the contents has been devised. As you will have noted from the contents pages each chapter is clearly labelled. The contents allow us to explore:

- various mediated knowledges of the crime and victimisation problems in society;
- feminist influences and contributions to criminological and victimological ideologies, theoretical inquiry and policy making agendas;

- men's, and women's committing of volume crimes and violences;
- men's, and women's risks of experiencing of criminal victimisation and other harms;
- the feminist movement, state and voluntary sector responses to offending and the committing of crime;
- the feminist movement, state and voluntary sector responses to victimisation and harm in society.

The approach that is adopted throughout the book is one which is supported by a range of pedagogic features. These are explained in more detail later in this chapter. However, the main vehicle for exemplification and illustration is that of the case study. In the main this is used to demonstrate the practical element of key theoretical debates. One main case study is drawn upon – see below – and a whole variety of other mini-case studies are also offered to encourage the reader to engage in critical reflection of the issues under discussion and to facilitate this approach as an original method of research amongst potential researchers in this field. Alongside these illustrations the type of reflective critique that is offered incorporates the following:

1 a historical and contemporary approach to reviewing research and theoretical developments;
2 a historical and contemporary approach to reviewing policy and practice issues;
3 combining and contrasting perspectives on the study of criminology with those of victimology;
4 drawing especially on the influences of feminisms and the 'woman question' and later developments around masculinities and the 'man question';
5 drawing on the author's experiences of doing original fieldwork;
6 exemplification, illustration and evidencing all of the above.

The scope of the book is designed to help shape and construct a gender agenda for the future which is more fully appreciative and understanding of the nature, extent, distribution and experiences of crime and victimisation in society. It is simultaneously designed to facilitate the reader with material relevant to help inform scholarly and robust criminological and victimological opinion on the relative salience of gender. In terms of gender specific matters the key foci for the book are made explicit from the outset and for clarity they are simply listed below. The explanation and exemplification is left for us to explore in detail in Chapters 2–8.

Key foci for the book

- the framing of maleness and femaleness as related to knowledges about crime and victimisation in society;
- gender related ambiguities and conundrums about crime and victimisation;
- feminist inspired research and knowledges as a spur to improved gendered research and knowledges around crime and victimisation;

- to use the above to critique other scholarly and mediated knowledges as well as social and public policy around crime and victimisation;
- gender alongside other salient 'power' issues connected to crime and victimisation, in particular, the relevance of gender-class intersections;
- feminist, critical and masculinities scholarship abilities to confront current and emerging dilemmas and challenges around (gendered) offending, crime and victimisation.

The next section begins to address the fundamental question, 'Does gender deserve priority?' In the context of social division, multiple identities and the intersectionalities betwixt gender-class-race-age, is this book justified in prioritising gender as opposed to any other variable that might equally or more forcefully impact upon people's committing of crime and experiences of victimisation?

Crime, victimisation/social division nexus

Social divisions are social categories. Such categories can include race, gender, age, class, sexuality, disability, mental health and physical disability (Davies et al., 2007). Social categories are not static, but, rather, dynamic and change over time, space and place. As Best (2005: 324) states, 'Social categories are not simply given, they have to be established and maintained and the process through which they appear is known as *social division*'. They are situated historically, culturally, economically, and politically. From the outset it is important to acknowledge that the intersectionalties of class-race-age-gender or multiple inequalities (Daly, 1993) variously combine 'as intersecting, interlocking and contingent' (Daly, 1997: 33). Class, race, age, and gender are the major social inequalities in our society. To be poor, to be black, to be young and to be female, simultaneously represents different distinct social categories with combined significance and relation to relative disadvantage, exclusion, marginalisation and powerlessness (Davies et al., 2007). Gender is therefore only one of a number of processes or social variables – social class, age, gender and ethnicity – that are usually attributed to framing our experiences of criminal victimisation (Davies et al., 2007) and which get to the very 'nature and essence 'of things (Keat and Urry, 1975 cited in Mawby and Walklate, 1994: 18). Several contemporary theoretical, feminist inspired constructs, have been postulated (see Connell, 1987, 1995; Messerschmidt, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2004) which suggest that gender is sometimes highly salient in understanding both offending and victimisation. '**Doing-gender**', the theoretical formulation most extensively demonstrated by West and Zimmerman (1987) and West and Fenstermaker (1995) was later extended to 'doing race' and 'class' (Daly, 1993, 1997) so that a new understanding of 'difference' is that it is viewed as an ongoing interactional accomplishment. The focus on gender as something which is

socially constructed sees gender as 'omnirelevant'. Moreover, it is something we are accountable for and any occasion offers the resources for doing it. Similarly **'doing-difference'** explains how gender, race and class operate simultaneously and like gender is a process. Race and class are similarly ongoing methodical and situated accomplishments (Lorber, 1994; Simpson and Elis, 1996; West and Fenstermaker, 1995; West and Zimmerman, 1987).

Gender salience?

Some gender and feminist scholars have focussed exclusively on the 'risk/ gender nexus', where 'gender and risk are interlinked and often mutually constitutive' (Hannah-Moffatt and O'Malley, 2007: 7) and yet they too are quick to acknowledge that identifying gendered risks is only part of the endeavour to capture the lived everyday realities of people's experiences of social harm and criminal victimisation. Gendered risks are integrally linked, simultaneously and interconnected to other inequalities and gender can be located within this broader matrix. Others have similarly grappled with intersections acknowledging that fundamental differences exist in the life experiences of women (Simpson and Elis, 1995; Simpson and Gibbs, 2006).

