

PERCEPTUAL RESPONSES OF VICTIMIZATION IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

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Relationships between frequency and severity of household victimization and fears, concerns and behavioral responses to crime are investigated utilizing a mailed victimization questionnaire among a predominantly rural/farm market population. Frequency of victimization is defined as the number of personal and property offenses experienced by household members. Severity is defined as the proximity of the victim to the offense. Fear is measured by three items relating to perceptions of the relative safety of one's residential area. Concern is measured by three items relating to attitudes or perceptions about crime in general. Behavioral measures include minor avoidance reactions, such as altering entertainment practices partially in response to crime, and major avoidance or retreatist actions, such as moving in response to crime.

Major findings and conclusions are as follows: (1) as the frequency and severity of victimization increases, fear of, but not concern about, crime increases; (2) though victimization appears to be an important factor in minor behavioral adaptations, this relationship is not as conclusive for major avoidance reactions; (3) fear is considered to be a rational response to people's experiential worlds; and (4) fear may be viewed as an independent consequence of both concern and victimization among the rural population sampled.

INTRODUCTION

Although victimization surveys were first undertaken largely to determine the extent of unreported crime, there was a peripheral interest in whether criminal victimization alters attitudes and

behaviors. However, initial research findings seemingly put this concern to rest. Victimization, it was shown, was not an important differentiating variable with respect to people's anxieties about crime.

Conclusions such as the above are exemplified by the following summary statement of research findings in a task force report of the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice: "having been personally victimized did not influence perceptions of whether crime was increasing or not, or the degree of a person's concern with the crime problem in most instances" (1967:86; see also, Biderman et al., 1967). Further, although some evidence suggested that crimes of violence may have an impact on people's attitudes and behaviors, McIntyre (1967:367) argued that victimizations of this sort do not occur frequently enough in any single individual's life "to make . . . [them] the major determinant of people's perceptions of the crime problem."

While victimization itself appears to have little direct effect, several studies show such demographic variables as sex, age, socio-economic status and area of residence to be associated with attitudes related to crime. Females, for example, are invariably more concerned about crime than men (McIntyre, 1967; see also Roper, 1975), despite the fact that they are less likely to be victimized (see McIntyre, 1967; Boggs, 1971; U.S. Department of Justice, 1974; and Hindelang, 1976). Similarly, anxieties about crime increase with age though the probability of victimization actually decreases (see Conklin, 1971; Hindelang, 1976). Within urban areas, lower income individuals consistently exhibit more intense anxieties than middle and upper income persons (see Block, 1970; Biderman et al., 1967; Ennis, 1967a; McIntyre, 1967; Reiss, 1967; and Conklin, 1975). Finally, though not extensively studied, Boggs (1971), Conklin (1971) and Ennis (1967a) each report that residents in rural and semi-rural settings are less anxious about the crime problem than are those in urban areas.

REDEFINING ANXIETIES ABOUT CRIME

Although the above seemingly supports the notion that responses to crime are at times irrational, Furstenberg (1971) has noted much of the research indicating victimization experiences are unrelated to anxieties about crime evidences a failure to recognize that "concern" and "fear" are not interchangeable variables. Fear of crime, he argues, is: "measured by a person's perception of his own chances of victimization, and concern by his estimate of the seriousness of the crime situation in this country. An individual may be troubled by the problem of crime, but not be in the least afraid of being personally victimized" (1971:603). At the same time, one might add, some individuals may not be particularly concerned about what they perceive to be the political rhetoric of the "crime problem." However, these same individuals may be very fearful of crime in their own back yard, given experiences with direct or "indirect" victimization.¹ Further, expressions of "concern" may be tempered by time, that is, perceptions about crime are relatively fluid. In fact, it might be that among those in "high" crime areas, concern over the increasing crime rate may be largely overridden by already existing fears, thus producing the lower levels of concern observed among these groups (see Furstenberg, 1971).

Given this distinction, Furstenberg reports that "those most concerned about the problem of crime are no more or less afraid of victimization than anyone else" (1971:605). Residents of high crime rate areas in Baltimore, for example, were less concerned about crime as a national social problem than were those residing in low crime areas. On the other hand, fear of crime is clearly associated with the perceived probability of victimization. Finally, fear and concern were actually inversely related: those living in high crime rate areas exhibited greater levels of fear than those living in low crime rate areas. It would appear, then, that those living with the realities of crime are likely to view it as a local problem; those not being particularly fearful, on the other hand, are more likely to express concern that it may "spread" to their neighborhood.

