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	<h1>Victimology as an Interdisciplinary Science and Its Foundational Contribution to the Development of Criminal Sciences: Conceptual, Historical, and Applied Perspectives</h1>	
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<h3>Abstract</h3> <p>Victimology has emerged as a distinct and indispensable scientific discipline within the broader framework of criminal sciences, shifting scholarly attention toward the often-neglected victim as a central actor in the criminal phenomenon. Although victims have existed throughout human history, systematic scientific inquiry into victimization only began in the aftermath of the Second World War, responding to theoretical and practical gaps left by traditional criminology. This article examines victimology as an interdisciplinary field that complements and enriches criminology, criminal law, criminal procedure, and criminal psychology by providing a structured understanding of the victim before, during, and after the commission of a criminal act. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical approach to define victimology conceptually, trace its historical development, and distinguish between the general notion of the victim and the legally defined victim of crime. It further explores the mechanisms of victimization, vulnerability, victim precipitation, and abuse of power, highlighting how these concepts contribute to a more comprehensive interpretation of criminal behavior and social harm. By analyzing the relationship between victimology and other criminal sciences, the article demonstrates how victimological insights enhance crime prevention strategies, improve judicial responses, support victim protection and rehabilitation, and promote a more balanced and humane criminal justice system. Ultimately, the paper argues that victimology is not merely an auxiliary branch of criminology but an autonomous scientific field whose theoretical and applied contributions are essential for understanding the full dynamics of criminal acts and for restoring equilibrium between the offender, the victim, and society.</p>		
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Introduction

Victimology is a modern science with inherently appealing subjects. even though victims have existed since very the beginning of humanity, the scientific study of this field did not begin until after World War II. It initially focused on

studying the victims of crimes and defendants, and thus, it is considered a necessary complement to criminology. This science emerged to fill a theoretical gap, and it did not take long before it became an integral part of criminology, possessing its own importance and nature that made it a fertile field for research. It is concerned with the scientific study of victimization, including the relationships between victims and offenders, victims and the criminal justice system, and victims and other social groups and institutions such as the media, corporations, and social movements. It studies victims of crimes and other forms of violations of individuals' rights that are not necessarily classified as crimes. Furthermore, through an in-depth examination of victims, the goal is to better understand the offender. The victim's background may provide important information about previous activities or lifestyle, which could directly lead to forming an idea about the suspect (the perpetrator). The present study is a descriptive one that defines victimology, distinguishes between victimology and the victim of crime, and highlights the scope and field of activity of this science in order to identify its contributions to enriching the criminal field as a whole, through its relationship with other criminal sciences such as criminology, substantive and procedural criminal law, and criminal psychology. Consequently, the study is divided into two parts: The first part is conceptual, devoted to defining victimology, the concept of the victim, and the victim of crime, as well as the categories of victims and an overview of the development of this science, and the second part focuses on the role of victimology and its contributions to the criminal field, and its relationship with criminology, criminal law, criminal procedures, and finally, criminal psychology.

Definition of Victimology:

The term victimology was coined in 1947 by Benjamin Mendelsohn, derived from the Latin term *victima* meaning "victim," and the Greek term *logos* meaning "study" or "science", thus forming the meaning "the science of victims." Moreover, the word victim itself dates back to ancient cultures and civilizations, its original meaning was rooted in the practice of sacrifice, the killing of a person or an animal to fulfill a duty or to appease a deity. Over time, the word victim acquired additional meanings to include anyone who suffered injury, loss, or hardship due to an act committed by another person. When we speak of victimology in the scientific field, we refer broadly to individuals who have suffered harm, regardless of its cause or nature. However, it is important to distinguish between: General victimology, which focuses on helping all people who suffer (known as victimagogics), and Criminal victimology, which specifically studies victims of criminal acts. The term victimagogics comes from the Latin word *victima* and the Greek word *agogs*, meaning assistance. A victimagogue is a specialist in victim assistance, whereas one who studies victims of crime is called a victimologist (Al-Bashari, 2005, p. 16). Several interrelated concepts help clarify the terminology related to victimology (Dussich, 2019):

Crime Victim: A person who has been physically, materially, or emotionally harmed, and/or whose property has been taken or damaged by someone who committed a crime.

