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PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL VICTIMIZATIONS: A COMPARISON OF PREDICTIONS MADE BY THE DEFENSIVE ATTRIBUTION AND JUST WORLD MODELS

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro PH.D. 1981

PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL VICTIMIZATIONS: A COMPARISON OF PREDICTIONS MADE BY THE DEFENSIVE ATTRIBUTION AND JUST WORLD MODELS

by

Kenneth J. Gruber

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Approved by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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GRUBER, KENNETH J. Perceptions of Personal Victimizations: A Comparison of Predictions Made by the Defensive Attribution and Just World Models. (1981) Directed by: Dr. Jacquelyn Gaebelein. Pp. 143.

Predictions derived from two models of victim perception, one suggesting that perceptions of victims are based on self-protective needs (defensive attribution), and one advocating that perceptions of victims are based on a view that undeserved outcomes require justification (just world) were evaluated against subjects' perceptions of stimulus cases portraying personal victimizations. Three factors, victim similarity, personal relevance of the situation, and the severity of the outcome for the victim, were manipulated in a 3 x 3 x 2 between-groups design. The results indicated no support for the just world model and only limited support for the defensive attribution model. A third model of victim perception, "normative expectations," was introduced to account for the pattern of responsibility attributions representing subjects' perceptions of the stimulus cases. This model suggests that people evaluate others in terms of expectations based on general social norms. The results are shown to conform to predictions derived from the model. Limitations to the "normative expectations" model and the need for the development of a more comprehensive model of victim perception are discussed. A framework for the development of a comprehensive model which can incorporate the existing models of victim perception, account for discrepancies in the literature, and

provide a basis for additional models of victim perception is introduced. This framework is based on Kelley's (1972b) work involving "causal schemata."

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When someone experiences a personal misfortune such as an accident, although sympathy and compassion may be extended to the victim, frequently we look for reasons why that particular individual was victimized. As a result, we often attempt to attribute the personal misfortune to some aspect of the individual's behavior or personality. In recent years, the interest in the phenomenon of how and why we attribute responsibility to other people, for both their behavior and the consequences of their behavior, has spawned a considerable amount of research investigating perceptions of accident victims and the conditions that influence victim-sympathetic and victim-blame attitudes (e.g., Chaikin & Darley, 1973; McKillip & Posovac, 1975; Shaver, 1970; Shaw & McMartin, 1977; Walster, 1966).

The tendency to perceive causal relationships between behavior and apparent consequences of that behavior is based on the theoretical proposition that people strive for mastery and control over their social environments (Wortman, 1976). This preference for personal control appears as a main basis for several of the major social perception models. For example, cognitive consistency models of behavior (e.g., balance models, see Abelson, Aronson, McGuire, Newcomb, Rosenberg, &

Tannenbaum, 1968) are based on the assumption that people are motivated to believe that events follow one another in a predictable and orderly fashion. Similarly, a basic tenet of attribution theory is that people's motivation to achieve control has a pervasive influence on their attributions of causality. According to Kelley (1972a):

> The purpose of causal analysis--the function it serves for the species and the individual--is effective control. . . . Controllable factors will have a high salience as candidates for causal explanation. In cases of ambiguity or doubt, the causal analysis will be biased in its outcome toward controllable factors. (pp. 22-23)

The belief that people are motivated to maintain control over their personal environments is also a central theme in several theoretical accounts of causal explanations of personal misfortunes. Two theoretical models that have evolved as explanatory accounts of this phenomenon are defensive attribution (Shaver, 1970; Shaw & McMartin, 1977; Walster, 1966) and just world (Lerner, Miller, & Holmes, 1976; Lerner & Simmons, 1966).

Although over a decade has passed since the introduction of the defensive attribution and just world models, few studies have attempted to compare the models' utility in accounting for perceptions of personal misfortunes. In an effort to address this deficit, the present paper reviews the conceptual bases of the two models and examines some of the empirical research which has attempted to investigate the explanatory power of each of the models. In

addition, in an effort to refine previous attempts to evaluate predictions made by the two models, an experiment is described which was designed to compare predictions made by each of the models using stimulus situations comprised of factors which are conceptually relevant to both models. The methodology, outcome, and discussion of the experiment are also presented.

The Defensive Attribution Model

The admission that everyone is to some degree vulnerable to catastrophic events is very threatening to most people. Because people do not like to believe they are as likely as everyone else to experience personal misfortunes, they tend to rationalize other people's misfortunes in ways which "protect" and minimize their own vulnerability to the same fate. As an explanation for this phenomenon, Walster (1966) postulated that when we hear of others who have suffered a small loss (a minor negative outcome), it is easy to feel sympathy for them, to attribute their misfortune to chance, and to acknowledge that relatively minor unpleasant outcomes can "happen to anyone." When the consequences of a personal misfortune are relatively serious, however, the perception and interpretation of the incident is considerably different. As the magnitude of the misfortune increases, it becomes more difficult to simply attribute what has happened to chance or fate. A misfortune of serious proportions is threatening to most people, particularly if there is the

implication that such an incident "could happen to anyone." Consequently, to deny the possibility that they too might experience a similar misfortune, people often try to reduce the perceived threat either by denying that any misfortune has occurred or by explaining the cause of the incident in terms which are personally nonthreatening. Frequently, such threats are reduced or eliminated by attributing responsibility to someone (i.e., the victim or perpetrator) in the situation. Not infrequently, this leads to perceived causal links between the victim's character and what happened and/or perceptions that the victim was somehow responsible for the incident.

Walster (1966) hypothesized when individuals feel threatened by someone else's personal misfortune, in order to deny the possibility that, by chance, they too could suffer the same or similar fate, they are likely to perceive the victim as personally responsible rather than admit the incident could happen to them. By blaming the victim and believing that they would have behaved differently under the same circumstances, individuals can reassure themselves that they will not encounter the same misfortune.

Walster (1966) tested this hypothesis by presenting subjects a tape-recorded description of an accident in which a car parked and unoccupied, rolls down a hill. Several versions of the "accident" were used which included a description of the car owner, some minor details about the car

itself, and the fact the car owner did not have automobile insurance. The outcome of the accident was varied so that the consequences were portrayed as being minor (no damage or the car rolled part way down the hill but was stopped by a tree stump which slightly dented the fender) or quite serious (the car rolled down the hill, crashed through the window of a store and either almost hit two people or hit two people and injured them). Consistent with Walster's predictions, subjects assigned more responsibility to the owner of the car when the outcome was serious than when it was minor. Although subjects did not perceive the car owner as more careless (the cause of the accident was due to a faulty brake cable), they did perceive the car owner to be under greater moral obligation to have had automobile insurance and to have had the brakes checked more frequently when the consequences were serious than when they were mild.

In a later study, Walster (1967) attempted to replicate her earlier findings using a different stimulus situation, but did not find support for the predicted relationship of attributed personal responsibility and severity of outcome of a personal misfortune. Shaver (1970) suggested the failure of Walster's 1967 study to support her prediction of greater attributions of personal responsibility as a function of an increase in the magnitude of the outcome of a personal misfortune could be accounted for by considering the relevance of the stimulus situation to the subjects making the

responsibility evaluations. In Walster's 1966 study, the relevance of the situation was probably high, inasmuch as the subjects were college students and the stimulus situation described a young male and an accident involving his car. In Walster's 1967 study, however, the stimulus situation portrayed an individual who purchases a home and subsequently experiences an unanticipated event which leads to the investor either taking a loss, making a profit, or neither taking a loss nor making a profit. Due to the likelihood that the stimulus person was perceived as older in comparison to the average age of the subject sample and because the situation involved a business deal with which college students are not likely to have had first-hand experience, it is quite probable the situation was not very relevant to the student-subjects.

Shaver (1970) revised Walster's original hypothesis by suggesting that only if a given incident is personally relevant to observers will there be the possibility that they will feel threatened and resort to making self-protective attributions. The relevance of a situation is based on its perceived situational and personal "affective significance" (Heider, 1958). Observers must perceive the possibility that they will some day find themselves in a situation similar to that of the stimulus person (situational relevance) and that the degree of personal similarity or dissimilarity they share with the stimulus person is apparent enough for

them to either identify with or differentiate themselves from that individual (personal relevance). The extent to which observers perceive themselves as similar or dissimilar to the stimulus person affects how they perceive that individual's role in effecting personal outcomes. Because people tend to evaluate favorably others whom they perceive as personally similar to themselves, unfortunate experiences involving a similar other often are perceived in such a way as to maintain a favorable impression of that individual. This same effort generally is not made when a personally dissimilar other is involved; in fact, observers may bias their perceptions of the individual's actions to "support" the perception that the individual is personally dissimilar. Thus, by attributing less personal responsibility to a similar other and greater responsibility to a dissimilar other for a personal misfortune, observers are able to distort the probability and the circumstances of the event, and presumably, the likelihood that they will experience a similar fate.

Shaver (1970) tested his reformulation of Walster's (1966) hypothesis in a series of experiments using variations of the accident described in Walster (1966) and an additional situation portraying an industrial laboratory accident. Situational relevance was assumed on the basis that the nature of the accident was presumably one with which subjects could readily identify. In the presentations involving the car

accident situation, personal relevance was varied by manipulating the age and educational status of the stimulus person. The stimulus person was portrayed either as younger (a 16-year-old high school student), as about the same age (a 19-year-old college student), or as older (a 22-year-old graduate student) than the subjects. The industrial laboratory accident was presented primarily to test Walster's (1966) suggestion that responsibility attributions are directly related to the relative severity of the outcome. The accident was depicted as occurring during a demonstration by the stimulus person of a piece of laboratory equipment, which shatters and sends out metal splinters, one of which hits a child spectator. Injury to the child was either mild (the splinter lodged in his wrist) or serious (the splinter hits him in the eye and produces permanent loss of vision).

Shaver did not find support for Walster's assertion that an increase in the severity of an unfortunate outcome would produce a corresponding increment in attributed responsibility. He did find, however, support for the proposition that responsibility attributions are affected by the relevance of the incident to the observer. Although age and responsibility for the accident were positively related (i.e., the younger stimulus person was attributed the least responsibility), subjects perceived the same age stimulus person as the most cautious prior to the accident. Shaver interpreted these results to imply that the more

personally relevant situation (the one involving a same age stimulus person) produced the need among subjects to protect themselves against the possibility that the accident could happen to them. Hence, when the stimulus incident involved a personally similar other, subjects apparently were less inclined to view the stimulus person as responsible.

In an extension of Shaver's (1970) work, Shaw and McMartin (1977) suggested that differences in attributed levels of personal responsibility for a given outcome, as a function of the degree of personal similarity between the stimulus person and the observer, represented different self-protective attributional strategies. According to Shaw and McMartin (1977), when confronted with another's personal misfortune which observers perceive as situationally relevant (and thus personally threatening) and which involves a victim they perceive as personally similar, the victim's misfortune is likely to be explained in terms of "blame-avoidance" attributions (e.g., the incident was accidental and not the victim's fault) as a way of maintaining their own innocence if a similar misfortune should befall them. In contrast, if the situation is perceived as relevant and the victim as personally dissimilar, Shaw and McMartin contend that observers are expected to justify the incident in terms of "harm-avoidance" attributions, e.g., attribute some degree of personal responsibility and/or identify some aspect of the victim's personality or personal characteristics that

explains why the individual was victimized and which provides a basis for why a similar event would not happen to them ("the victim is not like me, I would have been able to avoid what happened"). Thus, depending on the degree of personal similarity perceived by observers, a victim's personal responsibility for an unfortunate event may be exaggerated in order to assure observers that they will not be viewed at fault if a similar fate happens to them. The intensity with which observers will use "blame-avoidance" or "harm-avoidance" attributions is dependent on the severity or magnitude of the outcome of the misfortune (Shaw & McMartin, 1977).

Shaw and McMartin (1977) presented subjects a description of a chemistry/nutrition laboratory accident in which the outcome was either mild (no personal injury was suffered) or serious (several persons were injured). The context of the accident--a student in a college laboratory conducting an experiment--was assumed to be situationally relevant to the subjects. Personal relevance was "manipulated" by assuming opposite sex stimulus persons would be perceived by subjects as characteristically different. Same sex stimulus persons were presumed to be perceived by subjects as personally similar. In neither case was there empirical verification that situational and personal relevance had in fact been manipulated. Nonetheless, Shaw and McMartin found their subjects tended to blame an opposite sex other (personally dissimilar) and not blame a same sex other (personally

similar). They also found that attributions of responsibility were directly related to the severity of the outcome. When the accident involved a same sex (personally similar) stimulus person, the more serious the accident's outcome, the less personal responsibility subject-observers assigned to the stimulus person. In contrast, when the accident involved an opposite sex other (personally dissimilar), subjects tended to blame the stimulus person more. These results suggest support for the two attributional tendencies identified by Shaw and McMartin (1977). The results also provide partial support for Walster's (1966) original prediction that the severity of the outcome of an event will affect attributed levels of personal responsibility. Dissimilar stimulus persons were assigned more personal responsibility as the severity of the outcome of the accident increased.

In summary, the defensive attribution model is predicated on the belief that people prefer to believe they usually can avoid negative personal outcomes, or if they cannot avoid them, they do not deserve to be held responsible if some catastrophic event happens to them. To maintain this perspective the defensive attribution model suggests that people, when confronted with another's personal misfortune, which could possibly happen to them, will invoke explanations (defensive attributions) for the incident which either exonerates them from responsibility if a similar misfortune should involve them or assures that a similar event could not happen to them.

The Just World Model

An alternate explanation for why people tend to perceive the victim of an accident or other personal misfortune as being at least partly responsible is suggested by Lerner's (1970, 1974, 1977) just world hypothesis. According to Lerner (Lerner, 1974; Lerner, Holmes, & Miller, 1976), people tend to believe the world is a just and predictable place. Rather than believe personal outcomes are the result of mysterious or uncontrollable factors, Lerner asserts people prefer to believe they are responsible for their own actions and the actions of others which involve them. This belief leads people to anticipate a positive relationship between merit and reward--one in which "people get what they deserve and deserve what they get."

Lerner (1977) suggests the belief that "people get what they deserve" is threatened when someone is observed to experience an apparently unjust outcome, one which she/he ordinarily would not be expected to experience (e.g., when a presumably innocent person is murdered). Because the observation of such an event is personally discomforting, an observer feels threatened and reduces the perceived threat by attempting to justify why the victim received what she/he did.

The extent an occurrence of an unjust outcome is justified depends on how much the particular outcome is viewed as unjust. Consequently, the greater the discrepancy between

what one receives and what one "deserves" to receive, the more threatening that situation is to the belief that the world is "just." This suggests that incidents which result in mild negative outcomes (one in which the victim experiences only minor discomfort or suffering), generally will produce only minor threats to people's perceptions of a "just world." Because such incidents are believed to happen to almost everyone and because the perceived discrepancy between "what one gets and deserves to get" is of little magnitude, they generally are not very threatening to concerns about the justness of the world. Incidents which result in considerable suffering or injury, however, generally are not perceived as common experiences. When some serious harm or injury occurs to a victim, the relationship between what the victim experienced and what s/he "deserved" to experience becomes very salient. Because the relationship between serious or very negative outcomes and "deservedness" typically is not easily explained, the occurrence of such an event often poses considerable threat to the view that the world is "just."

To be sure, people do not and can not respond to all instances of perceived injustice, and consequently, many such events go unheeded. Injustices which are perceived to have little impact on individuals' personal lives and their continued trust that the world will remain orderly and just do

not create a sufficient threat to their perception of a "just world." Only when the perceived injustice becomes sufficiently relevant as a result of either some personal identification with the victim or the situation or in some other way which threatens observers' personal view of justice, do just world determinations become likely. Consequently, the situation need not be relevant in the sense that observers might someday find themselves involved in order to pose a threat to observers' belief in a "just world." Instead, it needs only to represent an instance in which the discrepancy between what is "deserved" and what is received appears to be in contradiction with the order and justness of the world.

Once the observers' sense of justice is adequately threatened (the discrepancy between what was "deserved" and what was received is perceived as sufficiently "unjust"), observers first are expected to try to resolve the perceived injustice by compensating the victim and/or punishing the perpetrator. However, if justification of the incident cannot be satisfied through compensation of the victim or punishment of the perpetrator, observers are likely to resort to altering their perceptions of the victim's behavior or personal character so that the victim is perceived as deserving her/his fate. If the victim is perceived as behaviorally responsible for her/his fate, then observers may justify the incident by downgrading the victim's actions. However, if

the victim is perceived to be behaviorally innocent and her/his fate cannot be attributed to something she/he did or did not do, observers may justify the incident by derogating the victim's personal character--implying that due to the victim's "bad" character she/he "got what she/he deserved."

