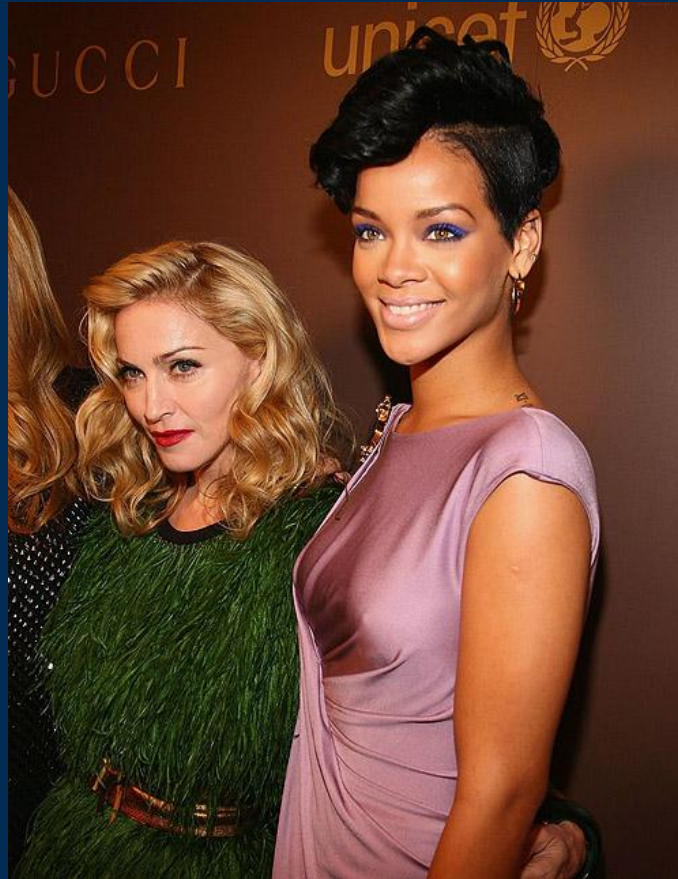




Framing victims of crime: thinking about the context of information rights

Antony Pemberton

Victims of crime



Key ideas

- Victims information rights are situated in a wider context
- A key issue in this context is the way aspects of the experience of victims of crime are *framed* in discourse at the public/ societal level
- This applies to
 - > The experience of victimisation itself
 - > The relationship between victims and organisations involved in assisting victims within or around the criminal justice process
 - > The possible outcomes of the criminal justice process for victims of crime

Framing

- The process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections between them to promote a particular interpretation (Entman, 1994, 2004, 2007)
- That is: frames introduce or raise the salience of apparent importance of certain ideas, activating schemas that encourage target audiences to think, feel and decide in a certain way
- Power of frames → Tversky and Kahneman's prospect theory (1981)

Classic example (Tversky and Kahneman, 1981)

- 600 people are threatened by a disease
- Two sets of choices
- A: 200 people will be saved
- B: 33,33% chance everyone will be saved, 66,66% no one will be saved
- C: 400 people will die
- D: 33,33% chance no one will die, 66,66% everyone will die
- 72% choose A over B, while only 22% choose C over D.

Key components of a successful frame

1. Problem definition
 2. Causal analysis
 3. Moral judgement
 4. Remedy promotion
- Success of *injustice* frames (Gamson, 1992): includes causality, blame, responsible agents in frame
 - Bias: consistent patterns in the framing of mediated communication that promote the influence of one side in conflicts (Entman, 2007)

Framing: macro and micro-level

- Frames are important at the *macro*-level: the way public and political discourse is shaped, and forms the driving and binding force in societal movements.
- But at the *micro*-level as well: people use frames to understand pertinent including identity issues referring to themselves (Bennett & Snow, 2000),

