

THE EMERGENCE OF THE CRIME VICTIM IN
THE SWEDISH SOCIAL SERVICES ACT

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A los amores de mi vida,
Iván y Sofía

Abstract

This study sought to explain how crime victims emerged as a target group in the Swedish Social Services Act in 2001. The findings, derived from legislative documents, a literature review, and focus group interviews with social workers, showed that the 2001 provisions both duplicated and undermined pre-existing provisions of the Social Services Act. The explicit aim of the reform was to improve services to crime victims. The provisions did not, however, change the legal responsibility of the social services, nor did they strengthen the social rights of crime victims. The social services already assumed responsibility for crime victims according to other provisions of the act. To some degree, the reform can be explained symbolically. Support for crime victims was a complicated issue for the social democratic government. The economic crisis of the early 1990s ruled out reforms that might bring high increased costs. Yet expanding crime victims' rights at the expense of the offender (e.g. toughening penal law and promoting victim impact statements) was not in line with social democratic ideology. By enacting the 2001 provisions, the government showed its commitment to providing support to crime victims. At the same time, the provisions did not increase costs or strengthen crime victims' rights. In this way, the provisions solved a political dilemma for the government. Incorporating the 2001 provisions in the Social Services Act may seem to have been a modest reform. Symbolic politics, however, are not empty; rather, they reflect attitudes and beliefs. This study proposed that the 2001 reform revealed the state's increasing concern with violence against women and individual responsibility. Furthermore, the provisions may have constituted a normative reorientation of the Social Services Act, in which individual responsibility increasingly replaced solidarity, the holistic view, and a right to assistance according to need.

Sammanfattning

År 2001 kompletterades socialtjänstlagen med bestämmelser om stöd till brottsoffer. Syftet med denna studie var att klarlägga hur brottsoffer blev en målgrupp för socialtjänsten. Studien byggde på en analys av förarbeten till lagstiftningen, en litteraturoversikt samt fokusgruppsintervjuer med socialsekreterare. Resultaten visade att regleringen både upprepar och undergräver redan existerande bestämmelser i socialtjänstlagen. Reformens uttryckliga syfte var att förbättra socialtjänstens stöd till brottsoffer. Förutsättningarna för brottsoffers rätt till stöd förändrades dock inte av regleringen. Socialtjänstlagen omfattade redan enskilda som utsatts för brott och kommunen kan själv bestämma stödets utformning. Reformen kan delvis förstås genom dess symboliska funktion. Stöd till brottsoffer var en komplicerad fråga för den socialdemokratiska regeringen. På grund av den ekonomiska krisen i början av 1990-talet var det inte möjligt att genomföra reformer som medförde höga kostnader för staten. Att stärka brottsoffrets rättigheter gentemot gärningsmannen var heller inte förenligt med socialdemokratisk ideologi. Med bestämmelserna i socialtjänstlagen markerade regeringen att stöd till brottsoffer var en viktig politisk fråga. Samtidigt innebar reformen varken några ökade kostnader eller stärkte brottsoffers juridiska rätt till insatser. På så sätt löste regleringen ett politiskt dilemma för regeringen. Bestämmelserna om stöd till brottsoffer kan uppfattas som en blygsam reform. Symbolpolitik är dock inte innehållslös, utan varje symbol betyder något genom att påverka attityder och föreställningar. Resultaten av denna studie visade att bestämmelserna avspeglar dels ett ökat intresse för våld mot kvinnor och dels ett ökat krav på individuellt ansvar – två processer som möts i tiden. Bestämmelserna belyser också hur socialtjänstlagens principer i ökande grad präglas av krav på individuellt ansvar, snarare än solidaritet, en helhetssyn på sociala problem och en rätt till bistånd efter behov.

Abbreviations

C	The Centre Party
BrB	The Criminal Code
FP	The Liberal Party
KD	The Christian Democratic Party
LSS	The Act on Care of Support and Services for Persons With Certain Functional Impairments
LVM	The Care of Alcohol and Drug Abusers Act
LVU	The Care of Young Persons Act
M	The Moderate Party
MP	The Green Party
SAP	The Social Democratic Party
SFS	The Swedish Code of Statutes
SoL	The Social Services Act
SOU	The Official Government Reports Series
V	The Left Party

List of Original Publications

The dissertation is based on the following studies, referred to in the text by their Roman numerals:

- I. Ljungwald, C., & Hollander, A. (2009). Crime victims in the Swedish Social Services Act. *The International Review of Victimology*, 15(3), 299–326.
- II. Ljungwald C., & Svensson, K. (2007). Crime victims and the social services: Social workers' viewpoint. *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, 8(2), 138–156.
- III. Ljungwald, C., (2010). The idea of the crime victim as a Trojan horse in the Swedish Social Services Act. In S.G. Shoham, P. Knepper, & M. Kett (Eds.), *International handbook of victimology* (669–692). Boca Raton: CRC Press.
- IV. Ljungwald, C., & Elias, R. (2010). The emergence of crime victims as a target group in the Swedish Social Services Act. *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, 11(2), 170–188.

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Introduction

This study analyses a 2001 reform to one of the key laws governing social work in Sweden: the Social Services Act (SFS, 2001:453) (SoL). All municipal social workers encounter the act in one way or another. Adopted in 1982, the Social Services Act strove to consolidate into one law all of the legislation concerning social services administered by the municipal governments, and it introduced a number of anticipated changes (Åström, 1988). The Central Organisation of Social Work¹ (*Centralförbundet i socialt arbete*) had retained paternalistic and philanthropic values from the turn of the 20th century, and the way social assistance was organised was considered an anomaly in the Swedish welfare state (Sunesson et al., 1998; Wersäll, 2006).

The 1982 Social Services Act signalled a fundamental shift in the conceptualisation of social work. The expansion of the public sector in the 1960s and 1970s influenced the act, as different ‘services’, such as child and elderly care, became an increasingly vital part of social services (Lundström, 1993). As Lundström (1993) pointed out, the act also marked a shift from government regulation of social services to municipal autonomy. The act was designed as a framework for social goals, grounded in substantive law, with mainly open-ended rather than prescriptive provisions. Due to the nature of the law, needs assessments and support initiatives became strongly tied to professional social workers’ knowledge and competence (Hetzler, 1989; Hydén, 1998). The act was and remains rooted in democracy, solidarity, equality, and social security (1:1 SoL), whereby social and financial assistance are rights, rather than charity (Government Bill, 1979/80:1; Holgersson, 2004).