Whether an individual is perceived to have "deserved" her/his fate is generally determined on the basis of a subjective evaluation of: (a) the individual's personal character, (b) the individual's behavior in the situation, and/or (c) chance or capricious circumstances. The latter reason (that one's fate may be due to chance or capricious events), however, is less likely than the other two alternatives. This is because the acknowledgment that someone is a victim of a chance or a capricious event implies a lack of control over one's outcomes and is generally contrary to the belief that one earns or is in some way responsible for what happens to that individual. Thus, in the event there is some question concerning whether the victim "deserved" what happened, it is likely the victim's fate will be justified, at least in part, as due to her/his personal character and/or some action taken or not taken by the individual.

The extent to which the victim or the victim's behavior is scrutinized usually depends on what observers perceive to have happened or what they infer may have happened. If a victim is perceived as "deserving" her/his

misfortune, then no threat is posed to observers' belief that the world is just and the victim is easily derogated or blamed in accordance to the degree the victim "got what she/he deserved." If, however, a misfortune occurs involving someone whom observers do not expect to experience an unpleasant fate (i.e., someone with whom they personally identify), then they are faced with the prospect of explaining how such an incident could occur.

Because the seriousness of accidents and other personal misfortunes are often unmistakable, maintaining a just world perspective frequently involves a fault-finding examination of the victim and the victim's behavior. According to the model, the way observers might do this is by altering their perceptions of the seriousness of the incident or their perceptions of the victim's character and the role the victim may have had in causing the incident. As a result, for a situation in which the victim ordinarily would be considered behaviorally "innocent" (e.g., a situation involving a similar other), observers may perceive some flaw in the victim's character as justification for the incident. On the other hand, if the victim's character is irreproachable, then some distortion of her/his behavior to account for the victim's misfortune becomes more probable.

Just World and Defensive Attribution as Viable Models of Victim Perception

Over the last decade, a number of studies have been conducted which have empirically tested predictions made by the just world and defensive attribution models. Although the results are far from conclusive, support for the just world model has been quite limited, while a number of studies have reported data which appear to support the defensive attribution model (Chaikin & Darley, 1973; Kaplan & Miller, 1978; McKillip & Posovac, 1975; Shaver, 1970; Shaw & McMartin, 1977; Shaw & Skolnick, 1971). As a result, there has been the tendency on the part of some researchers to conclude that the defensive attribution model is a better or more accurate model of victim perception. The adequacy of this conclusion, however, is limited for several reasons.

One reason is that despite the fact that several studies have reported evidence in direct contradiction to predictions made by the just world model, most of these studies have only reported data refuting one or two predictions of the model (e.g., innocent victims will be derogated more than responsible ones), while virtually ignoring results which are not contradictory to the other predictions of the model. For example, Miller, Smith, Ferree, and Taylor (1976) found subjects attributed significantly more responsibility to victims of accidents or personal victimizations when some level of personal culpability was evident than when the

victims were described as "innocent." A culpable woman driver was perceived as having the most responsibility, a female rape victim as having an intermediate amount of responsibility, and an "innocent" woman pedestrian as having the least amount of responsibility for personal injuries suffered as a result of their respective mishaps. The culpable driver also was viewed as less liked and less intelligent than the other two stimulus persons. No differences in likability were reported between the rape and pedestrian victims. Miller et al. (1976) interpreted their results as nonsupportive of the just world model because the culpable victim was faulted more for her injuries and liked less than the more "innocent" victims. The investigators argued that according to the just world model, behaviorally innocent victims should have been derogated more than culpable ones. However, this reasoning fails to take into account that an observer's "just world" is not threatened when one is perceived to "get what one deserves." That is, victim blame and victim derogation are only likely if the event creates a threat to an observer's sense of justice and there is no other way to explain or justify the victim's fate. If an innocent victim's misfortune can be explained by means other than personal responsibility, or if sufficient compensation can be provided to amend the injustice, attributions of victim blame or victim derogation are not necessary. Given this reasoning, Miller et al.'s data actually provide

some direct support for the just world model. In spite of no differences in perceived severity of injury, likability, and intelligence between rape and pedestrian victims, the rape victim was blamed more for her victimization, which according to the model is one way in which subjects may have justified the incidence of the rape.

Another reason why the just world model should be given further consideration is that a critical element of the model, the degree to which a personal misfortune is perceived as "deserved," has not been made clear in many of the stimulus situations which have been used. For the most part, the research on the perception of the victimization of others has portrayed stimulus persons as "victims" of accidents in which the outcome and the stimulus person's role in producing that outcome have been very ambiguous (Fishbein & Azjen, 1973; Vidmar & Crinklaw, 1974). For example, in the studies by Shaver (1970), Shaw and Skolnick (1971), and Shaw and McMartin (1977) involving an "accident," the stimulus person was not the only recipient of a negative outcome; in fact in most conditions, someone else experienced a more serious misfortune. Yet, it is not clear whether perceptions of personal responsibility were based on only the involvement of the stimulus person in the "accident" or on the involvement of the stimulus person plus the injury suffered by others in the situation. Equally unclear is whether or not the severity of the outcome of incidents such as chemical explosions in

laboratories and cars rolling down hills due to faulty brakes can be evaluated unambiguously as something for which the stimulus person can be reasonably held responsible. As a result, because the research generally has not provided appropriate stimulus situations for assessing the just world model, conclusions regarding reported "limited" applications of the model must be considered as tentative.

A third consideration which suggests that the defensive attribution model may not be necessarily a better explanatory model of perceptions of personal misfortunes is related to a conceptual confound inherent in many accident situations (Chaiken & Darley, 1973; Landy & Aronson, 1969). When the victim is also the perpetrator of an accident, perpetrator culpability and victim responsibility are confounded. Unfortunately, much of the past research which has assessed perceptions of personal misfortunes has used accident situations in which the stimulus person has been portrayed as both a "victim" and as a causal agent of harm to others (a perpetrator) in the situation. For example, in the Walster (1966) and Shaver (1970) studies, a car accident was described in which the "victim" was also the owner of the car involved in the accident. As the owner of the car, the stimulus person (a young male) was portrayed as both liable for the damage and/or injury done by his car and as a victim responsible for the damage and/or personal injury. Yet, because he wasn't in the car at the time of the accident nor was he injured in the car

accident, whether subjects responded to the stimulus person as a perpetrator (perceiving him as responsible for the outcome) or as an unfortunate victim (due to the damage done to and by his car) is not clear. Another example of victim-perpetrator confounding is evident in the Shaw and Skolnick (1971) and Shaw and McMartin (1977) studies. Although the details of the accidents in the two studies differed slightly, the stimulus situation in the two studies involved a chemistry or nutrition laboratory and a college student who has an "accident" while conducting an experiment. In the severe outcome conditions, the result of the accident (a chemical explosion) was described as harming both the stimulus person and others present in the situation. Consequently, the stimulus person could conceivably have been perceived either as a victim, as the responsible party for the accident, or as both the victim and perpetrator.

Hence, based on the criticisms outlined above, it seems advisable to reconsider the utility of the just world model in a context that is free of the confound inherent in an accident situation. One type of personal misfortune which is very comparable to an accident situation but provides a more identifiable dimension of "deservedness" (on the basis of what the victim does or does not do) is a personal or criminal victimization. Like an accident, a personal victimization can involve a range of outcomes (from severe to mild), can occur along a dimension of personal relevance (from high to low),

and can happen to a personally similar or dissimilar other. A personal victimization also has several advantages over an accident situation that makes it more suitable in a test of predictions of the two models.

First, the role of the victim is clearly unconfounded with the role of the perpetrator (one possible argument against this contention involves the quasi-legal concept of victim precipitation--the victim is perceived as initiating or in some other major way responsible for the incident (e.g., see Amir, 1967). Second, although both an accident and personal victimization may be equally unpredictable in the sense that in a given situation "anything can happen", the foreseeability of a personal victimization is likely to be more constant than that of an accident. Personal victimizations require that another person be present in the situation, whereas accidents can occur without another person present. Thus, the probability of a personal victimization in a given situation is objectively more predictable when the presence of others is possible. Third, because the severity of the outcome may be perceived as directly related to the victim's behavior (i.e., what the victim does or does not do, see Krulewitz & Nash, 1979; Scroggs, 1976) and thus partly controlled by the victim, judgments of "deservedness" particularly in relation to the severity of the outcome are more clearly based on victim-related variables.

Previous Research on the Perceptions of a Personal Victimization

The research to date utilizing a personal victimization situation has produced mixed support for the defensive attribution and just world models. For example, Smith, Keating, Hester, and Mitchell (1976) manipulated the social respectability of a rape victim by varying occupational role in order to make the perception of sexually provocative behavior (an obvious basis for ascribed victim responsibility), more or less likely. Male and female subjects were presented written cases of a rape victimization in which the victim was described either as a topless-bottomless dancer (low respectability), as a social worker (moderate respectability), or as a Catholic nun (high respectability), and as either acquainted or unacquainted with her assailant.

Major support for the just world model was provided by the finding that victim and assailant responsibility were essentially uncorrelated. In consonance with the model, this result suggests that subjects perceived the occurrence of the rape as due to factors other than the assailant's actions. The authors found that the level of attributed responsibility differed as a function of social role. Overall, the nun was viewed as less responsible (more innocent) for her rape than either the social worker or the dancer. In addition, the nun and social worker were viewed less likely than the dancer to have encouraged the rape. Subjects also

identified more with the nun and the social worker and expressed greater liking for the nun and the social worker than for the dancer.

For the dancer, and to a lesser extent the social worker, provocative behavior was identified as part of the reason they were victimized. Overall, victims unacquainted with their offenders were attributed more responsibility for their rapes than were victims who were previously acquainted with their assailants. This effect was particularly strong for the nun victim; she was viewed as significantly more responsible for the assault when she was portrayed as unacquainted with her assailant than when she was portrayed as being acquainted with him. These results also suggest support for the just world model. An assault by a stranger is generally perceived as more serious than one by an assailant with whom the victim is acquainted. As a result, a victimization by a stranger requires more justification, particularly when it involves someone who is liked and respected. In the case of the nun, subjects were faced with a situation in which they had to account for why an individual, who is normally thought of as sexually nonprovocative, was sexually assaulted. Consistent with the just world model, subjects apparently justified the nun's fate by assigning more personal responsibility when she was victimized by an assailant with whom she was unacquainted than when the attack was by someone she knew (which was presumably perceived as less serious).

Despite the consistent pattern of most of the findings, all the results of this study were not in clear support of the just world model. For example, subjects perceived the victimizations of the nun and the social worker by an assailant with whom the victims were unacquainted as due more to chance factors than when the victim was acquainted with her offender. According to the just world model, victimizations involving unacquainted victim-offender pairs should be perceived as more serious and more threatening to the notion of a "just world" than when the victim is acquainted with her attacker. This result, however, may not be completely inconsistent with the model due to the fact that subjects identified strongly with the nun and the social worker victims, and according to the model, identification with the victim can lead to more complex justification of why the victim was assaulted.

One other result that does not clearly conform to the just world perspective is the fact that, although the victims were perceived differently in terms of their responsibility for the rape incidents, subjects did not differ in recommending punishment for the assailant as a function of the social role of the victim. In the context of the just world model, the victim's social role should have affected the amount of justification required to resolve the threat to subjects' belief in a "just world," which then, should have resulted in different levels of recommended punishment (compensation). The lack of differences in recommended levels of punishment

by victim's social role, however, may be due to the fact that subjects assigned high levels of punishment for all offenders independent of the extent to which the victim was perceived as responsible.

In a study investigating the perception of rape incidents, Krulewitz and Nash (1979) also found data in support of predictions made by the just world model. These investigators presented written case accounts to subjects in which they manipulated the level of victim resistance in the course of a rape or an attempted rape. The results indicated that the attributed level of responsibility to the victim and the assailant varied as a function of whether the incident was a rape or an attempted rape. The victim was viewed as relatively more responsible for the incident when it was a rape than when it was an attempted rape. Attributions of "victim blame" and "victim fault" also tended to be greater when the victimization was a rape than when it was an attempted rape. Consistent with the assigned level of responsibility, the assailant was perceived as more responsible for the attempted rape than for the rape. In addition, although female subjects identified more with the victims than did males, they also attributed more responsibility to the victim. Thus, in support of the just world model subjects assigned more responsibility when the victim experienced a more serious outcome.

In addition to the assignment of greater responsibility on the part of the victim of a more serious outcome, subjects recommended longer prison sentences for the rape assailant than for the attempted rape assailant. This pattern of results is consistent with the model's prediction that individuals, in an effort to restore a sense of justice, will make attributions which wronged victims.

In another study which provides support for the just world model, Jones and Aronson (1973) presented subjects case accounts of either a rape or an attempted rape of either a married, single-virgin, or divorced woman and found that attributions of responsibility differed as a function of the respectability of the victim. As victim respectability increased (respectability was determined a priori by a panel of students similar to the subjects), attributions of fault for the incident also increased. The more "respectable" single virgin and married woman victims were perceived as more at fault than the less "respectable" divorced woman victim. Apparently, the knowledge that highly respectable females can be raped, threatened subjects' need to believe in a world that is "just", and in order to explain the incident they found it necessary to find fault with the actions of the victim.

Jones and Aronson (1973) also found that the social respectability of the victim affected the tendency of subjects

to assign severe penalties to the offender. Subjects assigned significantly more severe penalties (longer prison sentences) to the offender of the married woman victim (high respectability) than to the offender of the divorced woman victim (low respectability). The severity of the penalty assigned to the offender of the virgin female victim was approximately midway between that assigned to the married and divorced woman victims.

These results support the prediction that observers of a personal misfortune are likely to try to compensate a victim in order to justify the victim's fate. Compensation in the form of recommendations of punishment is one way to achieve this (Kerr & Kurtz, 1977). Because respectable persons are not expected to experience serious personal misfortunes, when they do, justification of such an event may involve a critical and possibly negative evaluation of the victim's role in the incident. Consequently, justification of the event involves considerable blame attributed to the victim, but according to the just world model, compensation to "fit" the outcome (e.g., punishment of the offender) may also be necessary. Hence, in the Jones and Aronson study, while the more respectable victim was apparently perceived as more at fault for her misfortune, she was also perceived as more "deserving" of appropriate compensation.

Finally, although subjects did not fault victims of a rape more than victims of an attempted rape (which is predicted

by the model), there was some indication that the rape incident as compared with the attempted rape incident was perceived as more serious and potentially more threatening to the belief in a "just world." Subjects recommended longer prison sentences for the offenders of both the married and virgin woman victims when the incident was portrayed as a rape than when it was portrayed as an attempted rape. Presumably, harsher sentences were recommended to reflect the greater need to justify through compensation the victims of the objectively more serious act (the rape).

Several attempts to replicate Jones' and Aronson's data have failed to produce much additional support for the just world model (Kahn, Gilbert, Latta, Deutsch, Hagen, Hill, McGaughey, Ryen, & Wilson, 1977; Kerr & Kurtz, 1977). Kerr and Kurtz (1977) presented subjects the same rape account used in the Jones and Aronson (1973) study and manipulated the severity of the outcome of the incidents by varying the amount of physical injury suffered by the victim. They also presented subjects a case involving an armed robbery in which an "innocent" male bystander, of high or low social respectability, was seriously or mildly injured. For the rape case, no difference was found in attributed fault as a function of the respectability of the victim's social role. Likewise, the amount of attributed victim responsibility for the incident did not differ as a function of the physical injury experienced by the victim. Both results are in contradiction to

predictions based on the just world model. The results, however, did indicate that longer prison sentences were recommended when the victim experienced the more serious outcome (the more extensive physical injury) which could be interpreted as "compensation" for the victim.

For the evaluation of the robbery case, overall, no relationship was found between subjects' assignment of responsibility and the social respectability of the victim. The length of recommended prison sentences also was not affected by the social role of the victim. However, a sex difference in the perception of the victims and their assailants in the robbery case does provide some limited support for the just world model. Although female subjects perceived the incidents similarly across all stimulus conditions, male subjects perceived the victim as more responsible as the degree of victim suffering increased. Thus, in line with just world rationalizing, males apparently thought the seriously injured male bystander "got what he deserved."

Kahn et al. (1977) also were unable to replicate the major findings of the Jones and Aronson study. These investigators assessed perceived victim responsibility for victims portrayed in roles of a virgin, a married woman, a married woman who was pregnant, and a divorcee. They also manipulated the social role of the assailant. They found no differences in the attribution of fault for the rape incidents either as a function of the social role (respectability) of the victim

or as a function of the social role of the assailant. Recommendations for years of imprisonment also failed to show differences across stimulus conditions.

