Cultural Victimology Revisited:

Synergies of Risk, Fear and Resilience

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Introduction

From the mid-1980s to the present day, the idea of the victim, and the material structures through which victimization is defined, have increasingly been shaped and influenced by cultural forces. To grasp both the processes through which meanings are attributed to victims and the institutional networks that emerge in response to victimhood, due consideration needs to be given to the broader cultural and political context within which notions of criminality and victimization are located. It is our intention to consider the changing place of the victim in society through an evaluation of prevalent political discourses, media representations and policy shifts. In this second edition of the chapter, we wish to revisit popular sociocultural theories and cogitate on their capacity to explain recent transformations in contemporary policy making and practice. In order to advance research in the area of cultural victimology, we begin by addressing the relationship between dominant understandings of the victim and the operation of cultural processes. Having highlighted the incremental gravitation toward culture as an explanatory force within criminology, we go on to explore the ways in which the media represents and influences the range of meanings commonly attributed to victims. Here we ask who is entitled to be classified as a victim, by whom and under which circumstances? In theoretical terms, moving through the risk and fear paradigms adopted by Beck (1992; 1999) and Furedi (2002;

2005) to approaches that foreground the concept of resilience, we show how imaginings of the universal victim conceal power relations, reveal the proclivities of the neo-liberal State and act in the interests of private security operators. Prior to stacking up this somewhat bold and disparate set of assertions, it is first necessary to consider the evolving nature and meaning of the victim.

Criminology, Culture and Victims' Rights

The societal visibility of victims has continued to grow since the first edition of this chapter a decade ago. Globally, groups campaigning for victims' rights have grown in size and scale, the mass media focus on victims has further intensified and criminal and legal processes have increasingly factored in the interests of victims (see Ginsberg, 2014). In addition, the international political currency that can be gained from championing the rights of victims - from those that perished in the Bhopal disaster to the families of those killed in the Hillsborough disaster - is sizeable. In line with this cultural, political and legal focus, competing explanations of the role and place of the victim in society have developed in the criminological literature (see McGarry and Walklate, 2015: 35). The positioning of victims is relational and connects to wider political, social and macro-economic factors. Strands of 'punitive' or 'penal' populism (see Pratt and Clark, 2005) - which consolidated across political lines in the 1990s - remain alive and kicking in Britain today, with something of a cross-party consensus in terms of approaches to crime control. The Labour Party, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition and the Conservative Party have all espoused varying pitches of 'tough on crime' rhetoric and this aligns with the rising profile of victims in society. Manifestations include the Labour Party lobbying the coalition government ahead of the 2015 general election to formally entrench victims'

rights in charter to bring the UK in line with the USA, the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights. While the emphases on aligning with European approaches in the UK may wane following Britain's exit from the European Union, the Conservative party had already proposed to extend the services offered to victims following a consultation on the 2015 Code of Practice for Victims of Crime. While not new, the focus on victims is a relatively recent phenomenon. Up until the late twentieth century, expenditure on crime control in most Western nations had been skewed toward preventing crime, rather than resourcing the needs of victims. This unevenness was reflected in mainstream criminology which has been largely offender rather than victim focussed. Although criminological studies in victimology are now firmly established, this has historically been overshadowed by a predominant focus on perpetrators, sentencing, policing and preventative legislation. In the last three decades, the victim has moved from the margins to the centre of debates about crime and violence, with interest in victimization in the academy rising alongside the growth in political initiatives oriented toward the victim and the expansion of victim support networks (see McGarry and Walklate 2015: 36; Zedner, 2002: 420).

Of course, the various turns toward the victim that have occurred can be indexed to deeper and wider transitions (see Mythen, 2014: 70; O'Malley, 2006). One of the outcomes of these transitions has been an attempt to reduce crime rates by raising awareness about crime and informing the public about strategies of victim avoidance. A further consequence of such consciousness raising initiatives has been a reported rise in public fears about crime and mounting numbers of people classifying themselves as victims of crime. To give some indication of the scale of transformation, in 2003-2004 the UK Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) paid out 2 million pounds to victims of violent crime. By 2015-2016 annual