Interestingly enough, there is evidence which suggests that the impact of actual victimization is greatest among those in low crime rate areas. Reppetto (1974:62), for example, found a significant association between fear and victimization and that the association was strongest among persons living in low crime rate areas "where in general people seem the least worried" (concerned) about crime. Similarly, both Conklin (1975) and Block (1971) report that initiation into criminal victimization is likely to result in redefinitions of the safety accorded certain areas of the individual's community in that "areas of the city toward which they had felt positively are redefined as high-risk places" (Conklin, 1975:75).

In summary, available evidence suggests that criminal conduct may indeed affect feelings related to the fear of crime. However, victimization does not appear to greatly affect people's overall concern about the crime problem. As a consequence, it would appear from the evidence that fear and concern are at times inversely related.

Unfortunately, much of the research upon which these conclusions have been based has been conducted in predominantly urban areas where high crime rate areas are easily identified and/or respondents are at least likely to have experienced "indirect" victimization (Conklin, 1971). Whether similar findings will be obtained in rural areas, where the extent of crime is generally presumed to be lower (see Boggs, 1971; Ennis, 1967a; Conklin, 1971, 1975), is at this point open to question. If it is the case that crime related attitudinal and behavioral differences emerge only when victimization experiences reach a fairly high level, (or at least when exposure to risk is high) then in those areas traditionally characterized by low levels of victimization, such differences may not exist. Fear, concern and behavioral responses to crime, then, may be directly related to and vary with criminal victimization. The purpose of this paper is to bring relevant data obtained from a predominantly rural/farm market area to bear on this hypothesis.

PROCEDURES

The Sample

As already noted, most victimization surveys have been directed at urban populations. The present study utilized a mailed questionnaire concerning victimization experiences within a predominantly agricultural area. Telephone directories from five counties in eastern Washington State were used to identify an initial probability sample of 5,200 households. A three wave mailing approach including an initial questionnaire, a follow-up post card and a second mailing of the questionnaire to non-respondents resulted in a 60 percent (N = 3,143) response rate.

Measuring Victimization

Frequency of victimization is measured by grouping responses to twelve property offense categories and six personal offense categories. The major property offense categories include burglary, larceny, and illegal trespass. In each instance, respondents were requested to indicate whether they, or a member of their household, had been victimized and, if so, how many times the offense occurred the previous year.

Two types of burglary were considered, those occurring at the respondent's place of residence (home, garage, or other out-buildings) and those occurring in temporary residences (motels, vacation homes, cabins, etc.). Theft of livestock, and farm or heavy equipment are included with auto theft as grand larceny. Petty larceny includes theft of vehicle parts, theft of objects from inside the vehicle, and thefts from around the house or related property.²

Only five property offenses were widely experienced by respondents' households. These are, in decreasing order of occurrence, illegal trespass (12.3%), theft of vehicle parts (12.3%), burglary from home or related property (7.1%), theft of objects from around the house (7.1%), and theft from inside auto (6.7%). Illegal trespass is the only offense for which extensive repeated victimization was reported. *Frequency of property victimization* is measured by an overall index generated by grouping such

victimization experiences into the categories "None," "Low" (one offense), and "High" (two or more offenses).³

Three major classifications of crimes against persons are considered: robbery, assault, and personal larceny. For robbery, respondents were asked whether they or a member of their household had something taken from them by force or threat of force. Assault included aggravated assault in which a weapon was used or serious injury resulted; simple assault in which no weapon was used or only minor injury occurred, and attempted or threatened assaults. Personal larceny included pickpocketing and purse snatching.

As expected, personal crime is relatively infrequent compared to property victimization. However, even among the personal offenses there is a wide range of occurrence. Attempted and actual assaults (4.3%) were reported three times more frequently than personal larcenies (1.5%) and ten times more frequently than robbery (0.4%). Because of the small number of offenses reported, *frequency of personal victimization* is measured by an overall index generated by grouping the above victimization experiences into "Victim" and "Non-victim" categories.

Severity is defined in terms of the proximity or closeness of the victim to the offender or offense, that is, how readily the victim realizes that a crime has taken place. Certain offenses are more apparent and detrimental (both physically and financially) to the victim's household. It is expected that they will have a greater impact upon people's lives than other offenses. Three levels are identified: "High," those experiencing personal crimes (1.9%); "Moderate," those property offenses expected to be readily observed by the victim, (e.g., illegal entry of home, temporary residence, or other buildings which one currently occupies, auto theft, theft of vehicle parts, thefts from inside vehicle, and theft of objects from around the house, 28%); and "low," those offenses expected to go unnoticed for quite some time (such as illegal entry of vacation homes, illegal trespass, thefts of farm or heavy equipment, equipment parts, or livestock).