Another imperative of the 1982 Social Services Act was the so-called ‘holistic view’ of social problems, meaning that social workers should assess clients’ situations within a wider social context (Bergmark & Lundström, 2007). The holistic approach represented a new perspective in social work, conceptualising social problems as a matter of structural rather than individual shortcomings. The act also made clear that social services should respect individual integrity and the right to self-determination (1:1 SoL). In contrast to earlier social services measures, which were considered controlling and punitive, the act encouraged social workers to seek solutions

¹ The Central Organisation of Social Work was established in 1903 and is a nongovernmental organization devoted to social policy research and change.

in collaboration with their clients (Lundström, 1993; Government Bill, 1979/80:1). To this day, the Social Services Act does not include coercive measures.²

Since the 1990s, the focus of the Social Services Act has increasingly shifted to the individual's responsibility for his or her situation (e.g., Government Bill, 1996/97:124). The government has also introduced sanctions into the act, mandating that young people participate in job training or skill-enhancing activities in exchange for assistance (4:5 SoL). However, very little research exists regarding recent modifications to the act. This study analyses a 2001 reform to the Social Services Act that introduced crime victims as a target group for social services. Support to crime victims has not traditionally been a central issue in social work research and practice. In fact, the term 'crime victim' (*brottsoffer*) did not appear in the Swedish language until 1970 (Österberg, 2002). However, since the beginning of the 1990s, concern for crime victims has grown dramatically. This study examines how the 'crime victim' appeared in the Social Services Act. How did a group for which we did not even have a word before 1970 become one of the social services' main target groups? As Best (1999) pointed out, one should not take new categories for granted; instead, one should ask why or how they appeared. Best argued that even a seemingly innocent category necessitates labelling people, and ideologies and institutions make that labelling possible.

Study Aims

This study seeks to explain how crime victims emerged as a target group in the Social Services Act in 2001. Clearly, it is important to examine the purposes of the provisions, as expressed in the government bill. Yet this is insufficient for understanding the reform's origins. New categories often emerge as a result of social and political shifts (Best, 1999). In order to draw valid conclusions about the provisions, we must examine the context in which the provisions were enacted and how they have been implemented.

Specific Objectives

The specific purposes of the study are to:

- Give an account of the legal history and the content of the crime victim provisions in the Social Services Act, e.g., what should be done on behalf of crime victims (Study I).

² Only the Care of Alcohol and Drug Abusers Act (SFS, 1988:870) (LVM) and the Care of Young Persons Act (SFS, 1990:52) (LVU), which complement the Social Services Act, allow for compulsory measures.

The Social Services Act's Target Groups: An Historic Overview

The social services' goals for different groups can be found in chapter 5 of the Social Services Act. Alongside special provisions concerning children, youths, elderly people, persons with functional impairments, substance abusers, and family caregivers, the provisions concerning victims of crime can be found in a separate section, which reads as follows:

The duties of the social welfare board include working for that those who have been subjected to crime and those close to them receive support and help. The social services shall especially consider that women who are or have been subjected to violence or other abuse by someone close to them may be in need of support and help to change their situation. The social services shall also especially consider that children who have witnessed violence or other abuse by or against a close adult are victims of crime and may be in need of support and help (5:11 SoL).

The social services, however, already assumes responsibility for the groups named in chapter 5 under other provisions of the Social Services Act. According to section 2:2 SoL, the municipalities are ultimately responsible for ensuring that persons living or staying within their boundaries receive the support and assistance they need. Chapter 3 of the act elaborates that the social services are responsible for the provision of care and service, information, counselling, financial assistance, and other assistance for families and individuals in need. Naturally, these responsibilities include the elderly, substance abusers, children and youths, and persons with functional impairments etc. The target group provisions in chapter 5 *clarify* the social services' responsibility for these groups.

This section of the dissertation provides an historical account of the Social Services Act's target group provisions, starting in the early 1980s.

The Holistic View: A New Perspective in Social Work

Before the Social Services Act was enacted in 1982, the right to social services assistance was tied to specific causes, such as illness, age, or inability to work. The Social Services Act rejected target- and symptom-oriented measures. Linking social assistance eligibility to specific causes or

situations was incompatible with the ‘holistic view’ of social problems, which became one of the hallmarks of the act (Government Bill, 1979/80:1). The act’s preparatory material noted that there would be ‘significant difficulties drawing up legislation which refers to all the situations in which there ought to be a right to assistance’ (Government Bill, 1979/80:1 s. 183). As Bergmark and Lundström (2007) pointed out, the holistic approach rested on two notions. First, social workers should assess the individual’s whole situation instead of classifying clients according to type of problem. Second, social workers should not only deal with individual problems but also engage in community and preventive work. Consequently, the Social Services Act tied the right to assistance to needs, independent of cause or group affiliation (4:1 SoL).

The 1982 Social Services Act did, however, specify target groups: the elderly, substance abusers, children and youths, and people with functional impairments. Research has also shown that efforts to implement the holistic view in the form of integrated social services units (dealing with a variety of social problems) have been sparse (Bergmark & Lundström, 2007). On the contrary, since the 1980s, functional specialisation, with an emphasis on child welfare, social assistance, substance abuse, etc., has been the strongest organisational trend in Swedish social work (Bergmark & Lundström, 2007).

When the Social Services Act was crafted in the 1960s and 1970s, support to crime victims were not yet considered an important political issue. In fact, the term ‘crime victim’ (*brottsoffer*) was never mentioned in the preparatory material for the act. The bill About the Social Services (Government Bill, 1979/80:1) discussed child abuse and violence against social services staff, but these issues were portrayed mainly as symptoms rather than as causes of social problems. For instance, the main cause of so-called ‘aggressive self-assertion’ could be ‘alienation, unemployment, substance abuse, and lack of housing’ (Government Bill, 1979/80:1 p. 211). In the 1970s and 1980s, men’s violence against women emerged as a policy issue. However, there were difficulties in addressing these women’s needs through the social services, as measures to prioritise women clashed with the ‘holistic view’ of social problems and individual needs (Wendt Höjer, 2002). As Wendt Höjer (2002) pointed out, efforts to confront men’s violence against women became an anomaly in the Standing Committee on Social Affairs’ reports (e.g., 1980/81:8). According to Wendt Höjer, the Standing Committee on Social Affairs was ambivalent about identifying violence against women as a state or municipal responsibility throughout the 1980s.

In the beginning of the 1990s, the government appointed the Social Services Committee (Committee Directives, 1991:50) to do an extensive review of the Social Services Act. In their 1994 governmental report (SOU, 1994:139), the Social Services Committee criticised the inconsistency of targeting specific groups in an act focused on needs independent of cause. According to the committee, groups not mentioned in the act might not receive the same support as those mentioned in the act. The Social Services

Committee stated that the act should instead emphasise the obligation of social services to carry out certain activities. In that case, ‘the need for provisions for different target groups will decrease’ (SOU, 1994:139 p. 304). The committee further argued that emphasis should be placed on the first section of the act (1:1 SoL), which presents fundamental principles, such as democracy, solidarity, equality, and individual responsibility. This would allow the act to ‘appear as a law that is not excluding any group’ (SOU, 1994:139 p. 304). Finally, the Social Services Committee warned that the cause of need should not affect the services received. As in the preparatory material underlying the 1982 act, the Social Services Committee did not mention crime victims as a target group. They did, however, discuss the obligation to report suspected child abuse or child sexual abuse to the social services.