compensation awards exceeded 150 million pounds.[1] In the 1980s and 1990s government, state agencies and policy researchers became progressively interested in victims, both as identifiable individual parties and collective marginalized groups. Accordingly, the plight of the 'victim' has ascended the political ladder, so much so that the category of victim acts as a key instrument of penal repression and policy formation around law and order (see Garland, 2001, Rock, 2002). The victim has become more visible in political debates about crime and victim's rights have assumed a pivotal role in public policy making. In recent years, the suffering of victims has been used to provide leverage for new legislation, such as Megan's Law and the PATRIOT Act in the United States (US). Arguably, there has been a nascent cultural shift in the way criminal justice is conceived of and delivered, characterised by an individualisation of victimisation. Manifestations of this include the naming of criminal justice policy after victims, the blurring of distinctions between legal decision-making and victim's wishes, granting families of victims in the US the right to view executions and a rationale of punishment less focused on the collective and social function of the criminal justice system and instead oriented to a logic of 'just deserts'. As Ginsberg (2014) observes, this has given rise to certain discursive framings of victims' rights which risk privileging the victim over wider society. It ignores the material, historical, and social foundations from which conflicts arise and often perceives of few solutions to crime beyond more severe sanctions and retributive punishments. Such a pattern of administering 'justice' has resulted in a culture of incarceration in the UK and the US which cannot be divorced from the ways in which victimhood has been elevated in recent decades. It also reflects wider inequalities and cleavages of race, class and gender, effectively polarizing the populous before the eyes of the law (see Hudson, 2006). The *Black Lives Matter*

movement, for example, has challenged disparities between the treatment of citizens at the hands of criminal justice agents globally and drawn attention to what Taylor (2016: 107) calls the 'double standard of justice'. While victims of crime do now figure as an integral part of constructing and delivering justice in principle, who actually qualifies as deserving of justice in the first place remains as problematic as it ever has been.

So, where place culture in such transformations? This is not a straightforward question to respond to and one which requires gentle unpacking. Despite the conceptual and definitional untidiness of culture (see Barker, 2000: 35), it can be usefully marshalled to enhance understandings of the nature, experiences and role of victims in society. Naturally, we cannot hope - nor did we ought to hope - to impose a single definitive meaning on culture. Following Raymond Williams (1981), here we conceive of culture as way(s) of life that involve institutions and modes of cultural production, including the organisation of signs and symbols through which sense making takes place. In this context, culture can be viewed as the collective symbolic environment in which individuals and social groups interact and generate meaning (see Ferrell, 2005: 140). It needs to be recognised that within the broad church that is culture, different methodological approaches can be taken according to one's research questions and theoretical trajectory (O'Brien, 2005: 606).

But what utility and resonances does culture have for criminology in general and victimology specifically? If we travel with Williams' earlier definition of culture - as both a way of life and a site of meaning making through symbolic practices - it follows that culture is at the heart of the process of victimization, from the habitual activities of offenders to institutional modes of caring for those who suffer crime. Being or becoming a victim is not a neat or absolute journey (Rock, 2002). Acquiring

the status of victim involves being party to a range of interactions and processes, including identification, labelling and recognition. As such, the contemporary politics of crime victimization cannot be *other* than a cultural issue and one which provokes considerable ethical dilemmas and moral conflicts. *Ergo*, it is not difficult to state the case for further working up of the cultural within criminology, particularly in the area of victimology. The work of Ferrell (1999; 2005), Presdee (2000) and Hayward (2004) catalysed the development of cultural criminology and increasing emphasis being placed on 'crime and its control in the context of culture; that is, viewing both crime and the agencies of control as cultural products - as creative constructs' (Hayward and Young, 2004: 259). Thus, cultural criminology has been alert to the power of mass media in contemporary culture and the salience of symbolic images in shaping dominant understandings of criminalization, regulation and victimization (see Greer, 2005: 174). Despite having its finger on the social pulse, it is fair to say that cultural criminology remains a scattered field of loosely connected approaches (Spencer, 2011), ranging from studies of urban culture to the association between risk taking and criminality. While we will return to critiques of cultural criminology in the conclusion, one can see how the core set of concerns developed within cultural criminology are equally well equipped to consider the ways in which victims come to recognise themselves *as victims* through engagement with cultural products and practices. Thus, cultural criminology in particular - and criminology in the round - can benefit from further reflection on the ways in which the victim is culturally constructed and socially remade.

The Media, Risk and Victims: Witnessing Suffering or Turning a Blind Eye?