Fulero and Delara (1976) in the context of the defensive attribution model suggested an alternate interpretation of Jones' and Aronson's (1973) data. They argued that rather than the level of social respectability as the focal point for responsibility attributions, the perceived personal similarity of the victim to subjects could better explain Jones' and Aronson's results. To test their proposal, Fulero and Delara had subjects rate a number of stimulus persons including the ones used in the Jones and Aronson study, in terms of their own personal similarity to the roles and in terms of social respectability. The results indicated that subjects viewed themselves as more similar to a young divorcee or a married woman than to a single virgin. Based on these findings (methodological considerations aside), Fulero and Delara reinterpreted the Jones and Aronson data in terms of the defensive attribution model. First, because the events were depicted as occurring on a college campus, the situation could reasonably be assumed as relevant to college student subjects. Second, on the basis of personal similarity rather than social respectability, less responsibility was assigned to the presumably more personally similar victim, the divorcee, than to the less similar victim, the virgin. Third, consistent with the "blame-avoidance" and "harm-avoidance" tendencies

identified by the model, subjects apparently assigned greater blame to the more dissimilar victims (the married woman and the virgin) as the seriousness of their personal misfortune increased; the married woman and the virgin were faulted more for their involvement when the outcome was a rape than when it was an attempted rape.

Fulero and Delara further tested their explanation by assessing perceived responsibility for rape victims who were portrayed as personally similar (a same age student) or dissimilar (a middle-aged housewife). The results indicated that for female subjects, personally similar victims were accorded less responsibility than dissimilar ones. No difference in level of attributed responsibility as a function of personal similarity was found for male subjects. Female subjects also reported a more positive impression of the student victim than they had for the housewife victim; male subjects held the opposite impression.

In a second experiment, the authors presented male and female subjects a description of a rape incident involving either a same-age female student (a personally similar other) or a middle-aged female alcoholic (a dissimilar low respectable other). Female subjects again assigned less responsibility to the more personally similar victim and more responsibility to the personally dissimilar victim. They also viewed the older, dissimilar victim as more likely to have provoked the attack than the younger, more similar victim. The older

dissimilar victim's behavior at the time of the rape--"walking alone at night" was assessed by female subjects as more inappropriate for the dissimilar victim than for a similar victim. Male subjects' ratings of victim responsibility did not differ across stimulus conditions.

In sum, in support of a defensive attribution explanation, Fulero and Delara found that female subjects tended to identify more with a similar other and reduce attributions of responsibility relative to a dissimilar other. The use of explanations ("victim-provoked") to downgrade the behavior of a dissimilar other and the more favorable impression of the more similar victim is consistent with the "blame-avoidance" and "harm-avoidance" tendencies predicted by the model.

Feldman-Summers and Lindner (1976) investigated college students' perceptions of a personal victimization by presenting them a case account of either a rape, an attempted rape, or a physical assault involving victims of differing social respectability. They manipulated social respectability by portraying the victim either as a prostitute, a divorcee, a married woman, a single nonvirgin, or a single virgin; the prostitute had the least social respectability, the single virgin the most, the other roles occupied intermediate ranges. (It should be noted that the respectability ratings were consistent with Jones' and Aronson's data and inconsistent with Fulero's and Delara's similarity ratings.) This suggests that similarity and respectability, even if highly

correlated, are independent dimensions. Feldman-Summers and Lindner found that victim responsibility was related negatively to victim respectability. When the victim was portrayed either as a prostitute or a divorcee, she was viewed as more responsible for what happened to her than when she was identified as either a married woman, a single nonvirgin, or a single virgin. The more socially respectable victims were also viewed as suffering more than the less respectable victims and to have experienced greater psychological impact from their experience. These relationships were consistent across the three types of victimizations, although the effects were more pronounced for the rape and attempted rape incidents.

Although no data were reported to indicate the extent to which subjects identified with the various social roles represented by the victims, the results do indicate that female subjects identified more with the victim than did males. Regardless of the type of victimization, female subjects recommended longer prison sentences, assigned more assailant guilt, and perceived greater psychological impact on the victim (all victims were female) than did males. The ratings of the stimulus persons by male subjects essentially paralleled that of the females, but were of lesser magnitude.

The pattern of results can be interpreted as support for the defensive attribution model. If subjects identified more with the married woman, single virgin, and single nonvirgin

victims than with the divorcee or prostitute victims, then the pattern of results indicates that subjects assigned greater responsibility to victims who were the most personally dissimilar. Also consistent with the defensive attribution model were the ratings of the degree of psychological impact the incidents were perceived to have had on the victims. The more personally similar victims were rated as more affected, the less personally similar victims were perceived as less affected by their experiences. This suggests that subjects viewed the victimizations of similar and dissimilar others differently.

A Comparison of Predictions Made by the Models: Relevant Dimensions of the Just World and Defensive Attribution Models

Because few studies have compared predictions made by the just world and defensive attribution models in stimulus situations in which theoretically relevant dimensions have been manipulated (e.g., Chaikin & Darley, 1973; Fulero & Delara, 1976; Jones & Aronson, 1973), possible limitations of either model's ability to predict observer perceptions of victims of personal misfortunes have not been investigated adequately. Three dimensions or factors which are expected to have critical importance to the cognitive operations predicted by the models are: (1) personal similarity--the degree to which observers perceive the victim as personally similar or dissimilar (the basis for perceived similarity can be due to

a variety of dimensions, such as sex, age, and personal values) to themselves; (2) situational relevance--the degree to which the situation is perceived to be personally meaningful to observers (i.e., that they may someday encounter the same or a similar experience); and (3) severity of the outcome--the extent to which observers perceive the consequences of the misfortune experienced by the victim as serious or important. The conceptual relevance of these three dimensions and their relative importance to each model in affecting how the misfortunes of others are perceived are summarized below.

Personal similarity. Because people identify more readily with an individual who is personally similar than with one who is personally dissimilar, the reasons attributed explaining a personally similar other's personal misfortune are not likely to be the same as those indicated for a personally dissimilar other who experiences the same misfortune.

In the defensive attribution model, the nature of the self-protective attributional set invoked to explain another's personal misfortune depends on the degree to which observers perceive that other as personally similar or dissimilar. When the stimulus person is perceived as personally similar by observers, the model predicts they will adopt a "blame-avoidance" attributional set and will avoid making attributions that blame the stimulus person for the incident. When the

stimulus person is perceived as personally dissimilar, the model predicts observers will adopt a "harm-avoidance" attributional set and perceive the stimulus person as responsible for her/his fate. It is also expected that observers will attempt to differentiate themselves from a dissimilar stimulus person as much as possible.

Personal similarity in the just world model relates to observers' expectations of "deservedness"--that similar others should act like them and receive the same outcomes. When a similar other is victimized, the fact of that event is inconsistent with the expectation that a similar other would not be, or does not deserve to be, victimized. The degree to which observers identify with a stimulus person may then mediate the perception that the individual "got what she/he deserved." Incidents involving stimulus persons perceived as personally dissimilar are more easily justified because assessments of what the stimulus person received can be evaluated against a standard of what most people in the same situation as the dissimilar person "deserve" to receive. For a stimulus person who is personally similar, such assessments are more difficult to make because the standard by which observers evaluate the stimulus person also represents how they themselves would expect to be evaluated should they become involved in a similar situation. Thus, the consequences of a personal misfortune involving a personally similar other are often perceived quite critically, particularly when the "outcome-deservedness" relation is very discrepant.

In sum, according to both models, the degree to which observers identify with the victim greatly influences observers' perception of an individual's role as a victim of personal misfortune. The models differ, however, in the way personal similarity is assumed to be related to perceived responsibility. For the defensive attribution model, personal similarity serves a discriminating function for assigning responsibility, whereas for the just model, personal similarity serves an information function with which a judgment of "deservedness" can be determined.

Situational relevance. To the extent a situation is perceived as relevant to observers, it should represent a more realistic situation and affect observers' view of a personal misfortune.

According to the defensive attribution model, situational relevance is determined by the subjective probability on the part of observers that they might encounter the same or similar outcome experienced by a victim of some personal misfortune. Situational relevance is a necessary condition for optimal prediction by the model; self-protective attributions will occur only if the outcome of a given incident is perceived as situationally relevant to observers. If the situation is not relevant, the model presumes observers are not adequately involved (to invoke self-protective attributions) and will not be able to make an unambiguous evaluation of the incident.

In the just world model, threats to a belief in a "just world" do not need to occur in situations that may actually involve observers. While the admission that a given misfortune could happen to them may increase its potential as a personally threatening event, the relevance of the situation is important only if it increases observers' ability to evaluate what the victim "deserved" to receive and if the outcome of the incident has some impact on their trust in the "justness" of their world. Consequently, even events which have little actual personal threat, if they threaten perceptions of "deservedness", can produce "just world" determinations.

In sum, according to both models, the degree of personal meaningfulness or relevance of a given situation affects whether the event in question has personal meaning or relevance to observers. For the defensive attribution model, the extent to which the situation is relevant or not relevant is critical to the expectations of the model. Situations which have little relevance to observers are not expected to produce adequate threat to observers' sense of "being able to avoid the same unfortunate outcome." For the just world model, the relevance of the situation serves an information function indicating whether or not the incident in question poses a threat to observers' belief in a just world; situations of personally low relevance can threaten just world beliefs if the victim is perceived as not getting what she/he "deserved."

Severity of the outcome. According to the defensive attribution model, the severity of the outcome of an incident affects the extent to which it threatens observers' sense of well being and feelings of security. Incidents involving serious negative outcomes are more personally threatening to observers than incidents involving less serious or mild negative outcomes. Greater personal threat produces the tendency to intensify self-protective motivations and in turn the tendency to invoke "blame-" and "harm-avoidance" attributions.

In terms of the just world model, the severity of the outcome of some misfortune experienced by an individual is important (because of its potential as a threat to the belief in a "just world") if the magnitude of the outcome fails to match what the individual "deserves" to receive. Consequently, the greater the discrepancy between what an individual "deserves" to receive and what she/he actually does receive the greater the threat that perceived injustice is to observers' belief that the world is "just." Outcomes which represent only small discrepancies between what is perceived to be "deserved" and received pose minimal or no threat to the belief in a "just world."

In sum, the severity of what happens to the victim serves a moderating function for both models. According to the defensive attribution model, the extent to which observers make defensive attributions is dependent on the severity of the outcome. Self-protective attributions are positively

related to outcome severity. For the just world model, the severity of the outcome of an incident provides critical information concerning whether the outcome was "deserved" or not. When the outcomes are not perceived as "deserved," just world rationalizing is expected.

Responsibility Measures

Before proceeding to the specific predictions made by each model, it is necessary to consider the classes of dependent measures by which differences in predictions made by the models can be compared. Among the classes of measures which are most relevant to a comparison of the models are measures of: (1) behavioral responsibility attributions, (2) characterological responsibility attributions, and (3) nonpersonal responsibility attributions.

Attributions of behavioral responsibility represent the extent to which the stimulus person is perceived responsible for a personal misfortune due to something she/he did or failed to do. Assessments of victim blame, victim fault, and victim-responsibility are examples of measures of behavioral responsibility attributions.

Attributions of characterological responsibility represent the extent to which the stimulus person is perceived responsible for a personal misfortune due to something about her/his personality or personal character. Assessments of personal derogation in which the victim's personal character

is denigrated and viewed as blameworthy and assessments of respectability and personal worth are examples of measures of characterological responsibility attributions.

Attributions of nonpersonal responsibility represent the extent to which the stimulus person is perceived as not personally responsible for a given mishap. Recommendations of victim compensation (e.g., offender blame and recommendations of offender punishment) and assessments of nonpersonal responsibility (e.g., evaluations of the incident being due to chance or the environment) are examples of nonpersonal responsibility attributions.

Perceptions of a Personal Victimization: Predictions of the Models

To test predictions made by the defensive attribution and just world models college students' perceptions of a personal victimization were assessed by comparing their evaluations (via attribution measures) of written case accounts describing a sexual assault perpetrated by a male assailant against a female victim. Comparative perceptions were obtained as a result of the manipulation of three major aspects of the incidents: (1) the relative relevance of the situation to the student observers, (2) the relative personal similarity of the stimulus person (victim) to the student observer, and (3) the magnitude or severity of the outcome of the incident to the victim. The situational aspect was varied along a dimension of personal involvement in the activity (walking

alone early in the evening, waiting alone for a bus early in the morning, going to a night club alone), so that the least engaged-in activity, going to a nightclub, was also the least relevant situation to subject-observers. The personal similarity aspect involved portraying the victim in a social role (either as a college student, a stock clerk, or a strip-tease dancer) which varied between relatively very similar (a college student) to relatively very dissimilar (a strip-tease dancer). The severity of the outcome was manipulated by depicting the assault either as a rape (high severe outcome) or as an attempted rape (low severe outcome). The manipulation of these three aspects or factors resulted in a 3 x 3 x 2 between-groups design. Specific predictions were tested by comparing the relative magnitude of each attribution measure and by the overall pattern of the various classes of attribution measures with the theoretical discrepancy-resolution process identified by each model.

Defensive attribution. According to the defensive attribution model, for conditions of low or no situational relevance, the class or classes of self-protective attributions which are most likely to be invoked to explain a personal misfortune is not easily discerned; consequently all three classes of responsibility attributions are equally likely to be used as explanations for the victim's fate. However, when a situation has sufficient relevance for observers, the relative probability of the three classes of responsibility attributions becomes more predictable.

1. Under conditions of high personal similarity/high situational relevance, attributions of nonpersonal responsibility are predicted as the most likely way observers will explain a personal misfortune of a similar other. To a lesser extent, attributions of behavioral responsibility may also be assigned. Attributions of characterological responsibility are the least likely of the three classes of responsibility attributions to be used to explain a victim's misfortune when it involves a similar other. Shaw and McMartin (1977) identified this attributional set as "blame-avoidance."

2. Under conditions of low personal similarity/high situational relevance, the model predicts that attributions of behavioral responsibility and/or characterological responsibility will be made to account for a victimization of a personally dissimilar other. To a lesser extent, attributions of nonpersonal responsibility may also be invoked to account for the victim's misfortune. Shaw and McMartin (1977) identified this attributional set as "harm-avoidance."

3. The magnitude or severity of the outcome experienced by the victim is expected to affect the intensity with which observers will make responsibility attributions. As the severity of the outcome increases, the tendency of observers to invoke either a "blame-avoidance" or "harm-avoidance" attributional set to explain the victimization is predicted to increase.

Just world. According to the just world model, situational relevance (that the observer may someday encounter the situation) is not absolutely necessary for just world determinations; the relevance of a situation is expected to act largely as a moderator variable. The more relevant observers perceive a situation to be, the better able they are to determine if a given incident poses a threat to their belief that the world is "just." Thus, even for incidents which occur in situations which are perceived as having little probability of happening to observers, if they are perceived as posing threats to the belief in a "just world," just world determinations are predicted.

1. Under conditions of high personal similarity/high situational relevance and high personal similarity/low situational relevance, justification of personal victimizations is most likely to involve attributions of nonpersonal responsibility and to a lesser extent behavioral responsibility attributions. Attributions of characterological responsibility are expected to be the least likely form of justification used to explain a similar other's personal misfortune.

2. Under conditions of low personal similarity/high situational relevance and low personal similarity/low situational relevance, justification of personal victimizations is most likely to involve attributions of behavioral responsibility, and to a lesser extent characterological responsibility may also be invoked. Attributions of nonpersonal

responsibility may also be invoked, although their use is relatively less likely than the other two classes of attributions.

The magnitude or severity of the outcome experienced by the victim is expected to be positively related to determinations of "deservedness" and thus is expected to be strongly related to the incidence and degree of responsibility attributions.

3. Under conditions of mild outcome/low personal similarity/high situational relevance and mild outcome/low personal similarity/low situational relevance, attributions of behavioral responsibility and characterological responsibility are predicted as the most likely ways to justify a personal victimization of a dissimilar other; relatively less likely are attributions of nonpersonal responsibility.

4. Under conditions of mild outcome/high personal similarity/high situational relevance and mild outcome/high personal similarity/low situational relevance, the model predicts that attributions of nonpersonal responsibility and to a lesser extent behavioral responsibility attributions are the most likely ways a victimization of a similar other will be justified. Attributions of characterological responsibility are less likely to be used to account for a victimization of a similar other.

5. Under conditions of severe outcome/low personal similarity/high situational relevance and severe outcome/low

personal similarity/low situational relevance, the model predicts that attributions of behavioral responsibility and characterological responsibility are the most likely ways a victimization of a personally dissimilar other will be justified. Attributions of nonpersonal responsibility are expected to a much lesser degree.

6. Under conditions of severe outcome/high personal similarity/high situational relevance and severe outcome/high personal similarity/low situational relevance, justification of a personal victimization is expected to involve high levels of behavioral responsibility and nonpersonal responsibility attributions. Characterological responsibility attributions may also be used, but relatively less so than the other classes of attributions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study was to compare predictions made by two victim perception models, defensive attribution and just world. The two models make contrasting predictions regarding the same phenomena on the basis of the cognitive-perceptual organization of an event presumed by each model to be invoked when people confront the personal misfortune of another. Predictions of the two models are made in regards to three major aspects of events comprising

personal misfortunes--the relevance of the situation to the observer, the personal similarity of the victim to the observer, and the severity of the outcome experienced by the victim.