At the same time as the arguments in this book will be suggesting that a gendered approach is sometimes useful and helpful, it will also be suggesting it can be ambiguous and confusing and furthermore, it remains open on the question as to whether it is ever or always the key variable in understanding the relationship between gender, crime and victimisation. Others have briefly confronted this very question. Walklate (2003) for example, has asked whether there can be a feminist victimology. Central to this question she argues, are the tensions between conventional victimological concerns and a feminist-informed agenda. She swiftly poses the more gender-friendly question whether there can be a feminist informed victimology (2003: 38) and states:

> It is this kind of theoretical starting point, which neither treats gender as a variable nor locates it purely as a definitional category, which permits the inclusion of a critical edge of feminist work into victimology'. (2003: 41)

In relation to masculinities, elsewhere Walklate (2006) has queried when is it that being masculine is the key variable in understanding the relationship between men, crime and victimisation and when other variables might be more important. There are then some dissenting voices from highly gender sensitive scholars as to whether a culturalist-dominated gender studies continues to be useful (Hall and Winlow, 2003a, 2003b). The same authors have

consistently asserted that men's and boy's violence is not best explained or likely to be reduced by focussing on the hegemonic masculinity thesis (Hall, 2002; Hall and Winlow, 2003a, 2003b). Some of these very issues are at the heart of discussions in Chapters 4 and 6 in particular.

Arguments in support of prioritising other key variables might be equally applicable to the study of victims and victimology. There is convincing evidence and debate for giving at least equal priority to age in explaining and understanding victimisation and social harm in society. In respect of the case study research example threaded throughout this text connected to women's motivations for committing economic crime, we might similarly question whether it is need and/or greed that is key to understanding the committing of economic crime by women (Davies, 2005) rather than their womanhood. There are then some minor signposts that indicate dissenting voices over whether gender ought to always be omnipresent. Is gender therefore a 'red herring' and a distracting cul-de-sac or precisely the opposite, a gateway to new revelations and knowledges? Here we justify and assume that gender matters, but that 'doing-gender' ought not to always and necessarily take precedence over economic and class explanations.

Nevertheless, from the outset, this book also focuses most explicitly on experiences, fears and perceptions of crime and victimisation through a gendered lens. At regular intervals class, race and age are also foregrounded as a reminder that readers are encouraged to think also about these interactions. As to whether or not it is justifiable to prioritise gender, readers are also encouraged to have an open mind on this question and to reserve their final opinion on it until after the final chapter. The arguments of the book are intended to be provocative and stimulating and to engage readers in serious consideration of whether and when gender matters most in understanding crime and the experience and recovery from victimisation.

A gender agenda?

The importance and significance of exploring structural variables in the study of crime and victimisation has long been recognised in the US and UK although some social inequalities and socio-structural factors have attracted greater attention than others. Class related demographics and influences were exposed as fundamentally important to sociological explanations of crime and deviance over several decades in the twentieth century. The Chicago ecologists and the work of Merton (1938, 1968), Shaw and McKay (1942), Cohen (1955) but also Mays (1954) and Morris (1957) in the UK were especially important. Compared with social class and associated theses such as strain, (Merton, 1938),

sub-culture and status frustration (Cohen, 1955) economic marginalisation and explanations linked to opportunity (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960) and poverty however, gender (and race) has featured less and has a shorter historical pedigree in terms of contributing towards explaining crime and counting it as important to criminological wisdom. There are several reasons for giving primacy to gender, some of which are briefly noted at this juncture:

- Women and girls have been neglected and/or marginalised in criminological research theory and policy related matters.
- There is a need to:
  - 'redress the balance', add women in and set the record straighter/clarify the distortions, misrepresentations, dispel the myths, challenge assumptions;
  - articulate women's positions, and men's positions, give voice to these gendered positions and differently hierarchically positioned femininities and masculinities where some gendered positions are prioritised and promoted and others marginalised and downgraded;
  - reveal relatively invisible gendered knowledges;
  - demonstrate and explain why social control, policing, community safety responses don't always work to the best effect.

This list of reasons is far from comprehensive and is in no particular order but it does flag up some reasonably convincing justifications as a well as some thought provoking and challenging debates that warrant serious criminological and victimological consideration. In addition to these briefly stated justifications we can begin to add more detailed reasons. For example, despite a focus on men as criminals and boys as delinquents, sociological and other explanations for offending have failed to grasp the real significance and explanatory value of the differences in offending patterns between men and women and boys and girls. Men and boys became the subject matter for the study of crime and deviance and for criminology more generally. It was not until pioneering feminists trickled into criminological waters that the beginnings of a gendered understanding of crime and offending can be recognised.

The above has commenced the task of justifying why gender is foregrounded in this book. It is also important to signpost very early on, the huge impact that the second wave of feminism and the campaigning women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s had across social relations. Three waves of feminism are now discussed in the broad confines of a gender, crime and justice literature although the first two are most commonly recognised. The first wave has its roots in the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, the social revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries such as the English and French Revolutions and concerns over equality. Between 1848 and 1919 in the United States there was a strong focus on women's right to vote and campaigns for their