The mass media has historically been identified as an important source of information about crime and a vehicle through which victimization is rendered visible. Given the ubiquity of media technologies in the modern world, it is likely that various forms of media play an increasingly central role in informing and cultivating people's everyday perceptions of crime, disorder and victimization. It has commonly been argued that - far from reflecting objective crime realities that exist 'out there' - the political economy in which news media operate, the professional interests of journalists and the technical needs of the production process mean that news making is an inherently selective and partial activity (see Greer, 2005: 158; Mythen, 2014: 81). The production of news impacts not only upon people's knowledge of crime but on their attitudes toward victims and offenders. The classic research of Cohen (1972) and Hall *et al*., (1978) articulates the cycle through which repeated portrayals of law breaking subcultures can stimulate moral panics about deviant groups. Despite technological diversity in contemporary society, the media sources that people use most frequently for information about crime and violence - such as social media, online news sites, newspapers and national broadcast news - can serve to promote anxieties and uncertainties. Through representations of crime victimization, the media creates symbolic identities for sufferers of crime (see Ferrell, 2005: 149). Within this *mise en scene*, the needs and interests of victims can easily be (mis)represented to satisfy the preferences of multi-media conglomerations and/or the objectives of self-seeking politicians. This point is aptly illustrated by the experiences of Professor John Tulloch (2006) who found himself party to all manner of media demands as a consequence of surviving the 7/7 bombings in London. Tulloch's story forces us to think long and hard about how victims are ascribed roles and what the ramifications of victim identities are for understanding the nature and causes of crimes such as terrorism. It is

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precisely because the survivors of 7/7 were party to an attack that deeply offended the moral sensibilities of 'ordinary people' that the UK government decided to increase compensation paid to victims. What is at play here is essentially a moral judgement about degrees of suffering, gauged in terms of cultural proximity and perceived psychological impact rather than a decision determined solely by physiological disability. Thus, victims of terrorism are culturally constructed as more important and deserving of sympathy than victims of other violent crimes, such as corporate homicide. Put bluntly, some victims are more equal than others.

The social construction of the terrorist threat is itself intriguing for the ways in which it conjures up imagined and imaginable victims. In the UK it is evident that a great deal of governmental work has been done post 9/11 to keep national security high on the media agenda and to make the public alert to the risk of attack. Indeed, successive Prime Ministers from Blair through Brown and Cameron to May have identified terrorism as the foremost risk to the nation. Such pronouncements are designed to universalise the threat: effectively anyone and everyone is endangered. While raising public awareness about the terrorist threat may be considered a sensible precautionary measure, there is no doubt that the threat level has been highly exaggerated and manipulated for political ends in some Western States (see Walklate and Mythen, 2015). As Miller (2016) points out, while there has been a dramatic rise in the global number of deaths from terrorist attacks since 2012, in Western Europe the numbers killed has steadily decreased since the early 1990s. Looking at the amplification of risks such as terrorism it becomes clear that consent for criminal justice policies can be sought by utilising and manipulating the symbol of the victim. Within this, appeals to the commonality of risk are significant, with the summons to take up the role of victim encouraging us *all* to reflect on our lived experience in ways

that invite anxiety. The political construction of crime risks - and the associated making up of the victim - does not happen in isolation and is itself shaped and vectored by other institutions such as mass media. As Miller (2016) suggests, the way in which similarly harmful events receive uneven attention indicates that who counts as a 'worthy victim' is an issue that is up for grabs. While Western media reporting of the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris was extensive and unfolded in real time, the simultaneous murder by Boko Haram of up to 2000 people in Baga, Nigeria went largely unreported (see McGowan, 2016: 16-17). Such skewed media reportage prompts us to consider the issue of proximity in relation to the politics of compassion and the witnessing of suffering. As Frank (2013: 137) posits, to become a witness of suffering is to assume responsibility for telling others about the suffering witnessed. Witnessing suffering is thus imbued with an ethical responsibility to act. With the expansion of mass media and technologies of surveillance we have never been 'better' placed to witness the suffering of others. Following this thread, (Mathieson, 1997) points to a global 'viewer society' in which we may be subject to greater surveillance, but also more capable of surveying others. The harrowing footage recorded of Black victims in the US dying at the hands of police in recent years stands as a case in point. At a moral level, it follows that never before have we been more aware of our responsibility to act, to intervene where we can affect change, or to oppose social and moral wrongs where they subject humanity to forms of suffering. The 'we' here is typically framed in terms of the West's response to Eastern and particularly African suffering, or the suffering of former European colonies. If we took charitable aid donations and international relief efforts to be a benchmark of action, Western citizens and governments are not indifferent to 'distant suffering' (Boltanksi, 1999; Campbell, 2014: 117). Yet the likelihood of victims being rendered visible remains