In 1994, the same year as in which the Social Services Committee presented their governmental report, a rights-based Act came into effect, providing for support and services for persons with severe functional impairments (SFS, 1993:387) (LSS). Nonetheless, people with functional impairments remained a target group in the Social Services Act. Support under the LSS Act must provide ‘good’ living conditions, while support under the Social Services Act must provide ‘reasonable’ living conditions.

New Target Groups Included in the Act

In March 1997, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs presented the bill Amendments in the Social Services Act (Government Bill, 1996/97:124), which established a ‘national standard’ (*riksnorm*) for basic living costs and limited the conditions for social assistance and the right to appeal to the County Administrative Court. The bill also introduced sanctions into the Social Services Act, mandating that young people participate in job training or skill-enhancing activities in exchange for assistance (4:5 SoL). With the 1997 bill, the government ignored the Social Services Committee’s criticism of the Social Services Act’s inclusion of target groups. Indeed, the government added a new target group to the act — family caregivers.

Family Caregivers

Family caregivers were the first target group introduced in the Social Services Act after its enactment in 1982. The 1997 family caregiver provisions (5:10 SoL) called on the social services to support people caring for relatives who are elderly, suffering from long-term illness, or have functional impairments. The government claimed that this role was not a ‘new undertaking, but was a task that was already included in the social services’ area of responsibility’ (Government Bill, 1996/97:124 p. 164). The government maintained that the provisions allowed municipalities to use

their discretion in providing support; accordingly, individuals could not demand support. Moreover, since the proposal called for 'a voluntary commitment' the costs were not assumed to rise (Government Bill, 1996/97:124 p. 165).

The Social Services Committee (Committee Directives, 1991:50) actually proposed the inclusion of family caregivers in the Social Services Act (SOU, 1994:139), which seems to contradict its criticism of target group provisions. However, the committee advocated the inclusion of family caregivers not as a separate target group, but rather in the act's initial section describing the social services' responsibilities and tasks. In fact, the committee suggested that *all* target group provisions be moved to the act's initial section. The committee (SOU, 1994:139 p. 589) indicated that:

The specification that is made in this section should not be interpreted so that the social services' responsibility is limited to these groups in society. The social services' responsibility applies as much to others that have a need for support and help.

As with earlier preparatory material for the Social Services Act, the 1997 bill did not discuss crime victims as a target group for the social services. The bill mentioned crime victims once, calling attention to the voluntary work undertaken for 'women who have been exposed to violence, support organisations for men, and crime victim support centres' (Government Bill, 1996/97:124 p. 60). The bill also highlighted that the Commission on Violence Against Women had proposed amendments to the Social Services Act (Committee Directives, 1993:88).

The 1997 Amendments in the Social Services Act was strongly criticised. Hence, just a few months after the bill was presented, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs initiated the Social Services Inquiry (Committee Directives, 1997:109) to review the Social Services Act.

Abused Women

In 1998, the Ministry of Labour presented the Women's Peace bill (Government Bill, 1997/98:55), which introduced women victimised by domestic violence as a target group in the Social Services Act. The bill also contained proposals for the definition of a new crime, gross violation of women's integrity, aimed at repeated punishable violations of women. Other proposal included an extension of the definition of rape, a ban on the purchase of sexual services, and a clarification of an employer's responsibility to take active measures to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. In the Women's Peace bill, the government specified that key referral bodies, such as the National Board of Health and Welfare, had argued against more detailed provisions in the Social Services Act. Nonetheless, the government cited shortcomings in the social services'

response to women experiencing violence and insisted on more specific obligations to this group. The provisions also raised protest in the parliamentary debate for the targeting of women only (Minutes of Parliament 1997:98:114).

Crime Victims and Children Who Witness Violence

Since 1998, section 5:11 SoL has been amended three times. In 2001, the bill Support to Crime Victims (Government Bill, 2001/01:79) introduced the general provisions for crime victims, which are the main focus of this dissertation. In 2006, the bill Children Who Have Witnessed Violence (Government Bill, 2005/06:166) added provisions for children who have witnessed violence or other abuse by or against a close adult. In addition, the bill proposed that children who witness domestic violence be entitled to criminal injury compensation from the state. The most recent amendment was made in July 2007, when the bill A New Social Services Act (Government Bill, 2006/07:38) replaced the verb ‘should’ with the more obligatory ‘shall’ in the second and third paragraphs. Each of these three bills made clear that the social services had already assumed responsibility for the support of crime victims, women exposed to violence, and children who have witnessed violence.

The following table outlines the history of the Social Services Act’s target groups. Note that all target groups not included in the original act were introduced in or after 1997.

Table 1. Target Groups in the Social Services Act.

Target Groups	Year of Introduction	Proposing Ministry
Children and youths	1982	Health and Social Affairs
Elderly people	1982	Health and Social Affairs
People with functional impairments	1982	Health and Social Affairs
Substance abusers	1982	Health and Social Affairs
Family caregivers	1997	Health and Social Affairs
Women who have been exposed to violence	1998	Labour
Crime victims	2001	Justice
Children who have witnessed violence	2006	Justice

Consolidation of Target Group Provisions

The Social Services Inquiry (Committee Directives, 1997:109) completed its review in 1999 (SOU, 1999:97). Two years later, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs presented the bill A New Social Services Act (Government Bill, 2000/01:80), which reinstated the right to appeal the social services' decisions in the County Administrative Court. The new act was based on the same principles and values as the 1982 act, but it was divided into chapters for readability (Government Bill, 2001/01:80). The provisions for target groups were placed in chapter 5, titled 'Special Provisions for Different Groups'. Paradoxically, the bill also emphasised that the right to assistance is tied to needs, irrespective of group affiliation (Government Bill, 2000/01:80 p. 90):

All persons should have the right to measures according to their needs. No group's needs should have stronger protection than others. /.../ It cannot be reasonable that persons in need of different caring measures or children and adolescents who need care are not given the same security of rights as, for example, elderly people and persons with functional disabilities.

Although the bill included a section on 'The Significance of Crime and Crime Prevention', crime victims were not named as a target group for the social services. In fact, the bill did not mention crime victims at all.

In 2009, the Child Protective Committee (SOU, 2009:68) suggested that the Social Services Act's provisions for children and youths be moved to a special act for Support and Protection for Children and Youths (LBU). The report has been circulated to organisations and authorities, but no governmental bill has yet been proposed.