Victimogenesis: Refers to the origin or cause of victimization, the constellation of variables that resulted in a person becoming a victim.

Victim Precipitation: A situation in which the victim has, wholly or partly, contributed to their own victimization.

Vulnerability: A physical, psychological, social, material, or financial condition in which a person or entity has a weakness that could make them a victim if someone recognizes and exploits that weakness.

General Victim: A person harmed physically, materially, or emotionally, and/or whose property has been taken or damaged by a person, event, organization, or natural phenomenon.

Victimization: Refers to the event or process through which individuals, communities, or institutions suffer harm or injury, often involving a violation of rights or a significant disruption of well-being.

Victimology: A scientific academic field that studies data describing phenomena and causal relationships related to victims. This includes the events leading to victimization, the victim's experience and its consequences, and the responses of society to such harms. Victimology therefore encompasses the study of precursors, vulnerabilities, incidents, effects, recovery, and responses by individuals, organizations, and cultures concerning victims.

Abuse of Power: A violation of national or international standards in the use of organized power, involving the physical, psychological, emotional, economic, or rights-related harm of individuals as a direct and deliberate result of misuse of authority.

Victim Assistance (or Support/Services): Activities implemented in response to victims with the aim of alleviating suffering and facilitating recovery. This includes providing information, assessments, individual interventions, advocacy, systemic and policy advocacy, and program development.

Overview of Victimology:

Although writings about victims appeared in many early works by criminologists such as Beccaria (1764), Lombroso (1876), Ferri (1892), Garofalo (1885), Sutherland (1924), von Hentig (1948), Nagel (1949), Ellenberger (1955), Wolfgang (1958), and Schafer (1968), the scientific concept of studying victims and the term victimology itself originated with the writings of Benjamin Mendelsohn (1937; 1940). Besides, his seminal work, published in 1956 under the title "A New Branch of Bio-Social Science: Victimology", introduced and defined the term victimology

and proposed the establishment of an international society for victims, an idea that materialized later in the creation of the World Society of Victimology, and some scholars consider the idea of the victim as a relatively new phenomenon and the concept itself as modern.

Aside from many researchers in the field of criminology point out that one of the first studies to focus on crime victims was Hans von Hentig's book "The Criminal and His Victim" (1948). This work examined the relationship between the criminal and the victim. Born in Germany in 1887, von Hentig immigrated to the United States before World War II and later became a professor at Yale University. His specialization was criminology, and his interest in victims was primarily criminological. He was not focused on the emotional or social impact of crime on victims; rather, he sought to study victims as a means to better understand crime and criminals. He believed that such knowledge could not only help catch offenders but also prevent crimes from occurring. In his book, von Hentig depicted the complex relationship between the criminal and the victim, using homicide data from both the United States and Germany (Jo-Anne Wemmers, 2010, p. 3).

The second key figure in the history of victimology is Benjamin Mendelsohn (1900-1998), he was born in Romania, he studied law and later worked as a defense attorney. Mendelsohn was the first to use the word victimology. In 1956, his foundational work was published in the journal "Revue de droit criminel et de criminology". In his article, titled "A New Branch of Bio-Social Science: Victimology" (translated from French by the author), Mendelsohn laid the groundwork for a new discipline, one he considered distinct from criminology. While Mendelsohn, like von Hentig, was interested in the victim, offender relationship (or what he called the duality of punishment), his concern for victims extended beyond explaining crime. In his article, he questioned why society had long ignored victims and left them to bear the burden of crime alone. Mendelsohn argued in favor of establishing victimology as a science that studies victims in the same way criminology studies crime and criminals (Jo-Anne Wemmers, 2010, p. 4).