contingent and contextual. If cultural victimology should be, among other things, 'attuned to human agency, symbolic display, and shared emotion' (Ferrell et al., 2008: 190), the assumption that media coverage of human suffering alone is an adequate indicator of how Western citizens understand violence which occurs beyond their immediate milieu is limited and limiting. The lack of attention afforded to non-Western victims in mainstream media is often attributed to the 'compassion fatigue' thesis popularised by Susan Sontag's (1977) seminal work, *On Photography*. The possibility of becoming desensitised by frequent exposure to images of suffering is potentially heightened in an age of continuous digital media. Yet Campbell (2014) rightly challenges the status of compassion fatigue as a universalising, 'catch-all' concept. Drawing on Sontag's later work - in which she revises several assertions made in her earlier thesis - Campbell suggests that people may divert their attention from human suffering as a consequence of genuinely feeling fearful. Furthermore, the suffering of others is not confined to the overseas 'other'. Frequently we are confronted with suffering 'at home', both geographically and literally. For Sontag (2003), the issue of distance, particularly relating to apathy toward images of suffering, is now less important. Whether we choose not to act or intervene when we witness photography of events thousands of miles away or choose not to intervene in matters playing out right in front of us, it is still just watching. We are, in effect, still bystanders (Sontag, 2003: 104-5; Cohen, 2001: 15). However, campaigns for victims, ranging from Black Americans unlawfully killed by police, to those displaced by the war in Syria, have prompted a groundswell of support in many communities despite inadequate responses from government. Therefore, we must acknowledge that the failure to universally recognise victims, while problematic in a whole host of ways, is a complex phenomenon that cannot be reduced to 'blissful ignorance'. In addition to

questions of geography, Boltanski (1999) reminds us that there is an important temporal dimension to the recognition of distant suffering. He argues for a politics of the present which prioritises present suffering and present victims. Disputes geared solely toward the past or concern with how future actions may play out, important as they are, often miss an opportunity for collective recognition of some of the most pressing concerns of our age. Sensitive to the exploitation of past victims for future political gain, Boltanski's argument reminds us that humanitarian compassion must be located in the immediate present if it is to reconcile differential responses to victims globally.

Theorising the Universal Victim? Risk, Fear and Resilience

Having considered both the contemporary place of the victim in society, prevalent media representations of the victim and some of the ways in which suffering is witnessed, it is now necessary to ask whether extant theoretical approaches can help us understand the nature, status and role of the victim in society. While risk and fear became commonly used lenses of analysis in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, in more recent times, the concept of resilience has risen to prominence in political, media and policy circles. Reflecting these developments, we will consider how these assorted concepts both reflect changing understandings of victimisation and understand the place of the victim in society.

The rising presence of risk as a means of framing human experience was both captured and developed by Ulrich Beck in *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (1992). The book graphically recounts the destructive impacts of risks generated by capitalist neoliberal modes of production, consumption and regulation on everyday life. Although the risk society thesis is firmly rooted in the tradition of Germanic

sociology, various components have been extracted within criminology to explore issues of penal control, policing and social justice (see Feeley and Simon, 1995; Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Hudson, 2003). Beck's summary of the changing nature of threat is supported by four major assertions. Firstly, he contends that contemporary threats have greater temporal and spatial mobility than the natural hazards affecting preceding cultures. The de-territorialized dangers of the risk society - environmental pollution, AIDS, and new terrorism - effectively dissolve boundaries of time and space. Where criminal justice is concerned, the globalization of crime means that 'national security is, in the borderless age of risks, no longer national security' (Beck, 2002: 14). Secondly, the risks delineated above are potentially catastrophic. Not only do they span the globe, they also generate irremediable effects that victimize people far and wide. Third, as the risks get bigger and more explosive, our capacity to institutionally manage them diminishes (see Mythen, 2014: 2). As a corollary, extant mechanisms of insurance, welfare provision and criminal legislation effectively short-circuit. Fourth, Beck posits that the fluctuating nature of social hazards disrupts established patterns of social distribution and transforms the content of politics. Growing awareness of the harm caused by manufactured risks promotes a shift in political focus within capitalist societies away from the positive problems of acquiring 'goods' - such as income, health care and education - toward avoiding 'bads'. This ground shift is suggestive of a wider point about social distribution. While the logic of the traditional class society is sectoral, the logic of the risk society is universal. The key dangers of the world risk society - ecological collapse, nuclear warfare and global terror networks - render us all potential victims, regardless of place, race, gender or class. Thus, according to Beck, the universality of threats serves to democratise the distribution of risk, with the pervasiveness of risk producing a dualistic cognitive

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effect. While people become more reflexive about their social practices and adapt to self-manage the trials and tribulations of everyday life, heightened awareness of risk serves to foment anxieties about threats that are out of the sphere of individual control.