Summary

The 1982 Social Services Act clearly rejected target- and symptom-oriented measures. Linking social assistance eligibility to specific causes or situations was incompatible with the holistic view of social problems, one of the fundamental principles of the act. Nonetheless, the 1982 act specified particular target groups: the elderly, substance abusers, children and youths, and people with functional impairments. Between 1982 and 1997, no new target group provisions were introduced into the act. In the beginning of the 1990s, the Social Services Committee even suggested that all target group provisions be moved to the act's initial section, which detailed the social services' responsibilities and tasks. The four target groups not included in the original act — family caregivers, crime victim, abused women, and children who have witnessed violence — were added in or after 1997, in the aftermath of the economic crisis of the early 1990s and in conjunction with increased calls for sanctions and work requirements for welfare recipients. In

2001, the provisions for target groups were placed in a particular chapter, titled 'Special Provisions for Different Groups'. Nonetheless, the preparatory material emphasised that the right to assistance was tied to needs, irrespective of group affiliation.

Evaluations of the Social Services' Work with Crime Victims

In Sweden, the National Board of Health and Welfare monitors and guides the implementation of the Social Services Act.³ The board is a governmental agency under the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and is comprised of two central and six regional supervision units. This section of the dissertation explores the board's evaluations of the social services' work with the target groups identified in section 5:11 SoL: crime victims, children who have witnessed violence, and women who have been subjected to domestic violence.⁴

Crime Victims

The National Board of Health and Welfare (e.g., 2009a, 2010) often describes support for crime victims as a responsibility of the social services' Individual and Family Care, which provides child and youth services, family law, financial assistance, and substance abuse treatment. As the board points out, only a few municipalities have dealt with violence against women in conjunction with providing for people with functional impairments and the elderly. Since 2002, the board has published reports about the state and development of Individual and Family Care. Every year, reports have mentioned the target groups of section 5:11 SoL, though to varying extents.⁵ The 2002 report (The National Board of Health and Welfare, 2003a) allocated half a page out of 54 pages for a discussion of violence against

³ The National Board of Health and Welfare has long shared supervisory responsibilities with the 21 County Administrative Boards. However, in January 2010, all supervision of the municipal social services was transferred to the National Board of Health and Welfare (Government Bill 2008/09:160). The National Board of Health and Welfare's reports summarise many of the County Administrative Board's studies.

⁴ Ola Florin, coordinator for questions relating to violence in close relationships at the National Board of Health and Welfare, has reviewed this section of the dissertation.

⁵ Violence and abuse have to a limited extent been discussed in the board's status and development reports for the social services' Care for People with Functional Impairments and the Elderly (e.g., The National Board of Health and Welfare, 2005a, 2008a). However, on the whole, crime has not been a general or recurrent theme in these reports. Since 2002, the term 'crime victim' has only been mentioned in one status and development report (The National Board of Health and Welfare, 2003b).

women, under the heading 'Family Law, Family Guidance and Measures for Women Who Have Been Exposed to Violence'. The 2008 report (The National Board of Health and Welfare, 2009b) allocated 8 of its 62 pages for a discussion of different groups of crime victims, under the heading 'Support to Crime Victims and Their Next of Kin'. The phrase 'crime victim' first appeared in one of the report's main headings in 2006 (The National Board of Health and Welfare, 2006a).

In 2004, the board (2004a) evaluated the 2001 general provisions for support to crime victims by interviewing social services representatives in 29 of Sweden's 290 municipalities. The study showed that the respondents were aware of the provisions, but the provisions had little impact on their work due to time and resource constraints. Some respondents claimed that crime victims did not turn to the social services for support. One social welfare director stated that 'there is no demand' (The National Board of Health and Welfare, 2004a p. 32). According to the respondents, many people showed little willingness or inclination to approach the social services for support. The respondents identified supportive conversations and referrals to other organisations as the main measures taken to help crime victims. Women exposed to violence seemed to occupy a special position. Developments in the social services, such as joint action groups and action plans, almost exclusively concerned this group. The respondents also identified as crime victims certain groups with which the social services already worked, such as substance abusers, children, young people, elderly people, and people with functional impairments.

In 2005, the board (2005b) presented an evaluation of the social services' young crime victims (*Stödcentrum för unga brottsoffer*), which provide counselling, information, and practical help to youths who have been exposed to crime, as well as to their parents. The evaluation was based on interviews with police officers and support centre employees. The first centre was initiated in 1999 in Stockholm, as a collaboration between the social services and the police, and with financial support from the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority (*Brottsoffermyndigheten*). The increase in reported muggings committed by youths at the end of the 1990s served as the catalyst for the project. In the mid 2000s, approximately 11 support centres had been established (or was planned to be established), of which 8 participated in the board's study. Since then, the number of support centres has nearly tripled, totalling 30 in 2011 (Gothenburg Support Centre for Young Crime Victims, 2011).

The board's evaluation identified the principal goal of the centres as helping young crime victims 'cope with trauma, feel better, get their self-esteem back and return to a normal life' (The National Board of Health and Welfare, 2005b p. 50). The board pointed out that some centres had a limited approach, focusing on issues directly concerning the crime in question. According to the board, the centres supported both girls and boys, mainly 14–16 years of age, with an upper age range of 20–23 years. Most victims

who turned to the centres had been subjected to robbery and assault. Unlawful threat and sexual abuse were also common. The report showed that most centres did not work with family-related crimes.

The board emphasised that the centres' work was based on close collaboration with the police, which worked well. According to the support workers, approaching the social services carried a stigma; 'youths and parents did not want to be associated with the social services because they do not have social problems' (The National Board of Health and Welfare, 2005b p. 55). The fact that all centres except one were housed in police stations marked their independence from the social services.⁶ The police referred most crime victims to the centre: 90–95% of the victims had filed a police report. In most cases, if the crime had not been reported, the support workers encouraged the youths to do so. The board highlighted the fact that many victims who turned to the centres had been perpetrators, as well (one fourth of the victims in one centre).

The board concluded that the support centres were a reasonable way to fulfil the social services' legal responsibility for young crime victims. According to the board, it was important to provide competent support to youths who had had frightening or traumatic experiences due to crime. The support centres could help victims avoid long-term consequences by helping them to feel better and return to a functioning life. In addition, a supportive environment made it easier for victims to describe what had happened, both to the police and in court. The board pointed out that since crime victims and witnesses were less inclined to shy away from their statements while receiving support, victim support often resulted in better police investigations and could ultimately make it easier to bring cases to court.

