**SOC 3290: Deviance**

**Overheads Lecture 17: Measuring Deviance 2:**

**Victimization Surveys**

\* Victimization surveys have been the preferred methodological tool of victimologists since the 1970's.

\*These gather information directly from victims. In the past, little was known relative to offenders

\* Focus on crime:

- With direct, identifiable victims

-Direct, potentially identifiable offender

-Victimizations for which information available

**Canadian Urban Victimization Survey (1981)**

\* Findings:

-Gender differences (assault)

-Age and risk (youth)

-Income

-Lifestyle (nights out on town)

-Fear of crime

-Only 42% of crimes reported

-Reasons: “Too minor”

“Police can’t do anything”

“Inconvenient”

Variation in sexual assaults

Most likely to report when large financial loss

**Violence Against Women Survey (1993)**

\* 51% of Canadian women experienced at least 1 incident of physical

or sexual assault since the age of 18 (vs. 10% in the preceding year).

\* Women were at greater risk of violence by men they know (45%)

than by strangers (23%). Many reported past violence from both.

\* 39% of women had been victims of sexual assault (vs. 5% in the

previous year). 17% reported physical threats or assaults by men other

than spouses (vs. 1% in the previous year).

\* 29% of women had been assaulted by a spouse or live-in partner (3%

in prior year). More was reported in previous relationships than current

ones (48% vs. 15%).

\* There was a continued risk of violence to women from ex-partners

despite a divorce or separation.

\* The most common forms of violence were threats, followed by

pushing, grabbing and shoving, slapping, throwing something, kicking,

biting, and hitting with fists.

\* The proportion who had been beaten up, choked, sexually assaulted,

or had a weapon used against them were all less than 10%.

\* A majority of respondents who have suffered violence had been

victimized more than once. This was particularly evident in sexual

violence.

\* Women were at risk of sexual violence in a variety of locations/

situations. 46% of sexual assaults occurred in a private place, 10% at

work, and were not an uncommon risk in public locations

\* Spousal assault did not merely involve low level violence such as

threats, pushing, grabbing and shoving.

\* The majority of abused women were assaulted repeatedly, 1/3 more

than ten times.

\*Men from previous relationships were reportedly more violent than

others.

The VAWS also detailed the *relationship dynamics* involved:

\* The percentage reporting emotional abuse was higher than those

reporting physical or sexual violence (35% vs. 29%).

\* Emotional abuse was used in conjunction with violence by the

majority of violent men

\* Obsessive and controlling behaviors were prominent in serious

battering relationships, & its frequency increased dramatically as the

seriousness of the battering increased

\* Controlling and abusive men often found a woman=s pregnancy a

threat to his exclusivity of attention and affection.

Finally, the VAWS indicated important *demographic* correlates:

\* Young women 18-24 experienced rates of sexual assault twice that in

the next age group (25-34), & had rates of wife assault 3 times higher.

\* The rate of spousal assault in new marriages (2 years or less) was

almost three times the national average.

\* Common-law relationships showed rates of violence 4 times higher

than legal marriages.

\* Single women & those with some (but not completed) postsecondary

education reported the highest rates of sexual assault.

\* In spousal assault, both men with less than a high school education,

& those who are unemployed, assaulted their partners at twice the rate of others

\* Spousal assault and sexual assault were twice as high among those

with low incomes

\* Witnessing violence in childhood was a very important risk factor for

both abusers and potential victims

\* Alcohol abuse was strongly correlated with violence & seriousness of

injury.

\* Rates of violent victimization varied from higher levels in Western

Canada to lower levels in the east.

\* When all of these associated factors are weighed statistically, the

most important predictors were:

verbal abuse/putdowns,

sexual jealousy

efforts to limit womens= autonomy/social

contacts

age

the man=s education

living in a common-law relationship

early exposure to violence

the man=s unemployment.

\* This VAWS picture of intimate violence contradicts lifestyle and routine activities theories of victimization.

**General Social Survey 2014**

\* Just under one‑fifth of Canadians aged 15 years and older reported being the victim of one of the eight offences measured by the 2014 General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization, down from just over a quarter in 2004.

\* Victimization rates for all crimes measured by the 2014 GSS were lower than those reported 10 years earlier, with the exception of sexual assault, which remained stable. From 2004, the violent victimization rate fell by 28%, while the household victimization rate decreased by 42% and the rate of theft of personal property declined by 21%.

\* Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec recorded the lowest rates of violent victimization among the provinces, while Manitoba posted the highest rate in 2014.

\* All of the Atlantic provinces and Ontario reported household victimization rates below the average for the 10 provinces, while the opposite was observed in each of the Prairie provinces and British Columbia.