Measuring Perceptual Responses to Crime

Fear of crime is measured by combining responses to three forced choice items: (1) "My chances of being attacked or robbed have increased"; (2) "There is reason to be afraid of becoming the victim of a crime in my community"; and (3) "How safe do you feel out alone at night?"⁴

Concern is measured by combining responses to three forced choice items relating to people's generalized anxieties about crime. These are: (1) "Crime is more serious than the newspaper or TV say"; (2) "Many people do not appreciate how serious a problem crime has become"; (3) "The threat of criminal behavior is greater today than in the past."⁵

Behavioral responses to crime are measured by two indices. The first refers to minor inconveniences including: (1) "Reasons for going out more or less than a year or two ago"; (2) "Reasons for going inside or outside the city for entertainment"; and (3) "Reasons for shopping in a different area than for entertainment."⁶ The second refers to more apparent retreatist reactions and includes: (1) "Reason for moving to present residence"; (2) "Why did you leave your former address"; and (3) "Is your neighborhood dangerous enough to make you think about moving?"⁷ With the exception of this last item, respondents indicated whether or not crime was among their major reasons for curtailing the various activities and behaviors. The resulting indices were dichotomized as "Crime and Other" and "Other" reasons.

RESULTS

The findings in Table 1 support the contention that there is a relationship between frequency of victimization and fear of crime. Those rural residents experiencing little or no victimization are less fearful of crime than those experiencing higher rates of victimization. Further, the relationship between personal victimization and fear of crime is somewhat stronger than the relationship between property victimization and fear of crime. As noted earlier, previous research suggests that women are more likely than men to express fear for their personal safety

regardless of victimization status. Interestingly, sex of respondent does not appear to be a major factor—victimization experiences appear to result in heightened fear regardless of sex.

Table 1

Associations (Gammas) Between Household Victimization and Fear of Crime			
Sexual Category	Victimization		
	Property	Personal	Severity
Male	.1851*	.1789*	.1481*
Female	.1347+	.2467+	.1453
Combined	.1781*	.2236*	.1539*

+ Significant at the .05 level
 * Significant at the .01 level

Similarly, the findings presented in Table 1 support the expected relationship between severity of victimization and fear of crime. Therefore, though the gammas are lower than those calculated for frequency of victimization, as the severity of victimization (defined in terms of proximity of the victim to the offense) increases, people are more likely to express fear for their personal safety (gamma for sexes combined, .15).

While the above shows a relationship between fear of crime and victimization, the results reported in Table 2 show no relationship between the frequency of victimization and concern about crime. The one possible exception is the relationship between property victimization and concern among females, though the gamma is trivial (.09). It appears, then, that rural residents who have experienced varying frequencies of personal and/or property victimization are, in general, no more or less concerned about crime than are the nonvictimized. Likewise, the gammas for severity of victimization are trivial and fail to attain statistical significance (sexes combined, .07). The prediction specifying that people experiencing more severe forms of victimization are no more or less concerned about crime than those experiencing no victimization or offenses of low severity is upheld.

Table 2

Association (Gammas) Between Household Victimization and Concern About Crime

Sexual Category	Victimization		
	Property	Personal	Severity
Male	.0644	.1371	.0759
Female	.0896+	.0299	.0508
Combined	.0736	.1001	.0680+

+ Significant at the .05 level

Despite the above, it is interesting to note that, unlike Furstenberg (1971), the fear and concern indices employed here are strongly and positively correlated (see Table 3). In fact, the gamma values generated from tabular analysis of these indices are stronger than any of the correlation between victimization and fear of crime (males, .32; females, .34; sexes combined, .32).

Table 3

Associations (Gammas) Between Fear of Crime and Concern About Crime

Fear of Crime	Concern About Crime		
	Male	Female	Combined
	.3150	.3370	.3176

All coefficients significant at the .01 level

It should be noted, of course, that the difference between these findings and Furstenberg's (1971) urban study, may be a function of different measures of fear and concern. Furstenberg utilized single item measures, whereas the present study employed multiple item indices. Though it may be that this divergence stems from a difference in the measures of fear and concern, the difference may also be attributable to the predominantly rural population. In either case, it is still possible to conclude, on the basis of the data previously discussed, that fear and concern

are not interchangeable variables. They tap different dimensions of anxiety regarding crime.⁸

Turning to the relationship between victimization and behavioral responses to crime, one finds that the minor avoidance reactions (see Table 4) are strongly associated with the frequency of property victimization (.36). Those most frequently victimized by property crime appear to alter their daily living patterns partially in response to crime. Moreover, though it fails to obtain statistical significance (largely attributable to small N's), the relationship between frequency of personal crime and minor avoidance reactions (.25) is in the predicted direction as well. Severity of victimization is likewise correlated with adopting minor behavioral alterations (.24). As severity increases, people are more likely to include crime among their reasons for altering their daily living patterns.