Abused Women

The bulk of the National Board of Health and Welfare's evaluation of section 5:11 SoL concerned the social services' work with violence against women. According to the board (2005c), the social services had long encountered abused women but were unaware of the abuse, as the women approached them for help with other issues, such as financial problems or substance abuse. In addition, since many municipalities have relied on nongovernmental women's shelters, they have not built their own base of knowledge and professional activities — although this has started to change.⁷

⁶ One centre chose not to co-locate with the police because they wanted to reach youths that had not reported the crime. If a youth were to enter a police station, he or she might feel compelled to report the crime.

⁷ In 2009, the board referred to a study by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (2009), which showed that 228 of the 255 participating municipalities offered shelter to women who had been exposed to violence: 23% of the municipalities offered shelter under

In 2000, the board (2000) evaluated the 1998 provisions for women subjected to violence. Most social services representatives who participated in the study were aware of the amendments to the Social Services Act. The provisions, however, had limited impact on social services work, mainly due to a lack of resources and knowledge. The study showed that only a few municipalities had special measures, informational material, or action plans for women exposed to violence. In 2003, the board (2003a) stated that the social services still had limited knowledge about violence against women. The board argued that the need for measures in this area was much greater than previously believed. For example, the s-called Women's Peace project was the most popular program in the Södertälje municipality, where 7 out of 10 reports to the social services concerned either violence or substance abuse. The board concluded that the social services needed a broader competence to meet the needs of this group, which required education and cooperation with other professions. The board also called attention to positive developments, such as websites and crisis centres for women exposed to violence in various municipalities. According to the board, the social services had become increasingly engaged in working with and developing methods for this group.

The board has pointed to positive trends in the social services' work with violence against women in every Individual and Family Care report since 2003. In 2004, the board (2004b) concluded that the social services had clearly prioritised this group. In 2005, according to the board (2005d), approximately 70% of the municipalities had developed action plans for violence against women. A lack of resources was a common reason that some municipalities did not have an action plan. The action plans primarily targeted women subjected to violence and their children, but they also addressed men who exercise violence against women. The majority of the actions plans (65%) were established between 2002 and 2005; 20% had been established before 2002. Most plans included direct measures for women exposed to violence. Very few plans dealt with structural measures to prevent and reduce violence against women.

During the last decade, the board (2007a, 2009a) addressed a number of shortcomings in the social services' work with women subjected to violence. For example, every municipality had its own way of dealing with this group. Another recurring theme in the board's reports is that the social services needed to draw attention to specific groups of women, such as elderly women, women with physical and mental impairments, women with substance abuse issues, women who have immigrated, and women in same-sex relationships. These groups often had limited access to domestic violence shelters. As late as 2009, the board (2009c) established that

their own operation, and around 80% offered shelter under the operation of nongovernmental organisations (the National Board of Health and Welfare, 2009c).

measures for women subjected to violence in same-sex relationships were almost non-existent within the social services. In addition, the specialisation of Individual and Family Care, according to the board (2006a), made it difficult to take a holistic approach to women and children's needs. The board (2007a) also pointed out that municipalities often lacked flexibility in their assessments of women's entitlement to financial assistance. Many municipalities did not consider that women 'have to leave everything when they flee their homes and thereby are in need of financial assistance above the norm' (The National Board of Health and Welfare, 2003a p. 30). The board (2009a, 2009c, 2010) has also addressed the need to further develop documentation, evaluations, statistics, and cooperation with other authorities.

In the preparatory material for section 5:11 SoL, the government emphasised that the provisions referred to women of all ages. Specifically, they incorporated so-called 'honour-related' violence against daughters or sisters (Government Bill, 2006/07:38). In 2003, the board (2003a) stated that many children and youths with foreign backgrounds lived under difficult circumstances; for instance, girls had been abused and murdered by their relatives because they had failed to comply with the values of their cultures. The board argued that a vigorous effort was needed in municipalities where women were being isolated and abused. To date, the board (2009d) defines honour-related violence as planned and collective. The oppression takes place in patriarchal systems and centres on controlling the sexuality of girls and women. According to the board, the violence can be physical, sexual, or social.

Between 2003 and 2007, the government invested 180 million SEK (18 million Euro) in measures against honour-related violence. During this period, the board (2005e, 2007b) presented a number of evaluations of the social services' work in this area. Overall, the board (2007a) argued that the social services had made progress in their work with victims of honour-related violence. For instance, by 2007, 27 shelters for such victims had opened, and most of their 105 spaces had been filled. The shelters worked well in crisis situations, but according to the board (2008b), the social services needed to develop long-term support. The board (2007b) showed that many municipalities had created action plans for this group, and almost every county had implemented education and training. The board (2008b) highlighted the need for further development, primarily in regard to education and cooperation with other authorities. Some municipalities had never come in contact with honour-related violence, making it difficult to motivate them to allocate resources for training. There were great differences in how different municipalities worked with this group.

Children Who Witness Violence

Children who witness violence were not included as a target group in section 5:11 SoL until 2006. As early as 2003, however, the board (2003a) stated that children who witnessed violence in their homes were often overlooked. One year later, the board (2004b) referred to studies that showed shortcomings in the social services' work with this group. The board also established that problems that affected children's well being, such as financial problems, substance abuse, and violence, were often related to each other. Exposure to domestic violence could, according to the board (2005f), lead to stress reactions such as asthma, eczema, difficulty sleeping, headaches, and eating disorders. It could also result in long-lasting psychological problems, such as depression, anxiety, and self-destructive and aggressive behaviour. The board emphasised that the mother's separation from the father in families where violence had occurred placed the mother and children in danger. In 2007, the board (2007a) stated that Individual and Family Care, nongovernmental organisations, and others had established a total of 87 programs throughout the country for children who have witnessed violence. According to the board, the programs did not, however, come in contact with many children.

The board's reports (2006b, 2008c) about Children's Houses (*Barnahus*) also discussed children who have witnessed violence. From 2006–2007, six pilot Children's Houses were implemented in Sweden, allowing representatives from the police, the prosecutor's office, the social services, and child health departments to work together to provide support for children who have been victims of sexual abuse and assault. Two of the six pilot programs identified as their target group children who had witnessed violence. The Children's Houses came in contact with children up to 19 years old, with a median of 11 years old. The Children's Houses aimed to improve the quality of investigations and to ensure that criminal investigations were sensitive to the children's needs. In 2008, all six pilot programs had become permanent, and an additional five Children's Houses had opened. Two years later, the board (2010) reported that 20 Children's Houses had opened throughout the country.