The risk society thesis has important connotations for victimology, drawing out several prescient trends which shape dominant notions of the victim and influence attitudes toward the regulation and management of crime. Beck's suggestion that the avoidance of 'bads' has come to replace the acquirement of 'goods' chimes loudly in the modern world, as our awareness of the dangerous side-effects of Western capitalist expansion grows unabatedly. There is no shortage of examples. The global financial crisis of 2008, growing concerns over climate change, the continuing threat of deadly viruses such as Ebola and Zika, antibiotic resistance, food shortages, refugee crises, state and non-state terrorism and ever-present fears over the future of nuclear warfare seem only to have ratcheted up a general sense of existential precarity. Further, Beck draws our attention to the capacity of media technologies to 'socially explode' hazards, leading to public and political debates about safety and security.

While Beck draws our attention toward the utility of risk as an explanatory concept, Furedi's work revolves centrally around the social construction of fear. Furedi's (2002) approach demonstrates that the tendency to view social experience through the prism of danger contributes toward the cultivation of a victim-oriented compensation culture. For him, a culture of fear is operating in Western nations, encouraged by state institutions and promoted by those working within the media and security industries. This culture of fear is characterised by rising fears about crime and sporadic moral panics about extreme but rare acts of violence and/or sexual

perversion (Furedi, 2002: 23). Contra Beck, Furedi posits that the cultural preoccupation with fears that may or may not materialise is deeply troubling. Firstly, so far as scientific, technological and social developments are concerned, the balance between positive advances and negative consequences becomes distorted. Secondly, media emphasis on high impact but low probability risks encourages individuals to become more inward looking. Furedi (2002: 5) claims that these processes constitute one aspect of a wider set of cultural changes that encourage victimhood in all of us: 'being at risk has become a permanent condition that exists separately from any particular problem ... by turning risk into an autonomous, omnipresent force in this way, we transform every human experience into a safety situation'. According to Furedi, the establishment of a culture of fear signals a ground shift away from adventurous risk-taking toward a pessimistic morality of low expectation. In such a climate, social institutions become hooked on defending against the negative effects of hypothetical risks unlikely to bear harm. At the same time, the institutional fixation with risk situates citizens as active fear managers as people become schooled in undertaking personal risk assessments, constantly weighing up the 'what if?' questions. Such 'what if?' questions lead us not only to imagine ourselves as victims but also to reflect on various means of victim avoidance. For Furedi, a society which is obsessed with risk endlessly produces *faux* victims and forgets that contemporary Western cultures are comparatively secure and safe environments. Like Beck, Furedi's macro theory building leads him to produce a somewhat caricatured version of reality. Although overstated, the culture of fear thesis does enable us to identify a burgeoning victim culture and an attendant drive for compensation. Furedi's work locks on to institutional attempts to share the burden of responsibility for crime risks with the general public through various awareness campaigns and partnerships.

Further, he is more attuned than Beck to the ways in which media news values assist the articulation of dominant ideologies. What is accentuated in Furedi's analysis - but downplayed in the risk society theory - is the way in which moral panics about crime are used to piggyback political interests and pave the way for new legislation. For Beck, the social explosion of hazards in the media is a positive phenomenon, which heightens risk awareness and leads to public calls for preventative action. Yet Beck's 'social explosiveness' is interpreted by Furedi as media sensationalism about low probability risks such as terrorism that are unlikely to affect large numbers of citizens. Furedi is also wise to the cultural production of the universal victim, but in a different way to Beck. Whilst the universal arc of Beck's thesis leads him to argue that the notion of the bystander has disappeared, Furedi justly warns that different people have different degrees of risk proneness. Insofar as Beck's thesis depicts a global society vulnerable to novel and catastrophic risks, the tendency to universalize threat obscures the differentiated material distribution of risks and downplays the strong link between forms of cultural stratification and patterns of victimization. Contra the Beckian notion that risks can stimulate progressive acts that improve safety and security, it might be argued that acceptance of living in a 'risk society' has been expedient for neoliberal politicians and serves to bolster social control. Institutional technologies can ostensibly reduce risk, yet they can also extend the tentacles of governance. In some senses then, Beck's theory - and its appeal to the universal victim - sits inadvertently, but comfortably, with the regulatory aspirations of government, law enforcers and legislators. A social environment in which a greater number of people feel themselves to be victims is also problematic in other ways. The mushrooming culture of victimhood potentially inhibits our capacity to differentiate between victims and muddies political priorities (see Ginsberg, 2014). If everyone is a victim of crime

then somehow nobody is. Degrees of victimhood can thus be flattened out and concreted over, ignoring the undulations of class, ethnicity, age, gender and location (Mythen, 2014: 106). People have different levels of vulnerability and different degrees of exposure to different types of crime. In this sense, the idea of the universal victim is something of a *canard*, particularly given that primary victimization serves as a reliable predictor of future victimization. As Williams (2004: 92) notes, 'the general risks of victimization disguise the greater real risks for some groups. Individuals within certain groups may fall victim to many offences in a year whereas others in different subgroups may never, or only very rarely, experience a crime'.