The defensive attribution model argues that people prefer to believe that the personal misfortunes of others are not likely to occur to them. That is, they either will not experience the same unfortunate fate, or if they do, the fact of their involvement will not be their fault. To assure themselves of avoiding the mishap or being blamed for it should it happen to them, the model posits that people will invoke self-protective defensive attributions based on the situational relevance of the incident, the victim's personal similarity to them, and the severity of the outcome of the incident for the victim. The effects of these aspects on perceptions of a personal misfortune are that the situation must be perceived as relevant before defensive attributions are made. The degree of personal similarity the victim shares with observers affects whether or not the observers will blame the victim for her/his involvement. The severity of the outcome moderates the strength of the predicted defensive attributions. The major effects predicted by the defensive attribution model are main effects for situational relevance and personal similarity, and the interactions situational relevance x personal similarity and situational relevance x personal similarity x severity of outcome.

The just world model contends that perceptions of the personal misfortunes of others are evaluated on the basis of whether or not the victim "got what she/he deserved." The major assumption of the model is that the world is a just and orderly place and people get what they deserve. Apparent contradictions to this relationship cause the need to explain or resolve the perceived injustice. People maintain their belief in a just world by rationalizing another's personal misfortune to be either sufficiently deserved or adequately compensated. In either case, the perception of a personal misfortune, and in particular, the role of the victim, may be altered drastically in order that the incident will be consonant with the belief that the world is just. Whether what has happened to a victim represents a sufficient threat to observers' belief in a just world depends on the situation, who the victim is, and what outcome the victim experiences. Personal identification with the victim and the situation provides a basis by which observers can evaluate expected outcomes. Outcomes which are not expected are the most threatening to the belief in a just world and require the most justification. The major effects predicted by the just world model are main effects for personal similarity and severity of outcome, and interaction effects of personal similarity x severity of outcome and personal similarity x situational relevance x severity of outcome.

In brief, the two models both predict a main effect of personal similarity and a three-way interaction of personal similarity x situational relevance x severity of outcome. Each model also makes predictions regarding effects not made by the other model. Defensive attribution predicts a main effect of situational relevance and an interaction of situational relevance x personal similarity. Just world predicts a main effect of severity of outcome and an interaction of personal similarity x severity of outcome. On the basis of these predictions, the results of the present study were evaluated as support for one, both, or neither of the models. Determination of the general adequacy of either model was made by assessing individual predicted effects and the overall pattern of responsibility attributions.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Subjects

Two hundred and seventy-five female students enrolled in introductory level psychology classes at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, during the Fall semester, 1980, participated in the study for course credit.

Design

Predictions made by the just world and defensive attribution models were compared by presenting subjects a written case account describing a personal victimization of a female in which the personal similarity of the stimulus person relative to the subjects, the relevance of the situation to the subjects, and the severity of the outcome involving the stimulus person (the victim) were manipulated. Three social roles representing high, moderate, and low personal similarity, three social settings, representing high relevant-high probability of subject involvement, low relevant-moderate probability of subject involvement, and low relevant-low probability of subject involvement, and two levels of personal harm suffered by the victim representing low severe and high severe outcomes were manipulated in a 3 x 3 x 2 between-groups design.

Since the primary case account involved a sexual victimization which may be considered unique to female victims, a second case account involving a victimization of a male was presented to subjects in order to extend the generalizability of the results. The stimulus situation portrayed a male, who during the course of a robbery, was physically assaulted. Manipulation of the victim's social respectability, the social setting, and the consequences of the incident for the victim yielded a 3 x 3 x 2 between-groups design. The first factor, social respectability, involved three levels, high, moderate, and low. Pretesting indicated that although females generally tended to identify with a stimulus person's social role regardless of the sex of the person, female subjects could not be expected to reliably identify with social roles of persons of the opposite sex. Thus, to ensure that the social roles of the stimulus persons portrayed in the male victimization incidents provided different levels of observer identification, the roles were selected on the basis of social respectability rather than personal similarity.[1] The second factor, social setting, was altered to represent three social contexts, representing high relevant-high probability of subject involvement, low relevant-moderate probability of subject involvement, and low relevant-low probability of subject involvement. The third and last factor, the outcome of the incident, was portrayed either as a low severe or high severe outcome for the victim.

Subjects were presented two personal victimization case accounts, one involving a female and one involving a male victim. The order of presentation of the two cases was held constant; the female victimization incident was always presented first. This order was followed so that the evaluations of the female victimization incident (the primary stimulus situation) would not be affected (i.e., confounded due to a contrast effect; see Pepitone & DiNubile, 1976) by exposure to a case involving a victimization of a male stimulus person.[2] The magnitude or severity of the outcome of the incidents was also held constant; subjects were presented two cases in which the consequences for the victims in both cases represented either low severe or high severe outcomes. The social setting of the incidents was counterbalanced so that each social setting involving a female victim preceded each of the male victimization social settings an equal number of times.

Stimulus Materials

Development of the stimulus materials. The development of the stimulus materials involved the construction of case accounts of personal victimizations that (a) included the three stimulus conditions identified as conceptually relevant to both models and (b) represented stimulus conditions which could be manipulated along the desired dimensions of personal similarity, situational relevance, and severity of outcome. These requirements were met: (1) by differentiating

the degree of personal similarity of the stimulus person with that of the subjects by the use of different social roles, (2) by altering the relevance of the situation to subjects by portraying the victimization in different social settings, and (3) by manipulating the severity of the outcome to the stimulus person by increasing the severity of the personal harm suffered by that individual. Selection of the stimulus materials was made on the basis of pretesting selected social roles, social settings, and personal outcomes identified from past empirical research that examined the perception of the victimization of others. The two victimization incidents, a sexual assault of a female and a physical assault of a male, were selected because of their use in previous research involving perceptions of victimizations.

Pretesting of the stimulus materials. Pretesting of the stimulus materials was designed to identify social roles, social settings, and personal outcomes that could be included in case accounts depicting a sexual assault of a female and a physical assault of a male. Inclusion and refinement of the set of stimulus materials used to compare predictions made by the two models were based on ratings made by several panels of raters made up of students enrolled in introductory level courses in psychology, mathematics, and business during the summer session, 1980. Pretesting of the stimulus materials included: (a) rating a list of social roles on the basis of perceived personal similarity to each role,

(b) rating a list of social settings for perceived relevance or likelihood of possible involvement, and (c) rating a list of personal outcomes in terms of personal suffering. From the results of these ratings, several stimulus situations were constructed representing combinations of high/low personal similarity, high/low situational relevance, and high/low severity of outcome conditions. These stimulus situations were then evaluated by a panel of raters (see Appendix A for the results of the panel's ratings). From these results, the final stimulus materials were constructed (examples of the stimulus situations are presented in Appendix B). For the case accounts of the victimization of the female stimulus person, the stimulus situations portrayed a personal victimization of either a strip-tease dancer (low personal similarity), a stock clerk (moderate personal similarity), or a college student (high personal similarity), who was either walking alone early in the evening (high relevant-high probability of subject involvement social setting), waiting alone in the morning for a bus (low relevant-moderate probability of subject involvement), or going alone in the evening to a night club (low relevant-low probability of subject involvement), and who suffers a rape (high severe outcome) or an attempted rape (low severe outcome). For the case accounts of the victimization of the male stimulus person, the stimulus situations portrayed a personal victimization of either a professional gambler (low social

respectability), a car mechanic (moderate social respectability), or a college student (high social respectability), who was either walking alone early in the evening (high relevant-high probability of subject involvement social setting), waiting alone in the morning for a bus (low relevant-moderate probability of subject involvement social setting), or going alone to a bar (low relevant-moderate probability of subject involvement social setting), and who suffers a serious physical assault (high severe outcome) or a less serious physical assault (low severe outcome).

Dependent Measures

After each case account, subjects were asked to indicate their perceptions of the victimization incident on a set of 7-point rating scales. These scales represented the extent to which subjects:

(1) perceived themselves as similar to the victim ("victim similarity")

(2) identified with what happened to the victim ("identification with the victim's misfortune")

(3) believed the same kind of misfortune that happened to the victim could happen to them ("likelihood of experiencing same fate")

(4) believed the victim got what she/he deserved ("victim deserved the outcome")

(5) felt the victim was to blame for the incident ("victim blame")

(6) felt the offender was to blame for the incident ("offender blame")

(7) felt the victim's involvement in the incident was her/his fault ("victim fault")

(8) considered the victim's misfortune as serious ("seriousness of the incident")

(9) viewed the victim as respectable ("victim respectability")

(10) recommended the offender (if perceived responsible) be punished ("offender punishment").

In an open-ended question, subjects were asked to indicate if they thought the victim was in some way responsible for the victimization incident, and if so, in what way or ways was she/he responsible. A listing of the questions and rating scales is presented in Appendix C.

Procedure

Along with the case accounts, several questionnaires representing two personality measures, a behavioral inventory of risk situations, and a reliability check on the personal similarity manipulation[3] were compiled into stimulus material booklets. A set of written general instructions for completion of the booklet and specific instructions for each questionnaire were included in the booklet. A reproduction of the cover page and general instructions is provided in Appendix D.

Subjects were recruited by volunteer sign-up sheets and run in mixed sex groups[4] varying in size from 1 to 25. Subjects were given a brief explanation regarding their participation (i.e., that they would be filling out some questionnaires) and were then asked to complete the stimulus materials booklet. Distribution of the stimulus materials booklet was random. Following completion of the booklet, subjects were thoroughly debriefed.

Data Analysis

Between-group (3 x 3 x 2) analyses were conducted separately for the ratings of the female and male victimization stimulus situations. This procedure produced 18 cells per stimulus situation with 15 subjects per cell. Data from five subjects were excluded because they failed to complete ratings for all dependent measures for the two stimulus situations. Replacement data were collected through recruitment of five additional subjects.

The data were analyzed using multivariate (MANOVA) and univariate (ANOVA) analysis of variance procedures. For purposes of determining differences among sets of dependent variables, groupings of conceptually similar measures were identified by three independent judges. This procedure produced three sets of variables: (1) Identification with the Victimization ("victim similarity," "identification with the victim's misfortune," and "likelihood of experiencing the

same fate"), (2) Victim Responsibility ("victim deserved the outcome," "victim blame," "offender blame," "victim fault," and "victim respectability"), and (3) Severity of the Incident ("seriousness of the incident" and "recommended punishment"). Average percentage of agreement between raters exceeded .80. Individual ratings by judges are presented in Appendix E. Empirical consensus for the three variable sets was provided by separate factor analyses of the ratings of the 10 dependent measures representing the female and male victimization stimulus situations, respectively. For both sets of dependent variables, the analyses produced identical factor patterns (see Appendix F) and showed close agreement with the groupings identified by the three judges.

MANOVAS were computed on the three sets of dependent variables identified by the raters and factor analyses of subjects' ratings of the variables. Canonical correlations for each multivariate effect were also computed.[5] ANOVAS were conducted for each dependent variable to test for significant univariate effects. Post hoc comparisons for significant simple effects were tested via the Scheffé procedure. This series of analyses was conducted separately for the ratings of the female and male victimization stimulus situations.

Results of subjects' ratings of perceived personal similarity of the male and female stimulus roles are presented in Appendix G, Table 1.

Organization of the Results

The results of the analyses[6] of the female and male stimulus situations are presented in separate sections. For the female and male stimulus situations, respectively, the results are organized into subsections by dependent variable set: (1) Identification with the Victimization, (2) Victim Respectability, and (3) Severity of the Incident. Within each subsection the order of presentation of results is as follows:

1. Statement of all significant multivariate comparisons.
2. Statement of all significant univariate comparisons.[7]
3. Presentation of post hoc assessments of all significant univariate effects.
4. Mean ratings for all effects for the female victimization incidents are presented in Tables 2 to 4 in Appendix H.
5. Mean ratings for all effects for the male victimization incidents are presented in Tables 5 to 7 in Appendix I.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Victimization of a Female

Identification with the Victimization. The results of a MANOVA performed on ratings of the set of variables representing the Identification with the Victimization ("victim similarity," "identification with the victim's misfortune," and "likelihood of experiencing a similar fate") identified significant multivariate effects for the situational relevance x severity of outcome interaction, F (6, 502) = 2.84, $p < .01$, and for the main effect of personal similarity, F (6, 502) = 9.99, $p < .0001$.

Victim similarity. Results of an ANOVA involving ratings of perceived similarity of the victim to subjects revealed that only the main effect of personal similarity was significant, F (2, 252) = 26.04, $p < .0001$, U.I. = .16. College student victims were perceived as significantly more personally similar than stock clerk ($p < .005$) and strip-tease dancer ($p < .001$) victims. Stock clerk victims were also perceived as significantly more similar than strip-tease dancer victims ($p < .005$). Mean ratings for "victim similarity" are presented in Table 2.

Identification with the victim's misfortune. The results of an ANOVA comparing the extent to which subjects

identified with the victim's experience indicated that the only significant difference was the main effect, severity of outcome, F (1, 252) = 5.06, $p < .03$, U.I. = .01. Mean ratings for this effect are presented in Table 2. Subjects identified more with a victim's misfortune when it was portrayed as a rape than when it was portrayed as an attempted rape.

Likelihood of experiencing a similar fate. An ANOVA conducted on subjects' ratings of the likelihood of their experiencing a fate similar to that of the victim yielded a significant situational relevance x severity of outcome interaction, F (2, 252) = 3.76, $p < .03$, U.I. = .02, and a main effect of personal similarity, F (2, 252) = 10.36, $p < .0001$, U.I. = .06. Mean ratings of these effects are presented in Table 2. Post hoc comparisons for the simple main effects of the situational relevance x severity of outcome interaction revealed that when the incident occurred while the victim was going to a night club and the outcome was a rape, subjects rated the experience as significantly more likely to happen to them than when the setting was the same but the outcome was an attempted rape ($p < .025$). Subjects also perceived greater likelihood of being a victim of an attempted rape when it was portrayed as occurring in the night club setting than when the setting depicted the victim either walking along alone ($p < .025$) or waiting alone for a bus ($p < .025$). In terms of the effect of personal similarity, post hoc assessments indicated that subjects

perceived the likelihood of what happened to the victim as significantly more likely to happen to them when the victim was a college student or a stock clerk than when the victim was identified as a strip-tease dancer ($p < .001$ and $p < .005$, respectively).

Victim Responsibility. The results of a MANOVA performed on ratings of the set of variables representing Victim Responsibility ("victim deserved outcome," "victim blame," "victim fault," "victim respectability," and "offender blame") identified significant multivariate effects for the interaction of situational relevance x severity of outcome, F (10, 498) = 2.33, $p < .02$, and for the main effects of personal similarity, F (10, 498) = 15.17, $p < .0001$, and situational relevance, F (10, 498) = 2.67, $p < .004$.

Victim deserved outcome. An ANOVA conducted to compare ratings of the extent to which subjects felt the victim deserved the outcome found only the main effect of personal similarity yielded a significant difference, F (2, 252) = 9.05, $p < .0002$, U.I. = .06. Subjects perceived strip-tease dancer victims as significantly more deserving of their fates than either college ($p < .005$) or stock clerk ($p < .005$) victims. Mean ratings of this measure by victim stimulus role are presented in Table 3.

Victim blame. The results of an ANOVA performed to identify differences in the extent subjects blamed the victim indicated that significant differences for the interactions of

personal similarity x severity of outcome, F (2, 252) = 3.58, $p < .03$, U.I. = .02, situational relevance x severity of outcome, F (2, 252) = 6.48, $p < .002$, U.I. = .04, and for the main effect of personal similarity, F (2, 252) = 6.96, $p < .002$, U.I. = .04. Mean ratings for these effects are presented in Table 3. Post hoc comparisons of the simple main effects for the personal similarity x severity of outcome interaction indicated that when the outcome involved an attempted rape, strip-tease dancer victims were blamed more for their fates than when the outcome was identified as a rape ($p < .025$). The analysis also found that when the outcome was portrayed as an attempted rape, strip-tease dancer victims were assigned significantly more blame for their victimizations than either college student ($p < .001$) or stock clerk ($p < .025$) victims. Assessment of the simple main effects of the situational relevance x severity of outcome interaction revealed that when victims suffered an attempted rape while going to a night club, they were rated as significantly more to blame for that outcome than if the outcome was more severe--rape ($p < .001$). Victims who experienced an attempted rape while on their way to a night club were perceived as significantly more to blame for what happened to them than were victims portrayed in the walking along alone ($p < .005$) or waiting alone for a bus ($p < .005$) settings. For the main effect of personal similarity, victims identified as strip-tease dancers were assigned

significantly more blame for their victimizations than were stock clerk ($p < .005$) or college student ($p < .01$) victims.