Summary

In the early 2000s, the board reported that the social services were aware of the provisions in section 5:11 SoL but that the provisions had had little impact on the social services' work due to a lack of resources, such as affordable housing, time, and staff. Since the mid 2000s, social services programs for victimised women, youths, and children have increased dramatically. Between 2004 and 2010, the number of support centres for young crime victims nearly tripled; between 2006 and 2011, no fewer than

20 Children's Houses had been established; by 2007, 27 shelters for victims of honour-related violence had opened; and by 2005, more than two thirds of the municipalities had developed action plans for violence against women. However, the board's reports repeatedly indicated that the social services rarely (and sometimes never) came in contact with some of the above-mentioned groups. In addition, because many of the board's reports focused on initiatives such as action plans and education for social services staff, it is sometimes difficult to tell how the social services have supported these groups in practice. Moreover, the board has addressed a number of shortcomings in the social services' work, for instance, the lack of unity among municipalities in terms of methods for dealing with violence against women.

Recently, the government has tried to steer the social services' work with target groups of section 5:11 SoL through the National Board of Health and Welfare. The government's assignments have mainly concerned victimised women and children; not until 2011 did the government commission the board to provide guidance to the social services on how to support 'crime victims' as a category (Government Letter of Regulation, 2011). Between 2007 and 2008, the board received 14 commissions from the government concerning violence against women, honour-related violence, and children who have witnessed violence (Government Communication, 2007/08:39). One part of the assignment was to support the municipalities in their implementation of section 5:11 SoL (The National Board of Health and Welfare, 2009a). In December 2009, the board presented general guidelines for the social services' work with women subjected to violence and children who have witnessed violence (SOSFS, 2009:22). The board will publish a handbook for the social services in May 2011 with the title 'Violence in close relationships — A handbook about support and help to women and children who have witnessed violence in May 2011 (Ola, personal communication, March 23, 2011). One of the aims of the handbook is to create a better and more uniform understanding of the provisions in section 5:11 SoL. The board also plans to develop a web portal about violence in close relationships (The National Board of Health and Welfare, 2009a).

Research Overview: The Social Services' Responsibility and Measures for Crime Victims

This section presents previous research about the Swedish social services' responsibility and measures for the target groups identified in section 5:11 SoL: crime victims, women who have been subjected to domestic violence, and children who have witnessed violence. The aim of the review was to identify knowledge gaps in this area and provide a framework for the results in this dissertation.

Research Review Methodology

Data collection began with an electronic search of the following academic databases: Academic Search Premier, Artikelsök, ASSIA, Bibliography of Nordic Criminology, Communication Abstracts, Criminal Justice Abstracts, CSA Linguistics and Language Behaviour Abstracts, ERIC, IBSS: The International Bibliography of Social Sciences, LIBRIS, PAIS International, PILOTS, PsycARTICLES, PsycBOOKS, PsycCRITIQUES, PsycINFO, Social Sciences Citation Index, Social Services Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, and Studies on Women and Gender Abstracts.

The review employed a combination of the following search terms in Swedish and English: abuse, crime, honour, municipality, protection, social services, social work, support, Sweden, victim, violence, witness, and women. In addition, the review searched the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority's (2010) list of victimological research projects in Sweden. Moreover, it searched (1) the reference lists of all included studies in the review and (2) the publication lists of all researchers included in review.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The review first included studies based on their title, abstract, and keywords. In total, it initially incorporated 22 doctoral dissertations and 77 articles. Based on the full text, the review selected from these studies 11 doctoral dissertations and 24 articles according to the following criteria.

Type of Publication

The review incorporated studies published in refereed journals and doctoral dissertations. This ensured that all studies included in the review had undergone a peer review process.

Methodology

There was no methodology prerequisite; the review included both quantitative and qualitative studies.

Language and Publication Year

The review incorporated studies published in Danish, English, Norwegian, and Swedish. There was no limit with regard to year of publication.

Definition of Central Concepts

The review included research about the Swedish social services' responsibility and measures for crime victims, children who have witnessed violence, and women who have been subjected to domestic violence. It excluded studies that dealt with groups that could fall under the label 'crime victim'— such as victims of trafficking, prostitution, torture, and sexual abuse — but did not use the concept of crime victim or any of the other terms above.⁸

The review defined 'social services' as activities governed by the following Swedish laws: the Swedish Social Services Act (SFS, 2001:453) (SoL), the Care of Alcohol and Drug Abusers Act (SFS, 1988:870) (LVM), the Care of Young Persons Act (SFS, 1990:52) (LVU), and the Act on Support and Services for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (SFS, 1993:387) (LSS).

Crime Victims

Traditionally, social work research has not focused on support to crime victims. However, social work scholars have long been involved in studies related to people who can be categorised as crime victims (cf. Hydén, 1996), such as abused or maltreated children (e.g. Brunnberg & Pečnik, 2007; Wiklund, 2006). Scholars in other disciplines, such as sociology and health sciences, have also conducted studies related to the social services' work with child protection, child physical abuse, and sexual abuse of children in compulsory care and detention homes (e.g. Coccozza, 2007; Lindell, 2005; Överlien, 2006). This research has, however, rarely labelled these children victims of crime. This review found a few studies concerning social

⁸ The only exception is victims of honour-related violence, which the preparatory material for section 5:11 SoL explicitly defines as women who have been exposed to domestic violence.

services' measures that regarded crime victims as a category, all of which were published from the middle to the end of the 2000s.

Lindgren's (2004) dissertation mainly explored how crime victims interacted with central actors in the criminal justice system, such as the police, courts, and public prosecutors. Lindgren also briefly discussed the social services' responsibility and measures for crime victims. The study was based on 11 surveys, conducted between 1993 and 2003, of over 3,000 people who had been exposed to crime. Lindgren pointed out that since 2001, when the provisions for crime victims were introduced into the Social Services Act (5:11 SoL), the municipalities had had the main responsibility for issues regarding crime victims. Lindgren (2005 p. 357) referred to the reform as a 'excellent legislative product which had been highly acknowledged'. Lindgren also pointed out that the reform was in agreement with international requirements related to crime victims. The reform's weakness was financing and the extent to which municipalities could fulfil their obligations. Lindgren highlighted the difficulty of allocating tasks to the municipalities without defined state grants; two thirds of the municipalities could not budget to make ends meet.⁹ Lindgren argued that, during the lawmaking process for the 2001 reform, the Ministry of Justice was well aware that the municipalities would not be able to handle the terms of the reform.

Lindgren concluded that the social services had not translated the government's priorities into action. According to Lindgren, both local politicians and professionals within the social services stated that they wanted to support crime victims but ultimately had so many other priorities. Moreover, they did not have the resources to employ more staff. Instead, the municipalities relied on other actors, such as the police and nongovernmental organisations.¹⁰

Persson's (2004) law dissertation examined Swedish political parties' views and arguments for legislation concerning the protection of and support for victims of crime. Persson used parliamentary publications, especially documents from standing committees, to conduct an empirical analysis. According to Persson, political parties focused solely on financial compensation as a method for helping crime victims until the end of the 1970s. Since then, the discussion has developed to include crime victims' need for legal assistance or other support and help from the social services and others. Persson argued that on a general level, political parties

⁹ Lindgren cited the chief economist at the Swedish Agency for Administrative Development, who argued that municipalities must find funding alternatives to taxes for areas such as care services and schools. The best way to solve the crisis in the public sector, according to Murray, was to increase fees or delegate public tasks to the market.