Other early contributions related to victims include the work of Rhoda Milliken, a police officer in Washington, who in 1950 drew attention to the suffering of sexual assault victims after their victimization. In 1952, R. Tahon, the Attorney General at the Court of Appeal in Liège (Belgium), published an article on the same subject, emphasizing that a victim's compliance does not lessen the criminal nature of the assault or hinder prosecution. Two years later, in 1954, Henry Ellenberger published an article on the psychological relationship between victims and offenders. Serious attention to victims began after World War II. Mendelsohn (1974) claimed that the idea of victimology had been planted before the war, but its development was hindered by the conflict and was only revisited after its end. Until the late 1960s (e.g., Mendelsohn, 1969), victimologists focused primarily on crime victims. The early works in this field were inspired by criminologists and criminal justice practitioners who introduced the concept of victims into academic discussions about crime as part of their efforts to understand it more comprehensively. Accordingly, growing interest emerged not only in the role of crime victims but also in the harm and neglect they suffered as the forgotten party within the criminal justice system (Jo-Anne Wemmers, 2010, p. 5).

Types of Victims:

Some studies classify victims according to the role they play in the scene or circumstances of the crime, where the victim may find themselves as a helper, a primary cause, or even an unwitting accomplice. Although such studies are limited, the following classification can be outlined:

- **The Ideal Victim:**

Many people hold a general image of what a crime victim looks like, this image corresponds to the notion of the "ideal victim" an innocent, powerless individual who has no connection to the crime. An ideal victim might be, for example, a young woman subjected to rape or an elderly woman robbed of her belongings. A study of public attitudes toward rape found that while most people agreed that rape is a morally and legally unacceptable act, certain "mitigating" circumstances were sometimes invoked to question the victim's status such as if the girl did not say "no" in the "right" way, if she remained emotionally attached to the offender after the act, if she was labeled "promiscuous," or if she appeared not to resist strongly enough. In these cases, some might argue that it should not be considered rape unless the victim was a minor, even if consent was given.

Norwegian criminologist Nils Christie described the ideal victim as one possessing at least six characteristics:

- The victim is weak.
- The victim is engaged in a respectable activity.
- The victim is on their way to a place beyond suspicion.
- The offender is stronger and can be described in negative terms.
- The offender is a stranger to the victim and has no prior relationship with them.
- The victim has sufficient influence or credibility to assert their status as a "true victim" (e.g., an elderly woman robbed, or a child subjected to sexual abuse).

This discussion opens the door to examining victims who directly contribute to their own victimization yet are still seen as ideal victims. For instance, a young man who becomes drunk and is robbed in a remote bar by his

companions individuals he voluntarily associated with may be seen as having contributed to his own victimization. Despite suffering psychological, physical, or economic harm, his behavior places him outside the accepted “criteria” of a crime victim, often resulting in reduced sympathy or protection.

- **The Complicit Victim:**

In this category, the traits of being innocent or weak are often absent. In many cases, the victim and the perpetrator overlap, sometimes they are even the same person. In incidents of so-called “street violence,” it is often difficult to determine who the victim is and who the offender is, which it frequently occurs in violent crimes involving alcohol consumption, where both parties may be intoxicated. A provoked or aggressive act by a drunken victim can be seen as a form of complicity, potentially influencing the court’s judgment. When the victim is perceived as having acted provocatively, this can affect both the legal reasoning behind the offense and the severity of the sentence.

- **The Passive Victim:**

In this type, blame is often shifted from the offender to the victim. For example, a woman who is raped might be criticized for being “too provocative,” “too drunk,” or “in the wrong place.” In some cases, her “failure” to resist or escape properly can be misinterpreted as consent. Offenders often threaten their victims with violence or death, leading to a survival-based reaction in which the victim complies or resists minimally in order to avoid greater harm. Besides, such behavior is a survival strategy, not consent. Some women resist physically or try to talk to or distract their attacker, while others remain silent or passive to minimize injury. Women who remain silent about their abuse especially migrant women, refugees, pregnant women, or mothers in dire economic and social conditions are often seen as passive victims. Their lack of social support and dependence on their partners makes resistance difficult, leaving them vulnerable and unprotected.