Victim fault. An ANOVA involving a comparison of ratings of attributions of victim fault found significant effects for situational relevance x severity of outcome interaction, F (2, 252) = 5.92, $p < .004$, U.I. = .03, personal similarity, F (2, 252) = 4.59, $p < .02$, U.I. = .03, and situational relevance, F (2, 252) = 14.02, $p < .03$, U.I. = .14. Mean ratings for these effects are presented in Table 3. Post hoc comparisons of the situational relevance x severity of outcome interaction revealed that subjects perceived the occurrence of an attempted rape as significantly more due to chance (as opposed to being the victim's fault) when the victim was walking along alone ($p < .001$) or waiting alone for a bus ($p < .001$) than when the victim was portrayed as going to a night club. Subjects also rated victimizations which occurred in the night club setting as due significantly more to chance factors when the outcome was a rape than when it involved an attempted rape ($p < .001$). Comparison of attributions of victim fault by victim role indicated that subjects perceived the victimizations of the stock clerk and the college student victims as due significantly more to chance factors ($p < .025$ and $p < .10$, respectively) than ones involving strip-tease dancer victims. For the effect of relevance of the setting, subjects rated victimizations which occurred while the victim was walking along alone or

waiting alone for a bus as due significantly more to chance than victimizations which occurred while the victim was going alone to a night club ($p < .05$).

Victim respectability. An ANOVA assessing subjects' evaluations of the victims' respectability revealed significant differences for the situational relevance x severity of outcome interaction, F (2, 252) = 3.12, $p < .05$, U.I. = .01, and for the main effects of personal similarity, F (2, 252) = 103.47, $p < .0001$, U.I. = .41, and situational relevance, F (2, 252) = 10.38, $p < .0001$, U.I. = .04. Mean ratings for these effects are presented in Table 3. Post hoc assessment of the simple main effects of the situational relevance x severity of outcome interaction revealed that victims who suffered an attempted rape were perceived as significantly more respectable when the incident was presented as occurring either in the walking along alone or waiting alone for a bus settings, than in the going to a night club setting ($p < .001$). When the setting of the incident involved going alone to a night club, subjects perceived victims of rape as significantly more respectable than victims of attempted rape ($p < .025$). Comparisons of mean ratings of victim respectability as a function of victim role indicated that subjects rated the strip-tease dancer victims as significantly less respectable than either the college student or stock clerk victims ($p < .001$). Post hoc assessments of the effect of the relevance of the setting revealed that victims of

incidents portrayed as occurring in the night club setting were perceived as significantly less respectable than victims assaulted in either the walking along alone or waiting alone for a bus settings ($p < .001$).

Offender blame. Results of an ANOVA conducted on ratings of "offender blame" identified significant differences among the main effects of personal similarity, F (2, 252) = 3.39, $p < .04$, U.I. = .02, and severity of outcome, F (1, 252) = 5.61, $p < .02$, U.I. = .01. Mean ratings for these effects are presented in Table 3. Comparisons of offender blame by victim role revealed that subjects perceived the offender as significantly less culpable when the victim was a strip-tease dancer than when the victim was either a college student or a stock clerk ($p < .10$). For the effect of severity of outcome, offenders were assigned greater blame when the incident resulted in a rape than when the assault against the victim was an attempted rape ($p < .02$, F-test).

Severity of the Incident. The results of a MANOVA performed on the ratings of the set of variables representing Severity of the Incident ("seriousness of the incident" and "offender punishment") identified significant multivariate effects for the interaction of personal similarity x severity of outcome, F (4, 504) = 3.00, $p < .02$, and the main effect of severity of outcome, F (2, 251) = 31.36, $p < .0001$.

Seriousness of the incident. An ANOVA computed on the ratings of the seriousness of the victimizations involving

a female found significant differences for the interaction of personal similarity x severity of outcome, F (2, 252) = 5.96, $p < .003$, $U.I.$ = .03, and for the main effect of severity of outcome, F (1, 252) = 45.23, $p < .0001$, $U.I.$ = .14. Mean ratings for these effects are presented in Table 4. Comparisons of the means for the simple main effects for the personal similarity x severity of outcome interaction indicated that then the outcome was an attempted rape, subjects perceived the incident as more serious for college student victims than stock clerk victims ($p < .005$). Victimizations involving all three victim roles were rated as significantly more serious when the outcome was a rape than when it was described as an attempted rape (stock clerk and dancer victims, $p < .001$, student victims, $p < .10$). Overall, rape victimizations were evaluated as significantly more serious than attempted rape victimizations ($p < .001$, F-test).

Offender punishment. The results of an ANOVA comparing subjects' recommendations of punishment for the offender of female victims yielded significant differences for the interaction, situational relevance x severity of outcome, F (2, 252) = 3.43, $p < .04$, $U.I.$ = .04, and for the main effect severity of outcome, F (2, 252) = 35.83, $p < .0001$, $U.I.$ = .11. Mean ratings for these effects are presented in Table 4. Assessment of the simple main effects for the situational relevance x severity of outcome interaction revealed that when the outcome was an attempted rape, subjects

recommended significantly harsher prison sentences for victimizations occurring in the waiting alone for a bus setting than for incidents presented as occurring in the walking along alone setting ($p < .10$). Subjects also recommended harsher prison sentences for rape victimizations than for attempted rape incidents ($p < .0001$, F-test).

Victimization of a Male

Identification with the Victimization. The results of a MANOVA performed on ratings of the set of variables representing Identification with the Victimization ("victim similarity," "identification with the victim's misfortune," and "likelihood of experiencing a similar fate") revealed significant main effects of personal similarity, F (6, 502) = 3.68, $p < .002$, situational relevance, F (6, 502) = 5.32, $p < .0001$, and severity of outcome, F (3, 250) = 2.80, $p < .04$.

Victim similarity. Results of an ANOVA involving ratings of perceived similarity of the victim revealed significant main effects for personal similarity, F (2, 252) = 6.16, $p < .003$, U.I. = .03, situational relevance, F (2, 252) = 8.73, $p < .0002$, U.I. = .05), and severity of outcome, F (1, 252) = 4.82, $p < .03$, U.I. = .01. Mean ratings for these effects are presented in Table 5. Post hoc comparisons for the effect of personal similarity indicated that male student victims were perceived as significantly more personally similar than professional gambler victims ($p < .005$). Victims identified as car mechanics were also perceived as

significantly more personally similar than victims described as professional gamblers ($p < .10$). Post hoc comparisons of the ratings of victim similarity across the three settings revealed that victims going to a bar were perceived as less personally similar than victims attacked either waiting alone for a bus ($p < .001$) or walking along alone ($p < .025$). Comparison of ratings of victim similarity by severity of outcome showed that subjects rated male victims who suffered serious personal injury as significantly more personally similar than victims who were portrayed as experiencing only minor physical injury ($p < .03$, F-test).

Identification with the victim's misfortune. The results of an ANOVA comparing the extent to which subjects identified with the victim's experience indicated that the only significant difference was the main effect of severity of outcome, F (1, 252) = 5.04, $p < .03$, U.I. = .01. Mean ratings for this effect are presented in Table 5. Subjects indicated that they identified more with the victim's misfortune when it involved a serious physical injury than when the victim was described as suffering only a minor physical injury.

Likelihood of experiencing a similar fate. An ANOVA conducted on subjects' ratings of the likelihood of their experiencing a fate similar to that of the victim yielded main effects of personal similarity, F (2, 252) = 6.27, $p < .003$, U.I. = .03, situational relevance, F (2, 252) = 11.71,

$p < .0001$, U.I. = .07, and severity of outcome, F (1, 252) = 6.10, $p < .02$, U.I. = .01. Mean ratings for these effects are presented in Table 5. For the effect of personal similarity, subjects perceived the victimization as significantly more likely to happen to them when the victim was portrayed as either a car mechanic or a college student than when the victim was identified as a professional gambler ($p < .001$ and $p < .10$, respectively). For the situational relevance effect, post hoc comparisons of mean ratings indicated that subjects were significantly more likely to admit that a similar victimization incident could happen to them when the setting involved walking along alone or waiting alone for a bus than when the setting was presented as going alone to a bar ($p < .001$ and $p < .01$, respectively). Subjects were also significantly more likely to perceive themselves as experiencing a similar fate when the outcome resulted in a serious physical injury than when it resulted in a less serious injury (F-test, $p < .02$).

Victim Responsibility. The results of a MANOVA performed on ratings of the set of variables representing Victim Responsibility ("victim deserved outcome," "victim blame," "victim fault," "victim respectability," and "offender blame") identified significant differences for the main effects of personal similarity, F (10, 498) = 7.69, $p < .0001$, and severity of outcome, F (5, 248) = 2.37, $p < .04$.

Victim deserved outcome. An ANOVA conducted to compare ratings of the extent the victim deserved the outcome found that only the effect of personal similarity yielded significant differences, F (2, 252) = 15.60, $p < .0001$, U.I. = .10. Subjects perceived victims identified as professional gamblers as significantly more deserving of what happened to them than either the car mechanic ($p < .001$) or college student ($p < .001$) victims. Mean ratings for this effect are presented in Table 6.

Victim blame. The results of an ANOVA performed to identify differences in the extent subjects blamed the victim indicated that only the main effect of personal similarity, F (2, 252) = 5.49, $p < .005$, U.I. = .03, produced significant differences. Mean ratings of subjects' assignment of blame are presented in Table 6. Subjects attributed more blame to victims identified as professional gamblers than when they were presented either as car mechanics ($p < .01$) or college students ($p < .025$).

Victim fault. No significant effects were found.

Victim respectability. An ANOVA assessing subjects' evaluations of victim respectability identified significant differences for the main effects of personal similarity, F (2, 252) = 35.66, $p < .0001$, U.I. = .20, and severity of outcome, F (1, 252) = 8.06, $p < .005$, U.I. = .02. Mean ratings for these effects are presented in Table 6. Post hoc assessments of ratings of victim respectability by personal

similarity indicated that subjects perceived victims portrayed as professional gamblers as significantly less respectable than victims identified either as car mechanics or college students ($p < .0001$). Subjects also rated victims who suffered serious physical injury as result of being assaulted as significantly more respectable than victims who suffered only minor physical injury ($p < .02$, F-test).

Offender blame. No significant effects were found.

Severity of the Incident. The results of a MANOVA performed on ratings of the set of variables representing Severity of the Incident ("seriousness of the incident" and "offender punishment") identified significant multivariate effects for the personal similarity x situational relevance interaction, F (8, 504) = 3.70, $p < .0003$, and for the main effect of severity of outcome, F (2, 251) = 6.48, $p < .002$.

Seriousness of the incident. An ANOVA computed on the ratings of the seriousness of the victimizations involving a male found significant differences for the interaction of personal similarity x situational relevance, F (4, 252) = 2.59, $p < .04$, U.I. = .03, and for the main effect of severity of outcome, F (1, 252) = 12.66, $p < .0004$, U.I. = .04. Mean ratings for these effects are presented in Table 7. Post hoc comparisons of the simple main effects for the personal similarity x situational relevance interaction revealed only that the physical attack of car mechanic victims was perceived as significantly more serious when the victims were

walking along alone than when the victims were portrayed as going to a bar ($p < .05$). The main effect of severity of outcome indicated that victimizations which resulted in serious physical injury were viewed as significantly more serious than victimizations which resulted in only minor physical injury for the victim ($p < .004$, F-test).

Offender punishment. The results of an ANOVA comparing recommendations of punishment of male victims found only the personal similarity x situational relevance interaction produced significant differences, F (4, 252) = 4.17, $p < .003$, U.I. = .05. Mean ratings for this effect are presented in Table 7. Post hoc comparisons of the simple main effects revealed only one significant difference; for victimizations occurring in the bus stop setting, subjects recommended harsher punishment for offenders of student victims than for professional gambler victims ($p < .01$).

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Support for the Just World and Defensive Attribution Models

A summary of the results showing significant multivariate and univariate effects for each dependent variable is presented in Table 8. The results which indicate support for the models are identified in Table 8 by a DA (defensive attribution) or JW (just world) superscript.

Just world. From Table 8 it clearly can be seen that none of the results involving perceptions of a victimization of a female or a male support the just world model. Subjects' evaluations of the victimization incidents did not coincide with the pattern of responsibility attributions predicted for the interaction effects of personal similarity x severity of the outcome and personal similarity x situational relevance x severity of the outcome. Contrary to predictions of the model, greater assignment of behavioral ("victim blame") and/or characterological ("victim respectability") responsibility did not occur as a function of an increase in the severity of the outcome for the victim. For example, subjects' ratings of the female victimizations indicated that victims of rape (the more severe personal outcome) were not assigned greater blame or perceived as less

Table 8

Summary of Significant Results Compared with Predictions of the Defensive Attribution and Just World Models

		Victimization of a Female						
		Personal Similarity (PS)	Situational Relevance (SR)	Severity of the Outcome (SO)	PS x SR	PS x SO	SR x SO	PS x SR x SO
Identification with the Victim	victim similarity	⊛						
	identification with the victim's misfortune			*				
	likelihood of experiencing a similar fate	⊛ DA					⊛	
Victim Responsibility	victim deserved the outcome	⊛ DA						
	victim blame	⊛ DA				* DA?	⊛	
	victim fault	⊛ DA	⊛				⊛	
	victim respectability	⊛ DA	⊛				*	
	offender blame	⊛ DA		*				
Severity of the Incident	seriousness of the incident			⊛		⊛		
	offender punishment			⊛			*	

Note: Significant univariate effects are denoted by an asterisk (*).
Significant multivariate effects are denoted by a circle (◯).
Support for the defensive attribution model is indicated by a DA superscript.
Support for the just world model is indicated by a JW superscript.
Possible or inconsistent support of one of the models is indicated by a question mark (?).

Table 8 (continued)

		Victimization of a Male						
		Personal Similarity (PS)	Situational Relevance (SR)	Severity of the Outcome (SO)	PS x SR	PS x SO	SR x SO	PS x SR x SO
Identification with the Victim	victim similarity	⊛	⊛DA	⊛				
	identification with the victim's misfortune			⊛				
	likelihood of experiencing a similar fate	⊛	⊛DA	⊛				
Victim Responsibility	victim deserved the outcome	⊛DA						
	victim blame	⊛DA						
	victim fault							
	victim respectability	⊛DA		⊛				
	offender blame							
Severity of the Incident	seriousness of the incident			⊛	⊛			
	offender punishment				⊛			

Note: Significant univariate effects are denoted by an asterisk (*).
Significant multivariate effects are denoted by a circle (◯).
Support for the defensive attribution model is indicated by a DA superscript.
Support for the just world model is indicated by a JW superscript.
Possible or inconsistent support of one of the models is indicated by a question mark (?).

respectable than victims of attempted rape (the less severe personal outcome). A similar pattern was found for the evaluations of the male victimization incidents. Hence, contrary to the just world view, victims of the more severe personal outcomes were not assigned more personal responsibility.

Defensive attribution. The results summarized in Table 8 show only minor support for the defensive attribution model. In similar fashion to the just world model, none of the major attribution patterns predicted by the defensive attribution model were supported by subjects' ratings of the victimization incidents. For example, contrary to prediction, the situational relevance of the setting did not differentially affect subjects' evaluations of personally similar and personally dissimilar victims. For the predicted interaction, personal similarity x situational relevance, only two sets of ratings ("seriousness of the incident" and "offender punishment" for the male victimization incidents) revealed significant differences. Neither of these comparisons produced results in support of the defensive attribution model. Another key prediction which was not supported was the three-way interaction of personal similarity x situational relevance x severity of outcome. For this effect, the model predicted an increase in "harm-avoidance" (victim responsibility) attributions when the victim was portrayed as personally dissimilar and an increase in "blame-avoidance"

(nonvictim responsibility) attributions when the victim was portrayed as personally similar as the outcome became more severe (i.e., rape vs. attempted rape). Situational relevance was expected to have the effect of creating appropriate conditions for the likelihood of defensive attributions; thus, under high situationally relevant conditions responsibility attributions should follow patterns predicted by the model, but under low or ambiguous conditions of situational relevance, no clear pattern of attributions was predicted. No significant differences for this effect for either the female or the male victimization situations were found.

Some limited support for the model is suggested by the results of the ratings of the Victim Responsibility measures as a function of the personal similarity of the victim. For incidents involving a victimization of a female, subjects were inclined to perceive victims of low similarity (strip-tease dancer stimulus persons) as more responsible for what happened than victims of high (college student stimulus persons) or moderate (stock clerk stimulus persons) personal similarity. Consequently, strip-tease dancer victims were perceived as more deserving of the outcome, as more to blame for the incident, and at greater fault for what happened.