¹⁰ According to the social work scholar Kerstin Svensson (2007), a common solution for the social services is to give contributions to nongovernmental organisations and refer crime victims to those organisations.

unanimously called for increased support for crime victims. However, the parties' arguments have differed sharply concerning *how* the support should be provided. One important dividing line has been whether measures for crime victims should be taken within the criminal justice system or within other sectors, such as the social services or health and medical services.

Persson's study illustrated that in 2001, when crime victims were introduced as a target group in the Social Services Act, the Social Democratic Party, the Left Party, and the Liberal Party took similar positions, emphasising the importance of the social services' work with crime victims. They also stated that the strategy for addressing crime victims' needs needed to incorporate attitude change and increased knowledge. The Moderate Party, however, de-emphasised the social services' efforts. They identified the family and the criminal justice system as the primary sources of support for 'ideal victims' (i.e., those most readily given the legitimate status of victimhood), while they saw the social services as the primary source of support for 'non-ideal victims' (i.e., those who are to blame, at least to some extent) (cf. Christie, 1986).

Sonander's (2008) sociology of law dissertation analysed the legal framework for different actors, such as the social services, with regard to children as victims of crime. The study also sought to examine whether or not the actors were fulfilling their legal requirements. According to Sonander, the social services' earlier work had been focused on groups other than crime victims, but this had started to change. For example, according to Sonander (2008 p. 102), the Social Services Act now 'in a concrete way' indicated the social services' responsibility for victims of crime. Sonander also stressed that a social services investigation and a police investigation have different aims. A social worker's task is to make sure that children that are exposed to crime get care and support, but the social worker does not have any obligation to investigate whether a crime has been committed. Even if a police investigation does not lead to a conviction, a child may still require support from the social services. The social services must always conduct a risk assessment based on the child's current situation. Nonetheless, Sonander argued that the police and social services are dependent on one another. The police have a duty to report to the social services any suspicion that a child is in need of protection, while the social services may have information that can help a police investigation.

Sonander examined 653 police reports in which children under 15 years of age had been exposed to crime. In approximately half (315) of the cases, the police had made a report to the social services. The majority of social services investigations did not result in an intervention. One of Sonander's conclusions was that even good legislation did not ensure that the work would be conducted in accordance with the intentions of the legislator. Other influencing factors included available resources in terms of time allocated for investigations and the actors' attitudes towards the legislation.

Sociologists Hansen L fstrand (2009a, 2009b) and Burcar (2005) have conducted research at the social services' support centres for young crime victims. Hansen L fstrand (2009a, 2009b) based her studies on qualitative interviews with professional support workers and young crime victims visiting the support centres. She also observed the daily work of the support centre for a period of five months, for instance, by participating in staff meetings. Hansen L fstrand mainly highlighted the 'teaching' dimension of victim support. The support workers' task was to 'teach' the youths about their feelings and needs as young crime victims, helping them to identify themselves as victims. Hansen L fstrand argued that the support centre's activities were founded on the belief that exposure to crime nearly always involved emotional trauma, even if the youth might not be aware of this trauma yet. According to the support workers, young crime victims were often unwilling to identify as crime victims. They expressed anger, which was seen as a mask for their true emotions, such as fear, vulnerability, or sadness. The task of the support worker was therefore to 'crack a hole in the shell' inside which the crime victim hid, utilising special pedagogical tools and techniques. The support workers frequently expressed their belief that victims who do not seek professional help would not learn to manage their emotions and would risk turning into perpetrators. Thus, Hansen L fstrand concluded that crime victim support was understood as crime prevention work.

Hansen L fstrand argued that the very existence and work of the support centres were legitimised by the idea that victimhood was widespread in society and that the real number of victims was unknown. Consequently, a key task for the support centre was to improve awareness of common reactions to crime and victimhood through education. The assumption was that many youths denied what had happened to them, but sooner or later they would need to confront their identity as crime victims. Hence, support centres argued that the target group for the centre's public opinion campaigns should remain undefined. According to this argument, as Hansen L fstrand pointed out, even if the actual number of youths visiting the centres remained small, the centres would need further economic resources in order to reach out to the unknown number of victims in need of support. It also gave the support workers a sense of being part of 'something big'.

Burcar's (2005) dissertation was based on qualitative interviews with 10 young men who had been exposed to crime. In addition, she conducted an interview with two support workers at the support centre for young crime victims. The support workers stated that young male crime victims were often quiet and reluctant to talk about their emotions, but at times they were able to effectively describe their feelings. The support workers stressed conversation and practical help as a vital part of victim support. In addition, the support workers argued that many young crime victims did not want to file a police report because of a lack of faith in the criminal justice system. They felt neglected and let down, having found that the police 'did nothing'

to apprehend the offender. Close cooperation between the support centre and police was therefore essential. Burcar's study made it clear that the support workers saw themselves as a link between the police and the young crime victims, and one of their most important tasks was to inform the youths about the police investigation.

Abused Women

Political scientist Wendt Höjer's (2002) dissertation investigated how Swedish politics dealt with men's violence against women from the 1930s to the 1990s, through an analysis of reports, public inquiries, government bills, and parliamentary debates. Wendt Höjer argued that in the 1970s and 1980s, it was established that battered women needed not only legal protection but also care and supportive measures, such as social services. This review found that the first article about social services measures for women exposed to violence was published in 1984 (Almén, 1984). In the article, social worker Almén stated that the existing literature on violence against women was limited. Almén urged the social services to give high priority to all types of abuse. Since many women did not disclose an abusive relationship, according to Almén, the social services should always ask women about violence. Almén also pointed out that abused women were often afraid that they would lose custody of their children if they engaged with the social services. Almén stressed that the social services needed to understand the 'psychological processes' of violence against women. She also identified practical measures, such as shelter and assistance through the criminal court process, as a vital part of social services.