- **The Resistant Victim:**

This category includes victims who choose to preserve evidence, and document injuries to expose the truth and ensure justice. For instance, a dignified woman suffering domestic abuse may clearly recount her experience in court, cooperate with investigators, and testify against her abuser, despite potential psychological or social repercussions. This type contrasts with the passive or complicit victim, who rarely discloses details of the incident, either due to guilt, shame, or perceived shared responsibility (e.g., being intoxicated or in a risky environment) (Nikolić-Ristanović, p. 28).

- **The Recurrent Victim:**

Empirical evidence shows that some individuals tend to become victims repeatedly the so-called repeat victims. This phenomenon raises complex questions about vulnerability, exposure, and offender selection criteria. During the Second International Symposium on Victimology, it was noted that while predicting re-victimization is difficult, understanding it can contribute significantly to identifying risk factors and preventive strategies (FATTAH, 1981, pp. 71-92).

- **The Victim-Turned-Offender:**

Various motives and justifications can transform a victim into an offender. The most typical example is revenge or acts of retaliation, the transition from victim to aggressor, from oppressed to oppressor is a well-documented phenomenon. Feelings of injustice, real or imagined suffering, and the desire for retribution, often reinforced by perceived moral or legal justification, can facilitate this shift from being a victim to becoming a perpetrator (FATTAH, 1981, p. 84).

The Contributions of Victimology to the Criminal Field:

Before the emergence of victimology, criminologists were unable to acknowledge any role of victims in the legal transgressions committed by others. Victimology arose to correct what was seen as an unfair stance toward the victim. Its proponents rejected the traditional interpretation of crime and criminology that focused exclusively on the offender and placed full responsibility for the criminal act on the perpetrator. Instead, they adopted an interactionist approach to the criminal event, viewing it as an interactive process that develops between two parties: the offender and the victim. Hence, this perspective led to the emergence of a new model explaining the mechanics of crime, which considers action and reaction, motives and objectives, and other interrelated dynamics. From this framework emerged several new concepts in determining the offender’s position within the criminal field, such as: Duet Frame of Reference, Penal Couple, and Doer-Sufferer Relationship. In reality, criminological studies raise important questions, such as: Why do some individuals, despite possessing factors that could lead to delinquency, never commit crimes, while others with fewer such factors do? Why do some people who are seemingly predisposed to victimization never become victims, while others who lack such predisposing factors do become victims? Simply posing these questions provides sufficient evidence for the idea of mutual, if not shared, responsibility between the parties involved in the criminal act, a principle advocated by victimology scholars. Despite criticisms that victimology lacks a strong theoretical foundation, many experts agree that its emergence brought crucial attention to the weaker element in the criminal process, the victim by emphasizing their rights and the consequences of acts that define them

as victims. Therefore, this development was not the result of temporary media campaigns or isolated events, but rather the product of a sustained social movement rooted in everyday realities affecting all segments of society. As a result of this movement, research in victimology has led, in many countries, to reforms in laws and procedures that aim to protect victims' rights and ensure compensation. Victimology focuses on several key areas, including:

1. **Identifying Risk Factors:** victimologists analyze a wide range of data and evidence to identify individuals most at risk of crime or violence. According to certain statistics, these groups may include:
 - Individuals with mental illnesses
 - Those with low levels of education or illiteracy
 - Recent migrants to cities or large urban areas
 - The inexperienced, the elderly, and minors,
 - Street children and foreign tourists.

In addition to other situational factors related to personal characteristics, time, and place.