Given their totalising pitch, both Beck and Furedi's theoretical contributions lack subtlety and tend to imagine an undifferentiated public. In both narratives the subject is an increasingly anxious, security conscious and risk aware citizen, albeit one that is catalysed in Beck's version and paralysed in Furedi's. The enduring influence of ethnicity, class and gender in shaping perceptions of risk means that victims of the same crime may react and respond to their victimization in markedly different ways (Zedner, 2002: 429). Going down a level further, those suffering multiple victimization might experience their victimization in various shades of activity, passivity and/or indifference. Whilst Furedi's 'culture of fear' chimes with a society at once fixated and appalled by various violent threats the idea of an all embracing 'culture of fear' is theoretically reductionist and empirically unsustainable. To understand fears about crime and the individual process of 'victim positioning' we need to address the cultural articulations through which fears about crime are propagated and the role of institutions in reinforcing notions of safety and harm. Clearly, the range, mix and depth of cultural processes at play will vary between different forms of criminal activity, different contexts and different places. It needs

also to be remembered that empirical studies indicate that the media is far from a one-way instrument of communication about crime (see Chadee and Ditton, 2005). The media may set the agenda on certain political issues and reinforce existing cultural values, but it does not determine people's perceptions of crime. Media moguls are not able to tell people what to think, but they can tell them what to think *about*. In a multi-media age of divergent patterns of interaction and engagement with social media, unidirectional flows of information are all but a remnant of history. Accounting for divergent public opinion around the risk of crime victimization, it is sensible to speak of different *cultures* of fear and to acknowledge that the resonance of certain threats will spike and recede over time. We need to be cognisant that 'the public' is constituted by risk-averse individuals *and* various cultures of pragmatism and resistance in which the anxieties projected by dominant groups are refuted and opposed.

Despite their popularity in the social sciences, the risk and fear paradigms developed by Beck and Furedi offer us both a generalised and a reduced notion of the victim. They tell us something about 'ideal types' in late modernity, but they also lack specificity. Both thinkers imagine somewhat apprehensive and risk obsessed subjects, some of whom develop a reflexive capacity to manage the difficulties of everyday life (Beck), others of which become rendered inert by the bombardment of manufactured fears in the media, politics and public life (Furedi). While it would be inaccurate to suggest that the cultural dynamics of risk and fear have changed markedly in the last decade, policy responses to them have meandered off in different directions. In certain policy initiatives geared toward protecting the public from serious threats - such as the PREVENT counter-terrorism strategy - the lexicon of risk remains the dominant grammar. Strategies such as PREVENT are foremostly designed to deploy techniques

of identifying 'risky' and 'at risk' individuals in order to make interventions prior to harm materialising. Yet, in other areas the concept of resilience has gained a foothold in policy making. But, what, exactly is meant by resilience?

Most definitions of resilience hinge on the capacity of people to 'bounce back' from adversity and adapt to their difficulties or hardships. Yet, in many respects, 'resilience' is as ill-defined as it is ubiquitous. Given the volume of recent literature on resilience (see, *inter alia*, Walklate and Mythen, 2015; Chandler, 2014a; Evans and Reid, 2014), our purpose here is not to rehearse the diversity of definitions, but rather to explore some of the relationships between resilience and other discursive frameworks of governance. Notably, resilience frequently appears alongside 'risk', 'uncertainty', and 'vulnerability' within policy as a contemporary organising metaphor which, much like the risk society and culture of fear theses, projects a generalised vista of the ways in which agents negotiate adversity. Yet where risk and fear tend to suggest defensive strategies of avoidance, the emphasis within discourses of resilience is directed towards positive strategies of durability developed through individual and collective coping strategies. Resilience has been promoted in relation to numerous active strategies of risk reduction, ranging from protecting against terrorist attacks (Coaffee, 2009) to cyber-crime (Herrington and Aldrich, 2013). Beyond criminal justice, resilience figures in a divergent array of policy areas, from disaster planning and environmental harm, to refugee support frameworks and calculations about the stability of financial markets. The discourse of resilience gained intensified traction in the UK under the 'big society' agenda, masquerading at that juncture as a tonic to declining investment in health and welfare services and growing levels of economic exclusion. Undoubtedly, the stretchiness of the concept of resilience and its apparent discursive capacity to both individualise and activate

