

# Victimology in Context: Examining Marginalized Communities and Crime Impact

Julianne Webster\*

Department of Criminology, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, Canada

## DESCRIPTION

Victimology, the study of victims and the psychological effects of their experiences, has expanded significantly since its inception. Traditionally, criminology focused primarily on the perpetrators of crime, but victimology brings the victim's perspective into focus, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the crime's impact. This paper search into the nuances of victimology within marginalized communities, exhibiting how social, economic, and cultural factors influence victimization and its consequences.

## Definition and scope of marginalized communities

Marginalized communities refer to groups of people who, due to systemic inequalities, are excluded from mainstream social, economic, cultural, or political life. These communities often include ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, and those living in poverty. Marginalization can be due to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or a combination of these factors. These groups are often at a higher risk of victimization due to their vulnerable social positions. Historically, marginalized communities have faced disproportionate victimization. In the United States, African Americans were subjected to slavery, segregation, and systemic racism, leading to long-term trauma and socio-economic disadvantages. Indigenous populations experienced genocide, forced relocation, and cultural eradication. LGBTQ+ individuals faced criminalization and societal ostracism. Understanding this historical context is important for comprehending contemporary victimization patterns within these communities.

One of the primary factors contributing to the higher rates of victimization in marginalized communities is socio-economic disadvantage. Poverty and lack of resources increase vulnerability to crime. For instance, impoverished neighborhoods often have higher crime rates, fewer law enforcement resources, and inadequate social services. Economic hardship can lead to situations where individuals are more exhibited to violence and

exploitation. Discrimination and prejudice significantly contribute to the victimization of marginalized communities. Hate crimes, motivated by biases against race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, are a direct manifestation of societal prejudice. For example, LGBTQ+ individuals often face hate crimes, which are violent acts committed due to the offender's hatred of the victim's sexual orientation or gender identity.

## Lack of trust in law enforcement

Marginalized communities often have a strained relationship with law enforcement, stemming from historical and ongoing instances of police brutality, racial profiling, and discrimination. This lack of trust results in underreporting of crimes, leaving victims without justice and support. For example, African American communities in the U.S. frequently report lower levels of trust in the police, which impacts their willingness to report crimes. Cultural and language barriers can impede access to justice and victim support services. Immigrant communities, for instance, may face challenges due to language differences and unfamiliarity with the legal system. Cultural norms might also discourage reporting of certain crimes, such as domestic violence or sexual assault, due to fear of stigma or retribution within the community.

Social isolation, often a consequence of marginalization, can exacerbate victimization. Individuals who are socially isolated have fewer resources and support systems to draw upon in times of crisis. For example, elderly individuals, particularly those with disabilities, may experience neglect or abuse but have limited means to seek help due to their isolation. Hate crimes are violent acts motivated by prejudice against the victim's identity. These crimes send a message of intolerance and can have a extreme psychological impact on both the individual victim and the broader community. Marginalized communities, including racial minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and religious minorities, are often targets of hate crimes. The impact of hate crimes extends beyond physical harm, inflicting emotional and psychological trauma and encourage a climate of fear and insecurity.

**Correspondence to:** Julianne Webster, Department of Criminology, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, Canada, E-mail: jweb@sfu.ca

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Domestic violence is a pervasive issue within marginalized communities. Socio-economic stressors, cultural norms, and lack of access to support services can exacerbate the risk of domestic violence. For instance, women in low-income households are at a higher risk of domestic violence due to economic dependency

and limited options for escape. Similarly, LGBTQ+ individuals may face unique forms of domestic violence related to their sexual orientation or gender identity, and may encounter barriers when seeking help due to discriminatory attitudes within support services.