Offenders of strip-tease dancer victims were viewed as less blameworthy than were offenders of college student or stock clerk victims. For the victimizations of male stimulus persons, the effect of personal similarity produced a pattern

of attributions similar to subjects' evaluations of the female victimizations. Professional gambler victims (who represented low personal similarity victims) were perceived as more deserving of the outcome and more to blame for what happened than either the college student (high personal similarity) or car mechanic (moderate personal similarity) victims. Professional gambler victims were also rated as less respectable than the other two victim roles.

A Balance Theory Approach to Explaining Victim Perception

As indicated above, the pattern of subjects' evaluations of personal victimizations does not appear to conform to either a "self-protective" (defensive attribution) or a "self-controlled" (just world) perspective of attribution of responsibility. Evidently, to account for the pattern of attributions identified in the present study, a different explanatory framework is needed. Recently, several investigators (Feldman-Summers & Lindner, 1976; Miller et al., 1976; Seligman, Paschall, & Takata, 1974) suggested that victim perception patterns could be explained within a balance theory framework (Heider, 1946, 1958). These investigators suggest that positive and negative patterns of responsibility, character, and outcome-attributions could be predicted as a function of the extent to which individuals identify with the victim and/or perpetrator of the victimization incident. Individuals who identify with the victim/perpetrator form

"positive" bonds and are expected to perceive ("hold positive sentiments toward") the victim/perpetrator in a positive way. This "bonding" is expected to result in positive attributions regarding personal responsibility, quality of character, and so on. For individuals who don't identify strongly with either the victim or the perpetrator, or who identify strongly with both, their pattern of victimization evaluations is expected to reflect the extent to which they identify with each of the parties involved.

Unfortunately, this version of a balance model of victim perception is practically indistinguishable from the defensive attribution model.[8] Both assume individuals' perceptions are influenced by the degree to which they identify with the victim although the motivation for making causal and other attributions is presumably different. For the defensive attribution model, the motivation is presumably self-serving, instigated to protect or provide the illusion that one is generally safe from undesirable outcomes. Within a balance framework, the motivation stems from the desire to protect one's cognitive world from stressful inconsistent cognitions. Both views predict that individuals will make attributions indicating less personal responsibility for victims with whom they strongly identify than for victims with whom they do not identify or identify with only slightly. Both explanations predict the weaker the identification bond, the less favorably a victim is likely to be perceived. Thus,

from the standpoint of parsimony, the balance explanation which has been suggested in the literature does not appear to offer a "better" explanation of victim perception than defensive attribution. Furthermore, even without the consideration of parsimony, given the complexities of attributions reported in the literature representing individuals' perceptions of victims, basing an explanatory framework of victim perception on the strength of victim/perpetrator identification seems woefully inadequate. It is easy to generate examples in which an individual is likely to identify strongly with the victim (i.e., a teammate) but still attribute considerable personal responsibility to the victim for an undesirable outcome (e.g., the victim committed an error which loses an important game).

If a cognitive balance process is the motivating principle behind how people view the personal misfortunes of others, a more complex formulation of the "balancing" process than the research to date has presented is needed. At the very least a reformulation needs to be distinguishable from defensive attribution and involve more than just the extent to which an individual "identifies" with a personal misfortune and the persons involved. Toward this goal a victim perception model based on a balance process framework is offered. At the outset, it should be clear that the framework to be presented represents only a rudimentary framework and consequently only general details regarding the conceptual processes and the bases for these processes can be presented.

People typically form unit associations on the basis of past learning, socialization, and cultural influences. These associations and the general process of associating one thing with another result in the generation of expectancies regarding the typical associations of people, situations, events, and outcomes which people are likely to experience. As people acquire information concerning associations between and among persons, situations, events, and outcomes, they frequently infer that if two or more things occur together (covary) over time, those things must be somehow causally related (Kelley, 1972a).

When an individual is asked to explain the occurrence of an event and the involvement of another in or with the events of interest, the individual is likely to explain the relation (the involvement of the other) as due either to the person, the perpetrator, or both. However, individuals usually have only limited information regarding the explicit role each party has had in producing the event in question. Consequently, the evaluation of victimization incidents often is made in the absence of critical details. Kanouse (1972) suggests that in the absence of critical details individuals make "intuitive probability judgments" about the generality or uniqueness of each party's involvement in the event. These "judgments" in effect "fill in the gaps" about what has occurred and provide a basis by which individuals make reasonable guesses regarding personal responsibility (causal attribution).

> Such a reasoning process simply involves applying a set of normative assumptions . . . then making the "normative" attribution that follows from these assumptions. (p. 122)

Extending Kanouse's notion to include expectancies and inferences of causality, the balance model proposed herein assumes that people have a set of "normative expectations" of what does and does not happen and what should and should not happen, and that people base their evaluations of the victimizations of others on these expectations.

The "Normative Expectations" Model

The guiding cognitive "strategy" postulated by the "normative expectations" model is that an individual evaluates factors pertaining to the personal misfortune of another by comparing the outcome of the incident with what might have been expected, given the victim and the circumstances under which the incident occurred.

A major premise of this model is that because individuals are limited in their perception of the complexities of causal relations and causal factors, an inference of stability or reliability of a chain of events is often made. Individuals' social perception of the world around them is based largely on their past experiences. From these experiences they come to expect that things (people, objects, events) will behave like they have in the past or at least in a way consistent with previous courses of action. As a result of this observation-expectation process individuals

develop the tendency to perceive certain people, situations, and events as single entities, occurring together predictably over time. These entities and their associated "units" (the particular people, situations, and events involved) form the basis of expectations regarding when (under what circumstances) particular persons, situations, and events "should" occur together. These associative relationships between and among cognitions of or about people, situations, and events provide the basis for the principle of cognitive balance. If an individual's cognitions about an entity relationship are in harmony, the relationship among the particular set of cognitions is considered "balanced." Conversely, if there is a perceived discordance in the associative relationship among a particular set of cognitions, the relationship is considered "unbalanced."

Balanced associations are generally consistent with an individual's expectations and generally produce favorable affect. Unbalanced relationships are generally counter to an individual's expectations and their occurrence is presumed to be psychologically discomforting. The effect of this "discomfort" is to activate a cognitive response which can accommodate (balance) the perceived discordant association. The perception of an "unbalanced" association is not itself sufficient to activate the cognitive balancing process. The discordance must represent a sufficient threat to an individual's personal view of reality. To qualify as a "sufficient

threat" the discordant relationship must be important (capable of affecting meaningful consequences) and have personal relevance (represent something meaningful) for an individual. The degree to which an individual is motivated to restore a state of balance among discrepant cognitions is dependent on the magnitude of the discrepancy among the cognitions in question and how important and personally relevant the perceived discrepancy is to the individual. The more important and relevant the perceived discrepancy the greater the probability that an individual will feel the need to restore a state of balance among the discrepant cognitive units. Discrepant relationships which lack sufficient importance or personal relevance are not likely to activate the balance process.

Application of the "Normative Expectations" Model

Considering the dimensions of a personal victimization manipulated in the present study, the "normative expectations" model would have predicted patterns of attributions consistent with the following propositions: (1) Because similar others are expected to be more liked, admired, or respected than dissimilar others, the more personally similar a victim is perceived to be, the more compensatory (less victim blame-oriented, more offender blame-oriented) observers are expected to be in their attributions regarding the victim and the victim's role in a personal victimization incident.

(2) The relevance of a situation is important only to the extent it provides a basis for observers' expectations concerning the situation and the victimization in question. In general, the more relevant a situation the more likely observers will hold definite expectations regarding that situation. (3) Because the occurrence of severe outcomes is generally less comprehensible than less severe outcomes, incidents for which a victim experiences a severe outcome are likely to produce greater discrepant perceptions than incidents resulting in a low severe outcome. Recommendations of compensation (attributions which exculpate the victim and blame the offender) for victims are expected to increase as a function of increases in the severity of the outcome.

Turning to the data reported in the present study, the explanatory framework provided by the "normative expectations" model appears to be able to account for the pattern of attributions representing subjects' perceptions of the victimization incidents. Table 9 presents a summary of the findings and indicates which results can be accounted for by the "normative expectations" model. Beginning with the responsibility ratings and victim social role, the data indicate that subjects assigned greater responsibility to the least personally similar/socially respectable female role when compared with stimulus person roles rated as more personally similar/socially respectable. In line with the model, personal similarity per se did not produce greater

Table 9

Summary of Significant Results Compared with Predictions of the "Normative Expectations" Model

		Victimization of a Female						
		Personal Similarity (PS)	Situational Relevance (SR)	Severity of the Outcome (SO)	PS x SR	PS x SO	SR x SO	PS x SR x SO
Identification with the Victim	victim similarity	⊛ NE						
	identification with the victim's misfortune			* NE?				
	likelihood of experiencing a similar fate	⊛ NE					⊛ NE?	
Victim Responsibility	victim deserved the outcome	⊛ NE						
	victim blame	⊛ NE				* NE	⊛ NE	
	victim fault	⊛ NE	⊛ NE				⊛ NE	
	victim respectability	⊛ NE	⊛ NE				* NE	
	offender blame	⊛ NE		* NE				
Severity of the Incident	seriousness of the incident			⊛ NE		⊛ NE		
	offender punishment			⊛ NE			* NE?	

Note: Significant univariate effects are denoted by an asterisk (*).
Significant multivariate effects are denoted by a circle (O).
Support for the "normative expectations" model is indicated by a NE superscript.
Possible or inconsistent support of one of the models is indicated by a question mark (?).

Table 9 (continued)

		Victimization of a Male						
		Personal Similarity (PS)	Situational Relevance (SR)	Severity of the Outcome (SO)	PS x SR	PS x SO	SR x SO	PS x SR x SO
Identification with the Victim	victim similarity	⊛ NE	⊛ NE	⊛ NE				
	identification with the victim's misfortune			⊛ NE				
	likelihood of experiencing a similar fate	⊛ NE	⊛ NE	⊛ NE				
Victim Responsibility	victim deserved the outcome	⊛ NE						
	victim blame	⊛ NE						
	victim fault							
	victim respectability	⊛ NE		⊛ NE				
	offender blame							
Severity of the Incident	seriousness of the incident			⊛ NE	⊛ NE			
	offender punishment				⊛ NE			

Note: Significant univariate effects are denoted by an asterisk (*).
Significant multivariate effects are denoted by a circle ( ).
Support for the "normative expectations" model is indicated by a NE superscript.
Possible or inconsistent support of one of the models is indicated by a question mark (?).

attributions of responsibility. The stock clerk role was rated as more personally dissimilar but attributions did not differ between this role and the college student stimulus role. Instead, apparently inferences about the social role/personal character of a strip-tease dancer accounted (i.e., an association with sexual permissiveness) for differences in perceptions of personal responsibility assigned strip-tease dancers and the other two stimulus person roles (which usually do not carry such sexually explicit connotations). Similarly, subjects' perceived differences in personal responsibility among male stimulus person roles were also more a function of social respectability than personal similarity. Stimulus persons portrayed as professional gamblers were perceived as more responsible for their victimizations than stimulus persons similarly victimized identified as college students and car mechanics (the latter two roles were not perceived as significantly different along a dimension of personal similarity). Apparently, subjects associated the role of a gambler with greater likelihood of precipitating a personal assault (perhaps due to an association of gambling with illicit or illegal activity) than the other stimulus roles.

Other support for a "normative expectations" model interpretation is offered by the ratings of the degree of "victim fault" and "victim respectability" involving female victims as a function of the situation. According to the "normative expectations" view, some situations are likely to

carry a higher probability of risk of personal victimization than others. Among the social settings used in the study, the night club/bar setting has a subjectively higher association of risk than either waiting alone at a bus stop or walking alone to work or class. The results indicate support for this interpretation. Female victims were assigned more fault for their victimizations and were perceived as less socially respectable when they were portrayed as sexually assaulted while on their way to a night club than when their victimizations were reported as occurring either while walking alone to work or class or while waiting alone at a bus stop. Another indication that the night club setting was perceived as more risky than the other two settings was provided by the fact that while victims assaulted in a night club setting were perceived as significantly less respectable and more at fault, they were not perceived as significantly more deserving or more to blame for their victimizations. Hence, stimulus persons assaulted in night club settings were apparently perceived as taking a greater risk by being in the setting, but were not perceived as any more responsible for being sexually assaulted than victims attacked in the other two settings.

Other results consistent with a "normative expectations" explanation involved the pattern of attributions regarding the victimizations as a function of the severity of the outcome. The more severe outcomes, rape and serious physical

injury, were evaluated as more serious than the less severe outcomes, attempted rape and mild physical injury. Rape victim offenders were also recommended harsher levels of punishment than offenders of attempted rape victims. Subjects also tended to hold more favorable impressions of victimizations which resulted in the more severe outcomes. This pattern was particularly true for assessments of the sexual assault victimizations portrayed in the night club setting; rape victimizations produced less culpable evaluations of the victim compared with attempted rape victimizations. This pattern of attributions suggests that observers may use different standards for evaluating personal victimizations on the basis of what happens during the incident. Some evidence for this interpretation has been reported by Krulewitz and Payne (1978). These investigators found in an assessment of attributions about rape, that subjects required proof that an attacker used direct and obvious force during a sexual assault before they perceived the attack as a clear case of forcible rape. The basis for this pattern may be related to how society tends to view the phenomenon of personal victimizations. Individuals who encounter only "mild" suffering as a victim are likely to receive less sympathy and compensation than victims whose suffering is much greater. Observers of incidents in which the victim experiences some serious negative outcome may be more inclined to be less certain of a victim's culpability for the incident than if

the outcome of the incident is less severe. Consequently, ambiguity about a victim's role in a personal victimization may result in lesser attributions of responsibility as a function of increased severity of outcome--as the severity increases observers perceive the victim as less likely to have been responsible for what happened. And, if this interpretation is correct, in terms of a "normative expectations" explanation, individuals may be more motivated to balance discrepant perceptions of incidents involving high severe outcomes than ones resulting in relatively less severe consequences.

Considerations Affecting the Utility of the Models

Despite its apparent superiority for predicting the pattern of attributions found in the present study, it would be unwise to conclude that the "normative expectations" model is in all respects a "better" model of victim perception. At its present stage of development, the "normative expectations" model is, at best, only a rudimentary model of victim perception. Besides the assumptions that people strive for consistency among their cognitions and that an imbalance between important cognitions is likely to motivate an individual to seek ways to resolve the discrepancy between those cognitions, the model is imprecise regarding the conditions which are necessary before the particular cognitive organization pattern identified by the model is "activated."

Without greater specificity of these conditions, the application of the model is limited and produces the result that empirical tests are guided more by intuition than conceptual relevance. Another problem with the "normative expectations" model is that it is ambiguous concerning the order in which a "balance" of discrepant cognitions is reached. This ambiguity is also a major deficit of the defensive attribution and just world models. In terms of predicting attributions of responsibility for a given instance of a personal misfortune, the just world and defensive attribution models tend to be unclear regarding which class (behavioral, characterological, or nonpersonal) of responsibility attribution will be invoked, which class of attribution is most important, and whether or not these classes of attributions share a common scale of magnitude and can be directly compared. In this regard, the "normative expectations" model is only somewhat better; because it doesn't presume individuals will blame another for a personal misfortune, nonpersonal responsibility attributions are expected to be the most likely type of attribution made. The model does not specify anything about the other two classes of responsibility attributions and also shares with the other models a lack of specificity regarding magnitude and relative importance.

Although the findings of this study indicate essentially little (in the case of defensive attribution) and no (in the case of just world) support for the defensive attribution

tion and just world models, it would be premature (and inappropriate) to conclude that based on the present data either model is unable to predict individuals' perceptions of the victimizations of others. There are several reasons for this conclusion. One reason is that the context in which observers are asked to make an evaluation of a personal misfortune is a major factor in the evaluation process (Luginbuhl & Frederick, Note 1; Myers, 1980; Vidmar & Crinklaw, 1974) and may be critical to the "activation" of the cognitive organization patterns predicted by the models. Luginbuhl and Frederick (Note 1) suggest that a major reason for the inconsistencies in results in the "perceptions of the personal misfortunes of others" research has been due to differences in the "frame-of-reference" context subjects have been instructed to use in making their evaluations. Generally, there has been the tendency to mix a jury process context with an impression-formation evaluation context. In the jury process context, observers are asked to consider the details of a victimization incident and the attributes of the involved parties as a means of deciding the guilt or innocence of the alleged offender. In comparison, in the context of an impression-formation exercise, instructions to observers are less specific and the focus of the assessment is less on whether the alleged offender is guilty or not, but more on the overall perception of what happened and why. In the present study an impression formation context was used because of its more general application to everyday

events and because it matched more closely with the "naive observer" role concept assumed by most attribution models (Jones & Davis, 1965). Conceivably, this kind of evaluation context may not be well suited to activate the cognitive organization processes identified by the defensive attribution and just world models. Perhaps, asking just for impressions of personal misfortunes involving others is insufficient in creating the perception that an incident poses a real enough threat to observers' sense of personal security (defensive attribution) or that an incident represents an undeserved outcome (just world) to invoke the cognitive organization processes identified by the models. The explanatory power of the defensive attribution and just world models may be limited to specific evaluation contexts or apply most optimally to conditions relevant to a particular evaluation context (i.e., when observers are asked to evaluate the personal misfortunes of another and to explain why a similar fate could or could not possibly happen to them).