citizens as unit managers of risk has proved highly attractive to securocrats, politicos and government advisors. Yet, there are reasons to be cautious about the existence of resilience as a classifiable category of human experience and its manipulation as a policy tool. Cleary, mobilising people to pre-emptively combat and defend against risks further shifts the burden of responsibility for harm reduction from the State to the people. The championing of resilience as a life jacket against risk masks the various forms of economic, social and cultural capital necessary to develop positive strategies of risk reduction and avoidance. As Harrison (2013) cautions, where resilience is framed in terms of one's ability to 'bounce back' from adversities as wide-ranging as climate change, ecological disaster, psychological stress, family breakdown, and financial recession, we should remain critical and alert to the expectations people have of what work the term can do, or, more specifically, what they hope it will do. The positivity ostensibly associated with resilience, as opposed to the negativity found in academic and policy rhetoric around risk and vulnerability, takes hardship, adversity, and even suffering as its point of departure, 'as an impetus for positive change' (Harrison, 2013: 98). The fact that people can overcome major adversity is not in question, leading some to criticise policy perspectives which proceed as though this were not naturally the case (*qua* Furedi, 2008). As Harrison (2013) argues, applying resilience 'in the round' on the basis that we know people are able to respond to challenging conditions does not occur in a vacuum, but rather entails policymakers making moral and political judgements. Aside from what she calls 'over-romantic celebrations of resilience' (2013: 109), which ignore the fact that individuals' socio-economic and psychological resources are in fact finite and do not replenish themselves endlessly, Harrison also problematizes popular conceptions of resilience which invariably couple considerations of 'bouncing back' with

presentations of adversity as 'shocks'. Reflecting on the everyday lives of citizens in a UK seaside town between the 2008 financial collapse and the 2011 austerity cuts, she notes that for many of her participants, financial insecurity and unemployment represented continuity and 'more of the same' - to suggest otherwise, as national policy initiatives have, is, she posits, to render over existing historical context. Assuming shock or even novelty in people's experience of adversity is, at best, erroneous and, at worst, insulting and voyeuristic.

In as much as discourses and narratives of risk, fear and resilience often overlap and intersect, the contemporary vogue for resilience signals a departure from previous ways of 'working on' victims (O'Malley, 2006: 52) that is culturally and epistemologically significant. The potential vulnerability and harm at the centre of risk assessment practices is replaced by a 'flatter ontology of interactive emergence' (Chandler, 2014b: 47; Aradau, 2014), in which surprise is embraced and preparedness prescribed. Underscoring this tranche of thought more explicitly, Evans and Reid (2013: 84) argue that the ontology of resilience effectively *is* vulnerability: 'to be able to become resilient, one must first accept that one is fundamentally vulnerable.' Central to these epistemological and ontological suppositions is the notion that unlike governance of earlier decades, resilience does not seek to minimize risk and uncertainty; it actively embraces it (O'Malley, 2010: 506). While scientific and political discourse around risk rely on the modelling of a parallel world, one which we can map potential scenarios onto in an effort to calculate likelihoods of harm, resilience presents us with an altogether different epistemic regime. Within this regime, 'surprise [harm/vulnerability/catastrophe] is inevitable and novelty always already in the making' (Aradau, 2014: 77). If we cannot adequately guard against terrorism, domestic violence, and financial recession through probability calculation,