Table 4
Associations (Gammas) Between Household
Victimization and Behavioral Responses to Crime

Behaviors	Victimization		
	Property	Personal	Severity
Minor	.3612*	.2468	.2366*
Major	.1602*	.1322+	.0680

+ Significant at the .05 level

* Significant at the .01 level

Much the same patterns are evident for the major behavioral reactions (see Table 4). Though somewhat weaker, the associations with frequency of personal (.13) and property (.16) victimization are in the predicted direction. As the frequency of victimization increases, people are more likely to include crime among their reasons for altering their lifestyles and areas of residence. The same is not true for the expected relationship between major behavioral reactions and severity of victimization where the gamma is minimal (.07) and fails to attain statistical significance. Generally, then, it does not appear that severity of victimization (as measured here) greatly affects people's decisions regarding major alterations of their lifestyles.

The findings presented in Table 5 indicate that the behavioral responses under study are associated with people's fears. People evidencing fear of crime, in the study, are far more likely to initiate minor adaptations in their lifestyles, as compared to their less anxious counterparts, and slightly more likely to evidence major alterations in their living patterns. Taken together, Tables 4 and 5 appear to indicate that rural residents experiencing victimization are more likely to express fear of crime and to, subsequently, alter their lifestyles in response to these anxieties.

Table 5
Associations (Gammas) Between Fear
of Crime and Behavioral Responses to Crime

Behaviors	Fear of Crime		
	Males	Females	Combined
Minor	.5587*	.6487*	.6326*
Major	.0725*	.1403	.1205*

* Significant at the .01 level

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has attempted to delineate the conditions under which attitudinal and behavioral responses to crime are altered as a result of household victimization experiences among rural residents. While there has been no overwhelming volume of research on rural residents, the findings generally corroborate those of previous research conducted in urban areas. The findings regarding fear of, and concern about, crime are generally consistent with those reported by Furstenberg (1971), Conklin (1975) and Repetto (1974). As the frequency and severity of victimization increases, among this predominantly rural population, fear of crime increases while concern about crime does not. Further, the relationship between fear and victimization is somewhat stronger among victims of personal crime than among victims of property crime.

Research has consistently found victimization experiences to be correlated with altered behavior patterns (which are considered to be reflections of people's anxieties about crime).

Ennis (1967a,b), Reiss (1967), Reppetto (1974), and Conklin (1975) indicate that people are more likely to initiate increased personal and household security measures if they have experienced some form of victimization. The attempt to further explore altered behavior patterns among a predominantly rural population generally supports this viewpoint. While frequency and severity of victimization are strongly associated with people adopting minor alterations in their behavioral patterns, such as altering or curtailing shopping and entertainment practices, crime is less likely to be included among respondents' reasons for major behavioral alterations (e.g., moving to a new residence).

Generally, the findings suggest that fear of crime is a rational response for individuals with previous victimization experiences. Rural residents who are more frequently victimized, and who experience more severe forms of victimization, are justifiably more fearful of subsequent crime than are those not having been victimized. Moreover, those evidencing fear are more likely to report altering their living patterns in response to their victimization experiences. Thus, it would appear victimization experiences produce fear of future criminal events, increasing the likelihood of minor, if not major, behavioral alterations.

On the other hand, concern about crime does not appear to be based upon personal experiences in the same logical manner. People who have been repeatedly victimized, or who have experienced more severe forms of victimization, are no more or less concerned about crime than those who have not had such experiences. It appears that the paranoia surrounding the "crime-problem" has affected both victims and nonvictims in approximately the same manner by producing a generalized anxiety about crime in our nation. If concern about crime is not based upon one's experiential world or upon one's perception of the chance of being victimized, it is likely based upon this more generalized anxiety concerning the overall crime situation.

The above suggests that fear may be viewed as an independent consequence of *both* concern and victimization. That is, both victimization and concern fuel people's fears. Within this context, *fear* becomes a function of the independent effects

of both overriding *concern* and actual victimizations. This may explain the difference between Furstenberg's (1971) urban sample as compared to our rural sample. Once considered the last bastion of safety, victimization experiences and visible crime occurring within the small city, town and farm settings, may produce heightened anxieties about crime. Among these populations there is no where else to turn to avoid crime—they live within the very areas our society has stereotypically (and idealistically) viewed as "crime-free."