20th century social movements



Framing the victimisation experience

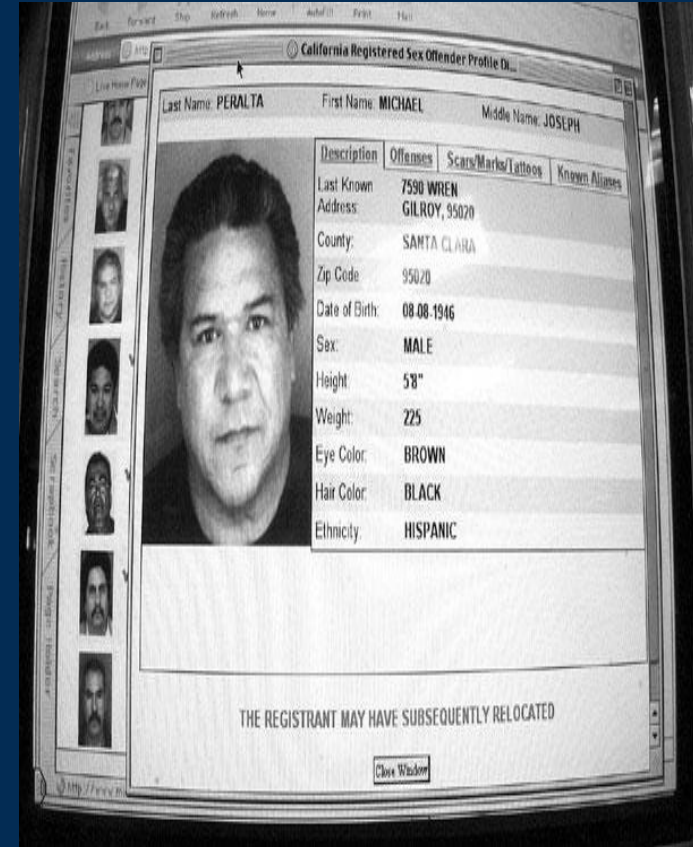
- Joel Best (1999): the way we talk about new crimes and new victims:
- Victimization is widespread and consequential.
- Victimization often goes unrecognized; awareness of victimization should be improved
- Qualms with the label victim.
- Relationship between victims and victimizers is straightforward and unambiguous.
- One type of victimisation at a time

Travis Walton



- A logger from Arizona
- Was abducted by aliens in 1975
- Went missing for five days, while his fellow crew members reportedly saw a UFO

A victims frame



Another victims frame



The ideal victim and the survivor

- The ideal victim (Christie, 1986):
 - > Weak in relation to offender
 - > Legitimate
 - > Blameless
 - > Unrelated to offender
 - > Offender is big and bad: the Myth of Pure Evil (Baumeister, 1997)
- The survivor:
- A *women* who has experienced *repetitive violence* by the hands of a *man* – often her ex-partner - whose violence serves *control and patriarchy* (the patriarchal terrorist, Johnson, 1995)

Overlap between victim and offender population



- A. Lahlah (2013)
- *Invisible victims?*
- Moroccan-Dutch boys overrepresented in delinquency figures
- Largely explained by child victimisation experiences

Questions

- To what extent do elements of the stereotypes in the frames diminish the self-relevance for certain groups of victims?
- For instance
- Victims who self-identify as strong?
- Victims who are to blame (for other crimes) or feel they are to blame?
- Male victims of domestic violence?

The relationship between victims and service providers

Are victims costumers?



Are victims clients?



The relationship between victims and service providers

Are victims citizens?



Are victims obligatees?



Victims as private sector customers?

- Customer perspective: Immediate gratification, sensory; own choice; repeated → so base for expectations
- Client: immediate gratification? Sensory or based on expert input? Is your own experience legitimate in the face of expert opinion?
- Citizen: As an individual or a group member? To what extent does result also reflect on group values: for instance justice?
- Obligatee: To what extent the *choice* to participate limited?

Satisfaction research?



When I'm watchin' my
T.V.

And that man comes on
to tell me

How white my shirts
can be

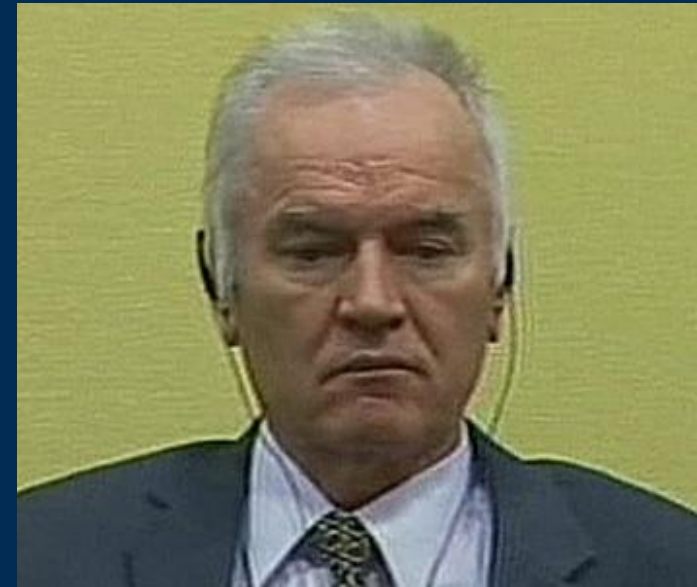
But he can't be a man
'cause he doesn't

smoke

The same cigarettes
as me

- Emphasis on the customer perspective: but what about the other perspectives?
- Service *provision* or *co-production*?

Justice?



Closure?