then the alternative 'solution' presented to us is, by necessity, to prepare. To this end, preparation to deal with the inevitable shocks of 21st century capitalism must be prioritised and represents something of an emotional retraining exercise. It has become one of the defining characteristics of the identity of a good and responsible citizen. As Neocleous (2012: 192) suggests, today's security politics can be characterised by the mantra: 'Don't be scared, be prepared'. Not only do notions of resilience share many of the deficiencies found within Beck and Furedi's theses, they also contain an important contradiction which limits utility so far as the cultural study of victimhood goes. While resilience policies often take vulnerability as their point of departure, they do so by positioning it as prospective or future facing. Conversely, for victims of crime - particularly victims of violence, terrorism, and war - the resultant suffering and trauma that can be incurred has both an immediacy of the present and is also, in some respects, inherently retrospective. How things like trauma play out over time are, of course, non-linear and far more temporally complex, but nonetheless require serious engagement with memory. If we only understand resilience as an exercise in future preparation, we miss that which occurs *in spite of* the policy imagination. While resilience as a metaphor and anchor for micro governance can never encapsulate all that it might claim to, this should not form the premise of our enquiry (Anderson, 2015), nor should we be deterred from trying to understand the social and cultural resources that victims rely on in times of hardship or suffering. As Cavelty, Kaufmann and Kristensen (2015: 8) posit: 'there is no such thing as *the* resilient subject - there is a vast variety of resilient subjects'.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have commented on the continued politicisation of the victim in society and revisited the possibility of incorporating deeper layers of cultural analyses into victimology. Homing in on the representational and ideational dimensions, the possibilities of and limitations to theoretical perspectives have been explored. While macro theories will doubtless prove important instruments in the future development of cultural victimology, their generality dictates partial utility across different contexts and situations. Theoretical perspectives assist us in travelling part way in understanding both the mediation of the crime threat and the universalization of victimhood, but it is critical that the lopsided impacts of crime across populations do not become obscured. We cannot assume either that we *are* all victims, or that victims of similar crimes attribute the same *meanings* to their victimization. The risks and fears associated with being, or feeling like, a victim are not simply a result of being located at the sharp end of criminality. Whilst the experiential aspects of victimization can be addressed by ramping up micro-level empirical forays, it is important that victimologists are alert to the macro structural effects of victim-centric forms of regulation and punishment.

In relation to the bulking up of cultural dimensions within victimology, it would be misguided to see culture as a magic bullet through which experiences of victims can be deciphered. The same criticisms that have been levelled at cultural criminology (see Hayward, 2016) need to be thoroughly addressed if cultural accounts of victimhood are to avoid the same pitfalls. Central to critiques of cultural criminology is the suggestion of a 'reinventing the wheel' which forgets the anthropological foundations upon which contemporary cultural studies is built (see O'Brien, 2005). Nonetheless, we maintain that there is space to develop victim-centred research which borrows from both cultural criminology and its critiques.

Methodologically, cultural criminology's concern to document lived experience through fine grain ethnographic work and visual methods is to be welcomed. We would, however, agree with O'Brien (2005) that the overtly political character of crime and criminalization, coupled with the material conditions within which these occur, means we have an ethical responsibility to challenge injustice and harmful imbalances of power in addition to documenting the symbolic. While the extent to which cultural criminology romanticizes crime remains a moot point, Hayward (2016: 305) concedes that it has, at times, perhaps over-valorised disparate forms of criminal transgression as political resistance without always providing a wholly convincing case for doing so (see also Hall and Winlow, 2007). Anticipating a comparable fallacy in relation to the cultural study of victimhood, it is clear that for many types of suffering ethical consequences abound. Just as cultural criminologists may sometimes be a little too eager to find resistance wherever they look, cultural victimologists run the risk of embellishing trauma and suffering if they become a little too eager to extract symbolic potential. Paying greater attention to the symbolic within victimology should not emulate problematic elisions in cognate disciplines by narrowly aestheticizing trauma to the point of abstraction-cum-by-standing (Kansteiner and Weilnböck, 2008) or providing caricatured analyses of victim-perpetrator characteristics which are so easily co-opted and commodified as mass media genres in their own right (Rothe, 2011).

For us, the cultural should be one facet of encompassing victimological approaches that also account for social, economic, political, geographical and technological factors. Quite reasonably, debates will continue about the extent to which such factors can be disentangled. As we have seen, when we get down to separating the cultural wheat from the political chaff, the analytical units begin to

shade into one another. This said, it is important that victimology takes culture seriously enough to grapple with the connections between perceptions of crime, media representations and the political economy of risk. There is no solitary cultural fix that can be added to reinvigorate extant understandings of the victim. Due to its inherent diversity, culture can be operationalised in various ways and employed at many different levels. In the first edition of this chapter it was posited that a cultural inflection within victimology might encourage research into representations of crime victims in popular culture, forms of cultural resistance to victim categorization, the discursive deconstruction of the language of victimization and the symbolic production of the victim. While there have been tangible advances in these areas, inroads have also been made in unpredicted cognate areas, such as witnessing, trauma and mediated suffering (see Howie, 2012; McGarry and Walklate, 2015). While the quest to develop overarching theoretical frameworks that panoramically capture victimisation continues, it may well be that the messier task of drawing out resonant elements from competing approaches ultimately provides us with the clearest vista.

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