\* Among the census metropolitan areas (CMAs) with releasable estimates, the CMA of Calgary recorded the lowest violent victimization rate while the CMAs of Halifax and Winnipeg posted the highest.

\* Household victimization rates were lowest in the Québec CMA, while most western CMAs recorded rates that were higher than the national average.

\* Unlike previous GSS cycles on victimization that found similar violent victimization rates among males and females, women posted a higher rate than men in 2014. This was mainly due to the relative stability of the sexual assault victimization rate—of which the majority of victims are women—while the victimization rate of other violent crimes declined.

\* Being young was the main contributing factor to the risk of violent victimization. The rate of violent victimization was highest among persons aged 20 to 24 years and then decreased gradually with age.

\* Mental health was the second most influential factor associated with the risk of violent victimization in 2014. About 1 in 10 Canadians reported a mental health‑related disability, a developmental or learning disability, or self‑assessed their mental health as poor or fair. These individuals combined reported a rate of violent victimization more than four times that of people who self‑assessed their mental health as excellent or very good.

\* Just under one‑third of Canadians reported experiencing some form of abuse at the hands of an adult before the age of 15. People who experienced child maltreatment recorded violent victimization rates that were more than double those of people who did not experience child maltreatment.

\* According to the GSS, in 2014 just over one‑quarter of violent incidents involved a weapon and just under one in five violent incidents resulted in injury to the victim. In about half of violent incidents (excluding spousal violence) the victim knew the offender.

\* About one out of seven victims of violent crime reported having suffered symptoms similar to post‑traumatic stress as a result of their victimization.

\* Some of the main risk factors for experiencing household victimization are living in a CMA, living in a single (detached) house, living in a dwelling for only a short time, living in a neighbourhood with low social cohesion, or renting the place that you live in.

\* According to the GSS, just under one‑third (31%) of criminal incidents were brought to the attention of the police in 2014, a proportion slightly lower than 10 years earlier, when 34% of incidents were reported. The proportions of incidents reported to the police ranged from 50% for break‑ins to as little as 5% for sexual assaults.

**International Crime Victimization Survey 2004**

This was the fifth round of this survey, also conducted in 1989, 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2010, with subjects 16 and over responding from 30 participating countries. Of the 10 offences covered, key findings from 2004 (more comprehensive than 2010) include:

\* 17% of Canadians aged 16 and over had been victims of at least one crime measured by the ICVS during the year preceding the survey. This rate was similar to the overall international victimization rate (16%).

\* Victimization prevalence rates for 2004-2005 varied from one country to another, with Spain, Japan, Hungary and Portugal registering the lowest victimization rates (between 9% and 10%). In contrast, Ireland, England & Wales and New Zealand were among the countries with the highest overall victimization rates.

\* For almost all countries participating in the ICVS, the offences with the highest victimization rates were theft of personal property, theft from a car and theft of a bicycle. In Canada, the highest victimization rate was for theft from a vehicle. Nearly 5% of persons aged 16 and over had property taken from their vehicle.

\* Not all incidents of criminal victimization are reported to the police. Across all participating countries, slightly more than half the population (53%) reported a victimization incident.

\* Canada, along with Finland and Luxembourg, ranked relatively low with respect to reporting. With a rate below the international average, 48% of Canadian victims of such incidents reported the incident to the police. Austria and Belgium had the highest reporting rates (70%) on the international scale. Victims in Mexico were much less likely to report their victimization incidents to the police compared to all other countries surveyed (16%). The next lowest rate of reporting to the police was in Iceland (40%).

\* While Canadians reported a lower proportion of incidents, when they did report, they were satisfied with the police response. In cases where Canadians reported theft from a car, burglary, robbery, sexual offences or assault, two-thirds reported that they were satisfied with police respondse. Additionally, 86% believed that the police were doing a good or excellent job at controlling crime in their area. Canada, along with Finland and the United States, were among the participating countries in the ICVS whose population was the most satisfied with the job done by the police.

The ICVS thus provides a great deal of information on victimization but provides the added value of placing Canada’s experiences in a broader international context.

**Victimization Surveys: A Critique**

\* Advantages of victimization surveys compare to UCR statistics:

-Respondents get asked about theoretically relevant issues

-Weed out public decisions not to report

-Weed out police decisions not to record

-Improve estimates of crime and victimization

\* Problems:

-Victims have to know they have been victimized

-Standardized survey questions can be interpreted differently

-Dishonesty in responses

-Faulty memories of respondents

-Giving most socially desirable answers

-Limiting offences inquired about affects outcome

-Selection of respondents

-Large samples needed/ inflates cost

\* Again, we must see these as useful constructions, to be used with other sources