2. **Differential Risk Determinants:** many researchers seek to explain victimization by integrating biological, psychological, and social variables to assess the degree of vulnerability. They particularly focus on individuals' lifestyles and activities to determine which factors increase or decrease the likelihood of becoming a victim.
3. **Reducing Risk Probabilities:** victimology also aims to reduce the probability of victimization and assess safety levels. However, measuring the effectiveness of preventive measures is challenging. Estimating when, where, and how a crime might occur, especially in the course of daily life remains a complex task.

In conclusion, the contributions of victimology to the criminal field are evident in its interaction with other core disciplines such as criminology, substantive and procedural criminal law, and judicial and criminal psychology. The victim represents the common link across all branches of the criminal field, a component that long lacked sufficient attention until the emergence of victimology as a distinct branch of criminology, devoted to studying and protecting the weaker party in the criminal relationship.

The Algerian Penal Code:

As can be deduced from Articles 350 bis, 303 bis 01, and 303 bis 13, there is a noticeable lack of attention or even omission of the element of harm, which is considered a fundamental criterion in defining the victim in certain legislations predominately in the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, which is mainly due to the fact that harm is not always essential for the criminalization of certain acts, especially since the law punishes attempts at committing crimes. In such cases, the criminal act itself represents a degree of danger that justifies punishment as a deterrent reaction to offenses against both public and private interests. This has always been one of the core objectives of penal laws throughout their stages of development (Falakaw, 2017, p. 169). Moreover, harm is a necessary condition for admitting a compensation claim before the civil courts or before the criminal judge when the victim establishes themselves as a civil party in the attached civil action. However, this element is not one of the required components for the occurrence of certain crimes such as attempts which justifies the absence of any reference to it in substantive provisions. In addition, the legislator, within the Penal Code, links the extinction of criminal proceedings in some offenses to the pardon of the victim. In all these provisions, the right to terminate prosecution belongs exclusively to the victim, the one upon whom the criminal acts were committed according to the definitions set forth in this law (Falakawi, 2017, p. 170).

The Algerian Code of Criminal Procedure According to modern criminal policy, which tends to be compensatory and solidarity-based, the participation of the victim in judicial proceedings has become necessary and indisputable (Falakawi, 2017, p. 173). The same law shows that the legislator used the term "victim" in several articles but without granting it a procedural role. For example, Article 531 bis 1, which concerns compensation for victims of judicial errors, refers to a weak party who must be protected by the judiciary at all levels, taking into account the harm suffered as a result of the crime. This suggests that the legislator adopts the same concept of the victim as in the Penal Code (Falakaw, 2017, p. 173), insofar as the victim does not perform procedural actions during the course of public prosecution. On the other hand, when searching for an effective role of the victim within the Code of Criminal Procedure, we find that it is limited to initiating public action without carrying it out, as stipulated in Article 1 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The victim may only initiate public action in specific offenses, either through a civil claim or direct summons before the court. Once initiated, the responsibility for conducting the proceedings passes to the judicial authorities. Hence, the victim's active role in the Code of Criminal Procedure elevates them from being merely a party entitled to procedural and substantive protection to a harmed party who can act as a civil plaintiff seeking compensation for the damage suffered and in some cases assisting the public prosecutor in presenting and discussing evidence (Falakawi, 2017, p. 174).

Nevertheless, it can be said that the victim of crime has not been granted significant importance in Algerian legislation, except within the general rules of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Furthermore, according to Article 2 of the same code, the right to civil action for damages resulting from a felony, misdemeanor, or infraction is granted to "any person who has personally suffered direct harm caused by a crime." However, following recent legal

developments, a broader definition of “victim” can now be inferred, especially after the latest amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure, where the legislator introduced the category of victim-witnesses as a legally protected party. Despite this progress, the field of study remains fertile, and the work in this area is still in its early stages especially regarding criminal policy and legal frameworks which calls for intensified and complementary studies to achieve justice for the weakest party in the criminal act: the victim.