Another reason why the results of this study may not disprove the models is that only the perceptions of female observers were assessed. It is possible that male observers might have perceived the victimization incidents differently from females and made attributions consistent with one of the models. Some data (e.g., Kerr & Kurtz, 1977) suggest that males may be more inclined to hold a just world view of people's personal misfortunes. There is also some evidence (e.g., Fulero & Delara, 1976) which suggests that the

pattern of defensive attributions might also differ as a function of the sex of the observer.

A third consideration concerning the utility of the models involves the stimulus situations used in the study. Although previous research (e.g., Fulero & Delara, 1976; Kahn et al., 1977; Kerr & Kurtz, 1977) has used stimulus situations involving personal victimizations like rape and physical assault, the general pattern of results of these studies has tended to indicate either limited or ambiguous support for the models. It is possible that while personal victimizations have the advantage of being conceptually "cleaner" (i.e., the roles of victim and perpetrator are not confounded) than instances of personal misfortunes, it may be this conceptual clarity that reduces the models' ability to predict observers' perceptions. Heider (1958) noted that in situations characterized by unmistakable causal information, attributional distortion is likely to be minimal. The conceptual ambiguity inherent in personal misfortunes involving accidents or mistakes may prevent individuals from clearly distinguishing individual levels of responsibility from more general levels of responsibility (Shaw & Sulzer, 1964; Vidmar & Crinklaw, 1974). As a consequence, in the absence of clear evidence that a victim of a personal victimization was (not) personally responsible for the incident, individuals may be likely to resort to the self-protective type of attributions guided by the factors predicted by the

defensive attribution ("I would have avoided it") and just world ("it never would have happened to me") models.

Victim Perception and Kelley's Notion of Causal Schemata

A framework which offers both a general perspective and a way in which the various proposed models of victim perception might be integrated into a more comprehensive model is suggested by Kelley's (1972b) "causal schemata" framework. A causal schema is a general conception an individual has about how certain kinds of causes (factors) interact to produce a specific kind of effect (event).

> Causal schemata reflect the individual's basic notions of reality and his assumption about the existence of a stable external world--a world comprised of permanent, though moving and apparently variant, objects; a world separate from and independent of himself; and a world seen by other persons in the same way as by himself. (Kelley, 1972b, p. 153)

In view of the lack of consistent support in the literature for any one model, it is conceivable that each model may actually represent distinct causal schemata by which individuals organize their perceptions of the personal misfortunes of others. (See Table 10 for a brief summary of the cognitive organization patterns posited by each of the models.)

This notion of multiple cognitive organization patterns and in particular Kelley's causal schemata framework suggests a possible resolution to the discrepancies in the data reported in the literature regarding victim perception. By

Table 10

Cognitive Organization Patterns Identified by the Models

Models	Cognitive Organization Process		Outcome of the Process
Just World	Observer perceives the personal misfortune of another	Adjusts perception of the incident so that it is consistent with the belief that the world is just and the victim's outcome was deserved	Likely to attribute responsibility for the misfortune due to the victim's behavior or character in order to explain an "undeserved" outcome.
Defensive Attribution	Observer perceives the personal misfortune of another	Alters the perception of the victim's role in the incident in terms of self-protective defensive attributions which provide self-assurance against blame or harm	Likely to attribute blame to a dissimilar other and excuse and be sympathetic toward a similar other who is a victim of a personal misfortune.
"Normative Expectations"	Observer perceives the personal misfortune of another	Makes an assessment based on what is observed and evaluates the victim's role and the incident in terms of general social norms.	Likely to attribute personal responsibility on the basis of what is inferred or assumed about the victim's behavior and social character; the more negative the perception of the victim the greater the attribution of personal responsibility.

positing that individuals might resort to one of a number of causal schemata to explain a victimization incident, this approach provides a basis for why individuals observing the same incident might make different interpretations regarding factors related to causality, responsibility, and outcome. Because two individuals are not likely to perceive the same constellation of factors the same way, their evaluations are likely to differ along dimensions which are pertinent to the "activation" of a particular causal schema. This could explain why in some cases individuals appear to evaluate a victimization incident in terms of its apparent threat to their self-security, while in other cases individuals make evaluations which appear to match the belief that the "victim got what she/he deserved," and still in other cases why the evaluation appears to be consistent with what might be considered a "normative expectations" view of personal misfortunes. Hence, within a causal schema framework the "co-existence" of opposing causal explanations is possible.

A major implication of the causal schema framework perspective is that prediction of victim perception patterns may be more complex than previous efforts have assumed. Simple manipulations of victim/offender characteristics, situational factors, and outcome factors may only partly account for observer differences in perceiving the personal victimization of others. As suggested by the defensive attribution and just world models, it is not only the complexity

of factors but the implication these factors have for an observer which is likely to influence how they perceive another's personal misfortune. For example, in the present study, subjects may not have perceived the victimization incidents as sufficiently threatening to their personal security (defensive attribution) or as instances of discrepant outcomes, deservedness, and justice requiring counter-intuitive causal attributions. Consequently, in the absence of the appropriate conditions for invoking a defensive attribution or just world explanation, a "normative expectations" explanation may simply have been more suitable. Conceivably, a different pattern of causal attributions would have resulted if the personal relevance was increased to the point that subjects were likely to experience at least the same general situation the victims encountered or if the information regarding the incidents was more complete so that subjects could have more adequately determined whether the victimization incidents represented undeserved outcomes in need of justification.

Suggestions for Future Research

It will be the task of future research to determine if there is a set of "ideal" conditions for which each model schema is optimally efficient in predicting victim perceptions. Such an assessment will require a more rigorous operationalization of conceptually and empirically relevant conditions.

For example, the research to date suggests that different degrees of personal involvement in the evaluation process have a definite influence on observers' evaluations of the personal victimizations of others (e.g., Alexander, 1980; Lincoln & Levinger, 1972; Wilson & Donnerstein, 1977). Consequently, future research involving the models/schemata reviewed in this paper needs to consider how observers' perceptions might vary across different social and situational contexts, including the general context in which the perception is made (i.e., a jury simulation vs. an impression formation exercise), the observer's role in the event being evaluated (i.e., whether the observer is only an observer or is also the victim, the perpetrator or both), and the consequences the observer's evaluation has either for her/himself or for the object of the observation.

Research involving perception of personal victimizations should also consider the possibility that the cognitive organization identified by each of the models/schemata actually represents different cognitive strategies related to individual or group differences. As noted earlier, there is some evidence that males and females perceive incidents of personal misfortunes differently. Other factors such as age, socioeconomic status, race, and specific personality traits or characteristics may also be associated with different cognitive strategies affecting how perceptions of events are organized and processed.

In conclusion, there is still much to be learned about why and how people blame victims for their personal misfortunes. Hopefully, as our understanding of this phenomenon increases it will provide a direction for developing ways to counter the tendency of people to perceive others as personally responsible for a misfortune solely on the basis of who they are while ignoring facts and evidence which indicate a contrary conclusion.

Footnotes

[1]This selection procedure was based on data reported by Fulero and Delara (1976), who demonstrated that personal similarity and social respectability are positively correlated; when observers view someone as respectable, they identify with that individual and see her/him as personally similar to themselves.

[2]The possibility that subjects' evaluations of the male victimization incident were influenced by their exposure to the description of a female victimization incident was examined by testing for differences among evaluations of the male victimization incidents as a function of the female stimulus role they were presented. This assessment was made via a 3 x 3 x 3 x 2 between-groups design. Three of the factors represented the primary effects, personal similarity (victim role), situational relevance (social setting), and severity of outcome (personal outcome) of the male stimulus situations. The fourth factor represented the female stimulus role portrayed in the female victimization incident a subject was asked to evaluate. A MANOVA was performed involving the 10 dependent variables representing subjects' ratings of the male victimization situations. No significant multivariate effects ($p > .05$) were found. These results indicate that subjects' ratings of the male stimulus situations were essentially uncorrelated with their ratings of the female victimizations. It was therefore assumed that

the case accounts portraying victimizations of males and females could be treated as separate and independent stimulus situations.

[3]Subjects were asked to rate the personal similarity of a set of social roles which included the six roles that were used for the personal similarity manipulation. The results of these ratings broken down by stimulus (victim) role group and for the total sample are presented in Table 2 (see Appendix G). Comparison of the means of the female stimulus roles (via t-tests) indicated that the college student role was perceived as significantly more personally similar ($p < .01$) than the stock clerk or strip-tease dancer role. The stock clerk role was perceived as significantly more personally similar ($p < .01$) than the strip-tease dancer role. These results indicate that the personal similarity manipulation involving the three female stimulus person roles was successful. The college student was perceived as most similar, the strip-tease dancer as the least similar, while the stock clerk was intermediate in terms of perceived similarity.

Comparison of the means by male victim stimulus role group also revealed significant differences (via t-tests) of perceived similarity between social roles. The college student role was rated as significantly more personally similar ($p < .01$) than either the car mechanic or professional gambler role. The car mechanic role was also perceived as

significantly more personally similar ($p < .05$) than the professional gambler role. These latter results indicate that the manipulation of personal similarity of the male stimulus victims was successful; the college student was perceived as most similar, the professional gambler as least similar, and the car mechanic as intermediate in terms of personal similarity. (Note: Apparently, perceived social respectability and the degree to which subjects identified with each of the male stimulus roles was highly correlated.)

[4]Due to an insufficient number of males ($N < 40$), data for males are not reported.

[5]The relative importance of each dependent measure for the multivariate effects found significant essentially paralleled the dependent variables for which significant univariate differences were found. Because of this close similarity the canonical correlations are not presented.

[6]Besides the main analysis reported in the results, a series of secondary analyses were conducted to compare predictions made by the just world and defensive attribution models. These secondary analyses were performed on ratings of the dependent measures of subgroups of the total subject sample. Separate ANOVAs were computed for the 10 dependent variables for all subjects who (1) indicated some possibility that what happened to the victim could also happen to them, (2) felt to some extent the victim deserved the outcome, (3) attributed at least some blame to the victim for what

happened, and (4) felt the incident was to some extent the victim's fault. These analyses were computed separately for subjects' ratings of the female and male victimization incidents. The results of these analyses revealed few significant results which differed from the main analyses. One revealing finding that the secondary analyses did produce was the substantial number of subjects who felt the situations had some relevance for them and the number of subjects who attributed some responsibility to the stimulus persons for their victimizations. The possibility of experiencing a fate similar to that of the victim was admitted by 239 (89%) of the subjects when the victimization involved a female and 230 (85%) of the subjects when the victimization involved a male. The perception that the victim deserved the outcome was indicated by 109 (40%) of the subjects when the victim was a female and 95 (36%) of the subjects when the victim was a male. The assessment of how much victims were to blame for what happened revealed that 142 (53%) of the subjects did not feel the victim was entirely blameless, while 112 (41%) of the subjects felt that male victims were partially to blame for their victimizations. Attributions of the incident being due to some degree the victim's fault (not due to chance) were made by 185 (69%) of the subjects when the victimization incident involved a female and 157 (58%) of the subjects when the victimization incident involved a male.

[7]Also included are univariate effects for which significant multivariate effects were not found. These results are admittedly statistically "weak", but are included for purposes of providing the broadest picture of significant differences among the dependent measures.

[8]Inasmuch as the just world model bases its explanatory process on the perception of deservedness and not an identification with the victim, considerations of a just world framework and this version of a balance model are different enough to be treated as distinct models of victim perception.

Reference Note

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APPENDIX A

Pretest Results

Mean Ratings of the Stimulus Situations

Social Role	Social Setting	Personal Outcome	Perceived[a] Similarity	Likelihood[b] of Experiencing Same Outcome	Likelihood[c] of ever being in the Same Situation	Seriousness[d] of the Outcome
female college student	walking to class	attempted rape	1.80 (5)	2.60 (5)	-	2.00 (5)
		rape	2.20 (5)	2.60 (5)	-	1.20 (5)
female college student	waiting for a bus	attempted rape	2.27 (11)	2.00 (11)	2.29 (7)	1.36 (11)
		rape	1.70 (10)	1.80 (10)	2.20 (5)	1.20 (10)
female college student	going to a night club	attempted rape	2.00 (17)	2.35 (17)	2.43 (7)	1.71 (17)
		rape	2.21 (19)	2.21 (19)	3.80 (5)	1.53 (19)
stock clerk	walking back to work	attempted rape	3.00 (4)	2.25 (4)	-	2.25 (4)
		rape	3.67 (3)	2.00 (3)	-	1.33 (3)

Note: The ratings were made on 5-point scales. N's are presented in parentheses ( ).

[a]Lower ratings correspond with higher similarity.
[b]Lower ratings correspond with greater likelihood.
[c]Lower ratings correspond with greater likelihood.
[d]Lower ratings correspond with greater seriousness.

Social Role	Social Setting	Personal Outcome	Perceived[a] Similarity	Likelihood[b] of Experiencing Same Outcome	Likelihood[c] of ever being in the Same Situation	Seriousness[d] of the Outcome
stock clerk	waiting for a bus	attempted rape	2.92 (13)	2.62 (13)	2.57 (7)	1.67 (13)
		rape	3.50 (10)	2.70 (10)	3.20 (5)	1.80 (10)
stock clerk	going to a nightclub	attempted rape	3.47 (17)	2.47 (17)	2.43 (7)	1.71 (17)
		rape	2.68 (19)	1.95 (19)	3.00 (5)	1.42 (19)
belly dancer (alternate role to strip-tease dancer)	waiting for a bus	attempted rape	3.65 (13)	2.88 (17)	2.86 (7)	2.06 (17)
		rape	3.68 (19)	2.26 (19)	3.00 (6)	1.47 (19)
strip-tease dancer	going to a nightclub	attempted rape	4.06 (17)	2.71 (17)	3.14 (7)	1.82 (17)
		rape	3.67 (18)	2.33 (18)	2.60 (5)	1.50 (18)

Note: The ratings were made on 5-point scales. N's are presented in parentheses ( ).

[a]Lower ratings correspond with higher similarity.
[b]Lower ratings correspond with greater likelihood.
[c]Lower ratings correspond with greater likelihood.
[d]Lower ratings correspond with greater seriousness.

Social Role	Social Setting	Personal Outcome	Perceived[a] Similarity	Likelihood[b] of Experiencing Same Outcome	Likelihood[c] of ever being in the Same Situation	Seriousness[c] of the Outcome
male college student	walking to class	mild assault	-	2.80 (5)	-	2.40 (5)
		severe assault		3.00 (5)	-	2.00 (5)
male college student	waiting for a bus	mild assault	-	2.42 (12)	2.29 (7)	2.17 (12)
		severe assault	-	2.70 (10)	2.40 (5)	1.90 (10)
male college student	going to a bar	mild assault	-	2.59 (17)	2.29 (7)	2.17 (12)
		severe assault	-	2.72 (18)	2.40 (5)	1.90 (10)
car mechanic	walking home	mild assault	-	3.00 (5)	-	2.40 (5)
		severe assault	-	3.00 (5)	-	2.00 (5)

Note: The ratings were made on 5-point scales. N's are presented in parentheses ( ).

[a]Lower ratings correspond with higher similarity.
[b]Lower ratings correspond with greater likelihood.
[c]Lower ratings correspond with greater likelihood.
[d]Lower ratings correspond with greater seriousness.

Social Role	Social Setting	Personal Outcome	Perceived Similarity	Likelihood of Experiencing Same Outcome	Likelihood of ever being in the Same Situation	Seriousness of the Outcome
car mechanic	waiting for a bus	mild assault	-	3.08 (12)	3.29 (7)	2.50 (12)
		severe assault	-	3.00 (10)	3.20 (5)	2.10 (10)
car mechanic	going to a bar	mild assault	-	3.00 (16)	3.71 (7)	2.38 (16)
		severe assault	-	2.95 (19)	3.60 (5)	1.89 (19)
ex-con (alternate to professional gambler role)	waiting for a bus	mild assault	-	2.82 (17)	3.71 (7)	2.65 (17)
		severe assault	-	2.42 (19)	3.20 (5)	1.89 (19)
professional gambler	going to a bar	mild assault	-	3.06 (17)	3.14 (7)	2.47 (17)
		severe assault	-	2.95 (19)	3.60 (5)	2.16 (17)

Note: The ratings were made on 5-point scales. N's are presented in parentheses ( ).