The above interpretation is consistent with the finding that frequency and severity of victimization are to some extent associated with behavioral responses to crime among our rural respondents. However, it may be that among predominantly rural populations, as compared to urban populations, people simply do not have the opportunities to alter their lifestyles in response to crime to the same degree as urban populations. This would appear to explain the lower than expected correlations between the two variables. Not only are resources limited in terms of areas one may shop or engage in entertainment activities in small farm market communities, but the bonds to the family farm or inter-generational home may limit the desire and ability to move in response to crime.

These findings, in addition to the discovery that fear apparently leads to some modification in lifestyles, argue for the necessity of further research designed to explore differences between rural and urban populations with regard to behavioral responses to crime. Future research should direct some attention toward developing an understanding of the differential impact that victimization experiences may have upon rural versus urban populations. Research must also begin to focus upon the factors responsible for heightened concern among portions of the population. Initially, an examination of the population's seemingly unrealistic general paranoia concerning crime is required, given what we know about the true probability of experiencing personal and property victimization. This information might suggest a need for the development and implementation of educational programs designed to combat such (unrealistically high) anxieties and may assist in improving the overall quality of life. That is,

while actual victimization experiences have decidedly negative consequences for those involved, unwarranted concerns which are translated into fear are perhaps more detrimental to our society as a whole. When victimization researchers are better able to understand the causes of these concerns, we can begin to suggest means of lessening their consequences.

FOOTNOTES

1. This expectation is based upon what Conklin (1971) has termed indirect victimization. The public has generally altered its habits and attitudes in response to fear of crime with the aid of an ever expanding ability of the mass media to capitalize upon a larger pool of crimes. In addition, known victimization experiences of acquaintances undoubtedly increases (at least temporarily) people's anxieties regarding crime.
2. Illegal trespass was used only when no other offenses had occurred in conjunction with the trespassing incident. Coders were requested to make sure that each offense noted was separate and distinct. When it was clear that the same incident was mentioned twice (or more) they recorded only the most serious offense.
3. Illegal trespass was omitted due to its high frequency of occurrence. While many respondents reported this form of offense, it may generally be considered more of a nuisance than a crime.
4. Cronbach's *alpha* is used as a measure of internal consistency applicable to Likert scaling (see Nunnally, 1967). Alphas obtained for males and females respectively are .72 and .68. These moderate coefficients indicate that the respondents do to some extent discriminate between the items and that the statements may not quite tap the same degree or level of fear.
5. The reliability coefficients for these items were: males, .68 and females, .60.
6. The reliability coefficient calculated for the "minor" behavioral items indicates that these items have a fairly high degree of internal consistency ($\alpha = .76$).
7. For the "major" behavioral items the reliability coefficient is extremely low ($\alpha = .21$) indicating that the items probably do not tap the same dimensions of behavioral adaptations to crime. This is largely attributable to the fact that the statement "Is your neighborhood dangerous enough to make you think about moving?" (reverse coding

utilized in analysis) is negatively correlated with whether people have actually moved in response to crime or whether crime was a factor in selecting one's present residence. When distinguishing between actual and contemplated actions, then, it is apparent that people are likely to indicate that they have considered moving from their present residence because of the crime situation; but when people actually move, factors such as jobs, schools, and housing are likely to be more important considerations.

8. Preliminary analysis indicates that in controlling for concern, the relationship between fear and victimization increases. This supports the contention that fear and concern are independent. Thus, it may be that fear is a function of the independent effects of both overriding *concern* and actual victimization.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF SYMBOLIC
AND CULTURAL POLITICS IN THE
MARCUS GARVEY MOVEMENT

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This research incorporates interdisciplinary data in order to discuss the Marcus Garvey Movement which emerged in the urban North during the World War I era. The importance of symbolic and cultural politics for Garvey's appeal to newly arriving, often uneducated and unskilled northern urban Blacks, is elaborated. Such forms of symbolic communication and politics, along with Garvey's inability to anticipate repression and other macro-structural issues and conditions, created intense conflicts with potential allies, as well as his own followers. Garvey's form of ideological or symbolic politics provided short run successes in the recruitment of poor, relatively uneducated segments of the Harlem community to his racial struggle. However, in the long run, Garvey failed to provide leadership and tactical direction for a sustained broad based movement for racial equality.

This research will articulate the symbolic politics of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (U.N.I.A.) movement which emerged in the urban North during the W.W. I era. I will introduce an interdisciplinary perspective in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of historical data about Garvey. This research utilizes cultural categories like symbolism, ideology, and ritual to complement traditional political and historical data.

Garvey's political movement may be identified as a form of emerging urban nationalism; its historical thrust emerged from general historical and social conditions prevalent at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century in the urban northeast. Garvey's ideas became part of a historical dialogue