Criminal Psychology:

A victim is anyone who has suffered trauma or distress regardless of its source in any unfair or unlawful way that harms their body, dignity, rights, or property (Cario, 2003, p. 13). Over and above, the victim is the central focus of an independent discipline known as victimology, which studies individuals after they have been subjected to a crime and have become victims themselves (Abbassi, 2015, p. 15). It aims to help them overcome their suffering, ensure their rights, and provide them with proper care and support. Although victimology is a relatively new scientific field and a sub-branch of forensic psychology, it is comprehensive in nature. In addition, it encompasses all aspects surrounding the victim and explains the reasons behind the transformation of an individual or a group from ordinary people into victims. During investigations, the psychological condition of the victim must be considered to assess the degree of impact, the extent of harm caused by the assault, and the alignment between the claim and the damage suffered or conversely, to determine whether the victim's accusation (Falakawi, 2017, p. 12) may be influenced by unrelated motives such as revenge or provocation. Forensic psychology, which focuses on the psychological study of all individuals involved in a criminal case whether they are directly part of the proceedings or not is itself a branch of criminal psychology. Within this framework, it pays particular attention to the statements made by victims, taking into account the circumstances surrounding the crime, both during and after the event. For example: A young woman walking modestly at sunset through a neighborhood known for its high crime rate. A person leaving a bank located in a busy marketplace carrying a visible bundle of cash without taking precautions. Victimology has always paid special attention to vulnerability whether general or specific to victimization. In fact, it focuses on studying the traits, attitudes, and behaviors that make certain individuals particularly susceptible to harm. Researchers seek to understand why the risk of victimization is unevenly distributed among individuals why some people are more likely to become victims or to experience repeated victimization. It is crucial to relate the risk of harm to various social and demographic variables to assess differential vulnerability among specific groups. Furthermore, the discipline emphasizes analyzing how victims react when confronted with one or more aggressors (Zaghbi, 2011, p. 20). Therefore, it is essential to study the victim's behavior before, during, and after the crime, analyzing the different types of responses strong resistance, moderate resistance, submission, resignation, or consent according to the nature of the crime. Most importantly, attention must also be given to post-victimization behavior: How does the victim adapt and cope with the new situation? What actions do they take to prevent further victimization? These questions remain central and in many cases still unanswered in the ongoing development of criminal psychology and victimology.

Conclusion

Victimology has changed the way we look at crime. For, fifty years after Mendelsohn first introduced the term “victim,” it has become impossible to think about crimes without including their consequences. Victimologists have succeeded in drawing attention to the suffering of victims, and this can be seen in the emergence of international organizations and conferences, such as the United Nations Declaration, as well as in the renewed interest of criminologists in crimes against humanity. The World Society of Victimology, through its role in disseminating knowledge and research, has played a major part in this process.

Victimology is still a young science. While there is still much debate about the boundaries of victimology and the concept of the victim, it is clear that this field remains strongly linked to criminology, as is evident in many studies on criminal victimization. However, it can be said that victimology has evolved independently of criminology. Moreover, this evolution is reflected in the creation of specialized research journals and institutions dedicated to studying victims and their various categories. On the other hand, victimology emerged from the womb of criminology to become a source of knowledge and inspiration for it. Nevertheless, the victim of a crime, as a party, was not given importance except within the general rules of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Its concept was limited, according to Article 2 of the Algerian Code of Criminal Procedure, to the status of a civil plaintiff, defined as “any person who has been directly harmed by a crime.” However, a broader concept has since been applied to those who fall under the category of victims, especially after the latest amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure, in which the legislator recognized the category of “victim-witnesses” as a legally protected party. The importance of the victim in the criminal field and their role in reducing the criminal phenomenon, viewed from the opposite side of the criminal act, calls upon all contributors in the criminal sciences to make the necessary efforts to do justice to a weak and neglected party known as “the victim.”

Ethical Considerations

This study is based exclusively on theoretical analysis, historical review, and previously published academic literature. It does not involve human participants, personal data, experiments, or field research. Consequently, no ethical approval was required. The authors have adhered to academic integrity standards, ensuring proper citation of sources and respect for intellectual property rights.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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