[a]Lower ratings correspond with higher similarity.
[b]Lower ratings correspond with greater likelihood.
[c]Lower ratings correspond with greater likelihood.
[d]Lower ratings correspond with greater seriousness.

APPENDIX B

Examples of Stimulus Situations

Victimization of a Female

Early one evening, as Kathy, a 19-year-old college student, walks to class along a residential street several blocks from campus, a man comes up and propositions her to have sex with him. Kathy ignores the man and starts to cross the street when he pulls a knife and demands that she keep quiet and do what he says. Kathy tries to pull away from the man but he forces her behind some trees and demands she take her clothes off. She refuses and struggles with her assailant as he takes her clothes off, but she is unable to fight off his advances and he succeeds in forcing her to engage in sexual intercourse. Just then, the voices of several people coming down the street startle Kathy's assailant and he avoids detection by running off behind some houses.

Kathy runs out into the street and a passing female motorist pulls over to see if she needs help. Upon learning that Kathy had just been assaulted, the driver of the car takes her to a hospital.

A medical examination confirms that Kathy had been forced to engage in sexual intercourse.

While at the hospital Kathy reports her assault and after a search of the neighborhood, Kathy's assailant is apprehended and arrested by the police.

One evening, while on her way to meet some friends at a night club across town from where she works, Sally, a 34-year-old strip-tease dancer is stopped by a man who asks her the time. Sally ignores the man and keeps on walking, but he grabs her and prevents her from screaming by threatening her with a knife. He then forces her into the hallway of a deserted building and propositions her to have sex with him. Sally refuses and tries to pull away from him. She struggles with him as he attempts to take her clothes off. Just then, the voices of several people outside the building startle Sally's assailant and he avoids detection by going out a rear fire escape.

Sally staggers out into the street and a passing female motorist pulls over to see if she needs help. Upon learning that Sally had just been assaulted, the driver of the car takes her to a hospital.

A medical examination reveals that as a result of the assault, Sally received a slight bruise on her chest, but no evidence of attempted intercourse is indicated.

While at the hospital Sally reports her assault and after a search of the neighborhood where the assault took place, Sally's assailant is apprehended and arrested by the police.

Victimization of a Male

While on his way to meet some friends at a bar one evening, Bob, a 47-year-old professional gambler, is stopped just outside the bar by a man who demands that he hand over his wallet. Bob refuses and starts to walk away when the man pulls a knife and forces him into an alley several doors down from the bar. Once in the alley, the man knocks Bob down and grabs for his wallet. The two struggle for a while but Bob's assailant is able to push himself free and run off with Bob's wallet.

A passing motorist sees Bob stagger into the street holding his side and stops to see if he needs any help. Upon learning that Bob had just been attacked, the driver of the car takes him to a hospital.

A medical examination reveals that as a result of the attack, Bob's jaw was fractured and several ribs were broken.

While at the hospital, Bob reports the incident to the police and after a search of the neighborhood where the attack occurred, Bob's assailand is apprehended and arrested by the police.

Early one morning, while Frank, a 43-year-old car mechanic, waits alone for a bus to take him to work, a man comes up to him and demands that he hand over his wallet. Frank refuses and begins to walk across the street when the man grabs him and flashes a knife in his face. The man orders Frank to walk toward a car parked on the side of the road. When they reach the car, the man grabs for Frank's wallet and there is a brief struggle which ends with Frank being shoved against the car and knocked down. The assailant then picks up Frank's wallet and disappears down the street.

A passing motorist sees Frank sitting on the side of the road holding his side and stops to see if he needs any help. Upon learning Frank had just been attacked, the driver of the car takes him to a hospital.

A medical examination reveals that as a result of the attack, Frank received only a minor bruise on his chest.

While at the hospital Frank reports the incident to the police and after a search of the neighborhood, Frank's assailant is apprehended and arrested by the police.

APPENDIX C

Rating Scales

RATING SCALES

1.	How similar do you feel you are to the victim?	very similar 1	2	3	4	5	6	not at all similar 7
2.	To what extent can you identify with what happened to the victim?	a great deal 1	2	3	4	5	6	not at all 7
3.	How likely do you think you would ever be in the same situation as the victim and experience a similar kind of victimization?	very likely 1	2	3	4	5	6	not likely at all 7
4.	To what extent do you feel the victim in some way deserved what happened?	very much so 1	2	3	4	5	6	not at all 7
5.	What, if anything, did the victim do to encourage the incident?							
6.	To what extent do you feel the victim was to blame for the incident?	very much to blame 1	2	3	4	5	6	not at all to blame 7
7.	To what extent do you feel the offender was to blame for the incident?	very much to blame 1	2	3	4	5	6	not at all to blame 7
8.	To what extent do you feel the victim's involvement in the incident was due to chance/the victim's fault?	completely due to chance 1	2	3	4	5	6	completely the victim's fault 7
9.	Considering what happened and what could have happened to the victim, how serious was the victim's misfortune?	very serious 1	2	3	4	5	6	not serious at all 7
10.	How respectable do you feel the victim is?	very respectable 1	2	3	4	5	6	not respectable at all 7
11.	If the person responsible for the incident is guilty of a crime, what kind of prison sentence should he receive?	harsh 1	2	3	4	5	6	mild 7

APPENDIX D

Instructions

Sex_____

Age_____

Year in school_____

INSTRUCTIONS

The purpose of this study is to assess how people view the personal misfortunes of others. To help us determine how people do perceive the personal misfortunes of others, we would like you to read brief descriptions of two incidents in which an individual experiences a personal misfortune and then answer some questions regarding how you perceived each incident. We also wish to collect some additional information and have included several other brief questionnaires we would like you to complete.

Please complete the questionnaires in the order they appear in the booklet. Please read and answer all questions carefully.

APPENDIX E

Judges' Groupings of the Dependent Measures

Variable Group	Judge 1[a]	Judge 2	Judge 3
Identification with the Victimization	victim similarity	victim similarity	victim similarity
	identification with the victim's misfortune	identification with the victim's misfortune	identification with the victim's misfortune
	likelihood of experiencing same fate	victim respectability	likelihood of experiencing same fate
Victim Responsibility	victim deserved the outcome	likelihood of experiencing same fate	victim deserved the outcome
	victim blame	victim deserved the outcome	victim blame
	victim fault	victim blame	victim fault
	victim respectability	offender blame	victim respectability
		victim fault	offender blame
Severity of the Incident	seriousness of the incident	seriousness of the incident	seriousness of the incident
	offender punishment	offender punishment	offender punishment

[a]Judge 1 did not categorize "offender blame" into one of the three groupings.

APPENDIX F

Factor Analysis of the Dependent Measures

Variable Group	Variables	Victimization of a Female			Victimization of a Male		
		Factor 1[a]	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Identification with the Victim	victim similarity	...[b]	.80	...	...	.86	...
	identification with victim's misfortune	...	.59	...	...	.67	...
	likelihood of experiencing same fate	...	.65	...	...	.61	...
Victim Responsibility	victim deserved the outcome	-.72	...	...	-.70	...	...
	victim blame	-.89	...	...	-.96	...	...
	victim fault	.60	...	...	.46	...	...
	victim respectability	.50	...	...	.44	...	...
	offender blame	.46	...	...	.43	...	....
Severity of the Incident	seriousness of the incident	...	...	.56	...	...	.53
	offender punishment	...	...	.66	...	...	.52

[a]A varimax rotation was performed. A near identifcal factor pattern was produced using a quartimax rotation.

[b]Loadings less than .40 are not shown.

APPENDIX G

Ratings of Personal Similarity

Table 1

Ratings of Personal Similarity

	Social Role	Victim Role Group			Total Sample		
		N	$\bar{X}$	SD	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
female	college student	90	1.37	.94	270	1.31	.87
female	stock clerk	90	4.60	1.90	270	4.76	1.76
female	strip-tease	90	6.68	.81	270	6.71	.74
male	college student	90	1.34	.88	270	1.31	.87
male	car mechanic[a]	26	5.69	1.35	101	5.87	1.32
male	professional gambler	90	6.40	1.28	269[b]	6.29	1.26

[a]Due to a clerical error, a substantial number of subjects were not asked to rate the personal similarity of themselves to the car mechanic role.

[b]One rating was omitted by one subject.

APPENDIX H

Mean Ratings of Stimulus Situations Portraying a Victimization of a Female

Table 2

Mean Ratings of Identification with the Victim Variables

		Social Setting					
		Walk		Bus Stop		Night Club	
Personal Outcome	N	Attempted Rape	Rape	Attempted Rape	Rape	Attempted Rape	Rape
Victim Role		Victim Similarity[a]					
strip-tease dancer	15	6.20	6.07	6.27	6.07	6.73	6.00
stock clerk	15	5.07	4.73	6.07	4.87	5.93	5.47
college student	15	3.73	4.73	4.53	4.27	4.73	4.87
		Identification with the Victim's Misfortune[b]					
strip-tease dancer	15	4.73	4.67	4.53	4.60	5.00	4.13
stock clerk	15	4.67	4.80	5.33	3.27	5.33	4.07
college student	15	3.73	3.73	4.73	3.80	4.60	4.67
		Likelihood of Experiencing a Similar Misfortune[c]					
strip-tease dancer	15	5.13	5.00	4.33	5.27	5.47	4.93
stock clerk	15	3.93	3.67	4.13	4.13	5.40	4.00
college student	15	3.60	3.73	4.13	4.73	4.27	4.07

[a]The lower the rating the greater the perceived similarity.
[b]The lower the rating the greater the identification.
[c]The lower the rating the more the experience was perceived as likely.

Table 3

Mean Ratings of Victim Responsibility Variables

		Social Setting					
		Walk		Bus Stop		Night Club	
Personal Outcome	N	Attempted Rape	Rape	Attempted Rape	Rape	Attempted Rape	Rape
Victim Role		Victim Deserved the Outcome[a]					
strip-tease dancer	15	5.47	6.00	5.27	5.80	5.47	5.80
stock clerk	15	6.60	6.53	6.07	6.80	5.73	6.40
college student	15	6.73	6.27	6.80	6.27	5.87	6.13
		Victim Blame[b]					
strip-tease dancer	15	5.47	5.67	5.20	5.87	4.67	5.93
stock clerk	15	6.33	6.33	6.33	6.13	5.13	6.47
college student	15	6.53	6.47	6.67	6.13	5.60	6.20
		Victim Fault[c]					
strip-tease dancer	15	2.47	2.73	2.60	2.73	3.40	2.80
stock clerk	15	1.80	2.20	2.13	2.33	3.07	1.80
college student	15	2.07	2.47	1.67	2.20	3.13	2.40

[a]The lower the rating the more the victim deserved the outcome.
[b]The lower the rating the more the victim was blamed.
[c]The higher the rating the less the incident was perceived as the victim's fault.

Table 3 (continued)

Personal Outcome	N	Social Setting: Walk — Attempted Rape	Walk — Rape	Bus Stop — Attempted Rape	Bus Stop — Rape	Night Club — Attempted Rape	Night Club — Rape
Victim Role		Victim Respectability[d]					
strip-tease dancer	15	4.33	4.67	4.07	4.67	4.93	4.73
stock clerk	15	2.00	2.33	2.13	2.00	3.80	2.27
college student	15	2.07	1.60	1.80	2.07	2.80	2.67
		Offender Blame[e]					
strip-tease dancer	15	1.80	1.40	1.67	1.27	1.67	1.27
stock clerk	15	1.20	1.13	1.47	1.13	1.47	1.07
college student	15	1.20	1.20	1.13	1.20	1.40	1.13

[d]The higher the rating the lower the perceived respectability.
[e]The lower the rating the more the offender was blamed.

Table 4

Mean Ratings of Severity of the Incident Variables

Personal Outcome	N	Social Setting: Walk		Bus Stop		Night Club	
		Attempted Rape	Rape	Attempted Rape	Rape	Attempted Rape	Rape
Victim Role		Seriousness of the Incident[a]					
strip-tease dancer	15	3.40	2.13	3.60	2.40	3.87	2.67
stock clerk	15	3.73	1.60	4.27	2.27	4.87	2.20
college student	15	3.40	2.53	3.07	2.40	2.87	2.67
		Offender Punishment[b]					
strip-tease dancer	15	2.60	1.20	1.87	1.87	2.53	1.80
stock clerk	15	2.20	1.33	2.20	1.47	2.13	1.53
college student	15	2.33	1.40	1.80	1.47	1.80	1.33

[a]The lower the rating the more serious the incident was perceived.
[b]The lower the rating the larger the recommended punishment.

APPENDIX I

Mean Ratings of Stimulus Situations Portraying a Victimization of a Male

Table 5

Mean Ratings of Identification with the Victim Variables

		Social Setting					
		Walk		Bus Stop		Night Club	
Personal Outcome	N	Attempted Rape	Rape	Attempted Rape	Rape	Attempted Rape	Rape
Victim Role		Victim Similarity[a]					
professional gambler	15	6.00	5.73	5.80	4.80	6.60	5.80
car mechanic	15	5.40	4.87	4.67	4.87	6.13	5.40
college student	15	4.46	4.73	5.47	3.80	5.33	6.00
		Identification with the Victim's Misfortune[b]					
professional gambler	15	4.73	4.80	5.13	3.60	5.33	5.20
car mechanic	15	4.27	4.33	4.47	4.27	5.67	4.07
college student	15	4.47	4.60	5.13	3.67	4.80	4.80
		Likelihood of Experiencing a Similar Misfortune[c]					
professional gambler	15	5.40	4.13	4.80	4.13	5.73	4.93
car mechanic	15	3.27	3.07	3.87	4.47	5.33	4.20
college student	15	3.80	3.87	4.73	3.60	4.87	5.13

[a]The lower the rating the greater the perceived similarity.
[b]The lower the rating the greater the identification.
[c]The lower the rating the more the experience was perceived as likely.

Table 6

Mean Ratings of Victim Responsibility Variables

		Social Setting					
		Walk		Bus Stop		Night Club	
Personal Outcome	N	Attempted Rape	Rape	Attempted Rape	Rape	Attempted Rape	Rape
Victim Role		Victim Deserved the Outcome[a]					
professional gambler	15	5.73	5.93	5.47	6.07	5.67	6.40
car mechanic	15	6.53	6.80	6.67	6.47	6.53	6.67
college student	15	6.60	6.80	6.73	6.73	6.33	6.47
		Victim Blame[b]					
professional gambler	15	6.20	5.47	5.60	6.20	6.57	6.33
car mechanic	15	6.13	6.60	6.53	6.27	6.53	6.60
college student	15	6.27	6.53	6.27	6.60	6.20	6.33
		Victim Fault[c]					
professional gambler	15	2.40	2.47	2.20	2.00	2.53	2.60
car mechanic	15	2.13	1.80	1.93	2.53	2.13	1.73
college student	15	2.40	1.93	2.00	2.47	2.13	2.60

[a]The lower the rating the more the victim deserved the outcome.
[b]The lower the rating the more the victim was blamed.
[c]The higher the rating the less the incident was perceived as the victim's fault.

Table 6 (continued)

Personal Outcome	N	Social Setting: Walk — Attempted Rape	Walk — Rape	Bus Stop — Attempted Rape	Bus Stop — Rape	Night Club — Attempted Rape	Night Club — Rape
Victim Role		Victim Respectability[d]					
professional gambler	15	3.53	3.40	3.80	3.60	4.13	3.47
car mechanic	15	2.27	1.93	2.60	2.07	2.73	2.13
college student	15	2.70	1.73	2.00	1.93	3.13	2.07
		Offender Blame[e]					
professional gambler	15	1.20	1.33	1.33	1.33	1.20	1.27
car mechanic	15	1.60	1.00	1.13	1.27	1.47	1.13
college student	15	1.07	1.07	1.60	1.00	1.33	1.20

[d]The higher the rating the lower the perceived respectability.
[e]The lower the rating the more the offender was blamed.

Table 7

Mean Ratings of Severity of the Incident Variables

Personal Outcome	N	Social Setting: Walk — Attempted Rape	Walk — Rape	Bus Stop — Attempted Rape	Bus Stop — Rape	Night Club — Attempted Rape	Night Club — Rape
Victim Role		Seriousness of the Incident[a]					
professional gambler	15	3.87	3.40	3.33	3.40	4.20	3.73
car mechanic	15	3.47	2.20	4.40	3.80	4.40	3.20
college student	15	4.13	2.93	3.53	3.20	3.67	2.87
		Offender Punishment[b]					
professional gambler	15	2.73	2.53	2.93	3.07	2.07	2.40
car mechanic	15	2.53	2.13	2.80	2.40	2.27	2.60
college student	15	3.27	1.93	2.00	1.93	2.87	2.60

[a]The lower the rating the more serious the incident was perceived.
[b]The lower the rating the larger the recommended punishment.