

A question of (co)responsibility in intimate victimisation and victimless crimes

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Scientific interest in victims of criminal and other victimisations has very soon clashed with the normative question about what and how great is their (co)responsibility for the damage they have suffered. The problem of risk behaviour - be it criminogenic or victimogenic - of actual and potential victims has gained special gravity in the context of situational and environmental crime prevention, which becomes an increasingly important mechanism of the control and prevention of criminal offences and other disturbing and harmful events (especially in the private sector, i.e. in large systems which are in private ownership and are mostly subjected to the logic of economic rationality). It is increasingly evident, that a victim's conduct (be it commissions or omissions) often represents an important facilitating or even encouraging factor in an "ante-criminal situation". For this reason, there has been a growing pressure on people who are expected to do their best to reduce the "offer" of criminal opportunities, to strengthen the system of protection of potential crime targets and to behave in general in a more self-protective way.

In this area, the state also becomes more and more active by alarming, mobilising, recruiting, instructing, informing, activating, co-ordinating and addressing individuals, communities, groups and organisations as potential victims of criminal offences; in this way it tries to create a kind of loosely integrated "partnership for order and peace" between the public and private sector, which has resulted in erasing the line of demarcation - which is profoundly ideological - between the state and civil society (the latter having been slowly transformed in a policing society). An increased interest in victims of crimes, which becomes more and more politicised and ideological, has slowly changed attitudes towards so-called victimless crimes. While liberal criminology / victimology strives for decriminalisation and normalisation of such activities, the rising neo-conservative politics argue the thesis that victimless crimes nevertheless have their victims: if these are not concrete individuals, then the victim is the community as a whole, because its quality of life is threatened by such phenomena as prostitution, pornography, drug use, vagrancy, drinking in public places, begging or too loose conduct of young people.

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