EU website

- ***75 million Europeans each year become victims of crime. The European Union is guaranteeing their right to support, protection and access to justice. Wherever you are in the EU.***
- http://ec.europa.eu/justice/criminal/promo_criminal_en.htm

Aspirational claims versus the reality of victims' experience

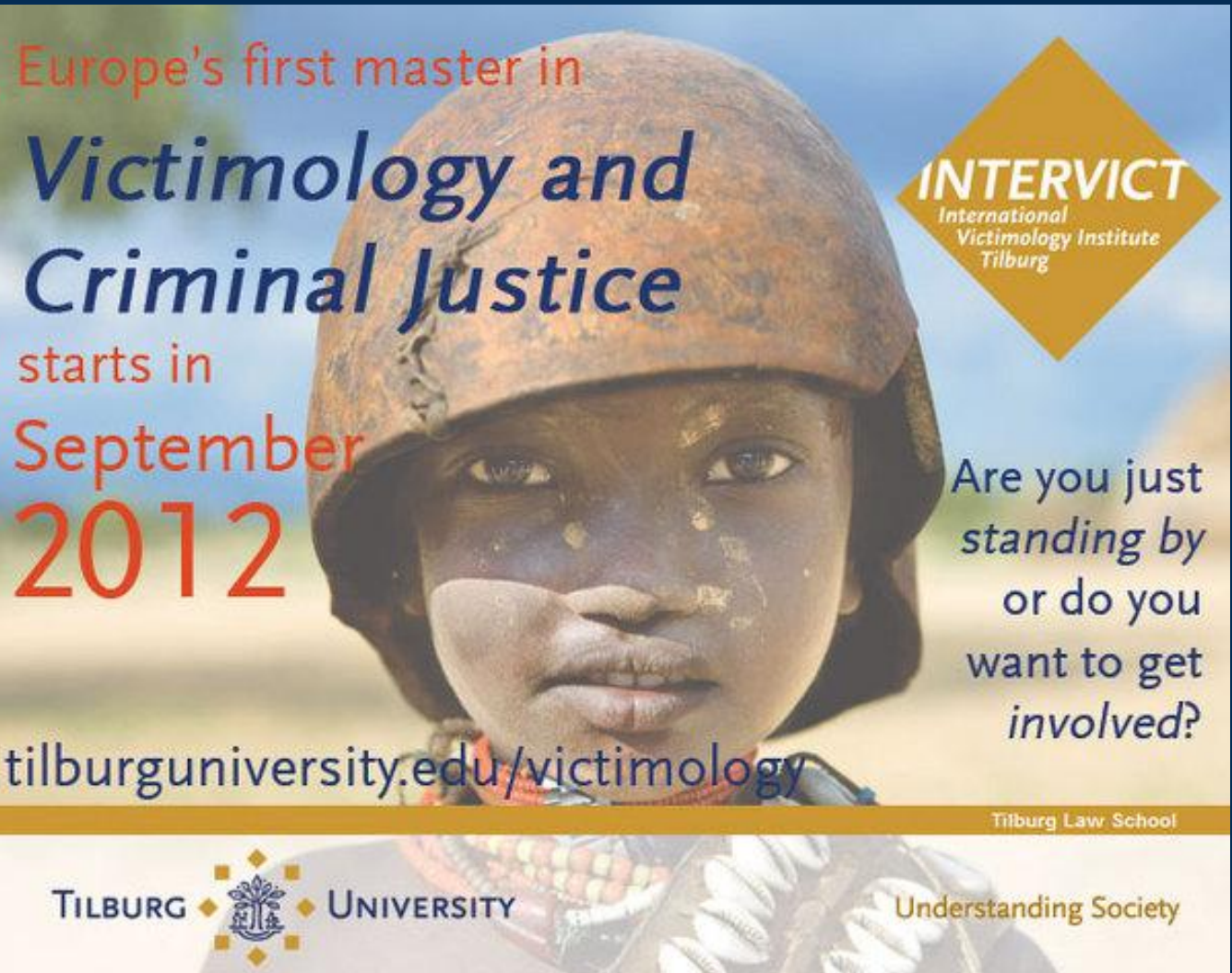
- Criminal justice provides justice and closure to victims, while guaranteeing their support, protection and support.
- In reality any gains of criminal justice for victims are small: protection from rather by criminal justice is a larger concern.
- Moreover:
- Victimology's sad truth concerns the catch-22 of justice: In the aftermath of criminal victimization the more justice is needed, and the more important it is, the less likely it can be fully obtained or even defined.

- To what extent does framing the outcome of criminal justice in aspirational terms solely lead to expectations that criminal justice cannot and will not realize?

Questions?

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More Questions?




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