In 1990, Bergman and Brismar (1990) published a study of social services measures for 'battered wives'.¹¹ The study included social files and medical records for 98 acutely battered women who had visited a surgical emergency department; 78% of the women had been in contact with the social services on repeated occasions over several years. Violence was documented in less than half of the social services files, which, according to Bergman and Brismar, reflected poor documentation and showed that violence was not the sole reason for women to contact social services. In some cases, the women did not disclose the violence to the social worker. The measures taken by the social services to help the women consisted of financial support and psychotherapy. Less frequently, social workers helped the women with such practical matters as temporary housing. The social services had only reported two cases to the police. Bergman and Brismar stressed that the measures

¹¹ Three years earlier, in 1987, psychiatrist Bergman had presented the first Swedish doctoral dissertation with primary research on violence against women. Bergman's (1987) dissertation 'Battered wives: Why are they beaten and why do they stay?' raised a heated debate. One of the main critics was the feminist scholar Lundgren, who claimed that Bergman was blaming the women for the violence by portraying them as provocative and inadequate.

were prompted not only by violence but also by the women's generally unfavourable social situations. For example, one quarter of the women were referred to a treatment home, mainly for alcohol or drug abuse. According to Bergman and Brismar, the cooperation between the medical and social services and the police was very limited. The social and medical services also underestimated the importance of informal help such as women's groups and shelters, which were often valued by the battered women themselves. One of Bergman and Brismar's conclusions was that the support to women exposed to violence was insufficient, and that proper cooperation among authorities and between formal and informal sources of support would improve the situation.

In 1991, political scientists Elman and Eduards (1991) echoed Bergman and Brismar's (1990) criticism of the social services in a survey of 82 battered women and 66 women's shelter staff. Elman and Eduards claimed that social workers had little knowledge about battered women's needs. Social workers were inclined to take a therapeutic approach, rather than acknowledging the criminal dimensions of violence against women. The women in the study stated that social workers had not encouraged them to file a police report and apply for an order of protection. In addition, Elman and Eduards stressed that social workers failed to comprehend the psychological trauma and physical dangers the women faced.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the research on men's violence against women has greatly expanded, but with a few exceptions, few researchers have examined the social services' responsibility and measures for this group. Some studies have suggested that the social services for battered women had not improved. In the beginning of the 2000s, Elman (2001) published a follow-up study of her 1991 study (Elman & Eduards, 1991). According to Elman, social workers were still unwilling to acknowledge the criminal dimensions of abuse. One woman in the study stated that both the social workers and the police had ignored her and wanted to take the 'soft approach'. Another social worker had placed a woman in the same counselling room as her abuser. Elman found it disconcerting that the state had entrusted the social services with overseeing programs and policies to better meet the needs of abused women. According to Elman, women's shelters and even police and prosecutors might be better qualified to meet the challenge.

A few years later linguist scholar Tarja Joelsson (2005) published an article based on a review of two municipal programs that focused on men's violence against women. Joelsson argued that both programs were based on a 'holistic approach' to violence, meaning that the social services offered support to both the abused woman and the abusive man. Further, Joelsson argued that the social services had a 'gender neutral' and 'impartial' approach, rather than approaching abused women as 'crime victims'. According to Joelsson, this approach carried risks, such as concealing unequal power relations between men and women and marginalising the

needs of abused women and children. Joelsson concluded that the social services' work with men's violence against women should be modeled on a 'feminist approach', rooted in women's experiences of violence. It was also important, Joelsson (2005 p. 525) stated, that 'violence is named violence, perpetrators are named perpetrators, and crime victims are named crime victims'.

In a recent study based on interviews with 23 women hiding from men who had abused or threatened them, pedagogy scholar Weinehall and women's shelter worker Jonsson (2009) argued that there were shortcomings in the social services with regard to security. For example, the social services were blamed for leaking protected names and addresses. Weinehall and Jonsson stated that the social services were obliged¹² to support battered women for economic and security reasons. One of Weinehall and Jonsson's recommendations was the institution of personal protection officers at the social services; these would be specially trained caseworkers able to support the women once protection measures had been determined.

Some researchers have focussed on social services measures for specific groups of abused women, such as elderly women, pregnant women, victims of honour-related violence, and women in contact with the social services' family law department. Nursing scholar Saveman (1994, 1997, 1999) has published extensively on how the social services deal with elderly abuse. Saveman's (1994) dissertation was based on surveys and qualitative interviews with formal caregivers from the health services and the social services, such as district nurses and home service assistants. The study showed that abused elderly people were often very old women, and the perpetrators their close relatives. The abuse involved a combination of psychological, physical, and financial abuse and neglect. In the study, home service assistants described problems dealing with elder abuse; they often felt uncertainty in approaching the family, identifying the abuse, and intervening. The home service assistants categorised their interventions as: giving individual support, reporting to the police, helping the perpetrator, giving financial advice, and placing the abused person in a special home. According to the home service assistants, alcohol abuse, mental disturbance, and financial problems contributed to the abuse. They also stated that the abuse was related to family conflicts, lack of living space, and the perpetrator's exhaustion due to caregiving responsibilities. In a more recent study by Erlingsson, Carlson, Åstrom, and Saveman (2009), a family member who witnessed elder abuse involving her uncle and his disabled wife stated that there were no care personnel she could trust. According to the family member, home-help services were of low quality, provided by stressed and uneducated personnel. The family member longed for support

¹² Sociologist Peter (2005) interpreted the provisions in section 5:11 SoL as declaring that the municipalities *must* help domestic violence victims. This choice of language is interesting, according to Peter, because it reinforces the government's commitment to addressing this social problem.

from elderly care coordinators that could help her maintain her relationship with her family.

Eriksson's (2003) sociology dissertation examined how family law secretaries¹³ handled men's violence against women (see also Eriksson & Eriksson, 2002 and Eriksson, 2008). The study was based on official documents and qualitative interviews with 10 family law secretaries and 13 mothers who had been in contact with family law secretaries during or after a separation or divorce. Eriksson concluded that the family law secretaries' handling of fathers' violence against mothers was really a non-handling. Notions of shared parenthood seemed to overshadow fathers' violence and abuse of power. The family law secretaries stressed that they were 'impartial' and 'neutral' investigators, which could make it difficult for them to support abused women. According to the family law secretaries, a professional investigator took both parties' reality and understandings into account. Hence, to show empathy for the mother was the same as being 'unprofessional'. According to Eriksson, to remain 'impartial' by refusing to take a position on men's violence against women was hardly neutral, and it created the potential for a social work practice to enable future abuse. The battered mothers in Eriksson's study talked about criticism and questioning from social workers, lack of support, and even abuse from their ex-partners in the presence of the social workers. They also found it difficult to get their interpretation of reality affirmed by the social services, in particular their description of their ex-partner as a violent father.

Similar to Eriksson, Ekbrand (2006) sociology dissertation showed that battered and separated mothers had mainly negative experiences with the social services' family law department. Ekbrand's dissertation, based on a survey of 347 divorced or separated women, argued that the family law secretaries' procedures were unfair and allowed the father's violence to give him advantage over the mother. According to Ekbrand, this violence produced fear in the mothers, who then lowered their demands in child custody negotiations.

Midwife and scholar Edin's (2006) dissertation on intimate partner violence in the period of pregnancy briefly addressed social services. One of Edin's studies, based on qualitative interviews with five midwives, showed that social workers from the social services were the midwives' primary contact when dealing with domestic violence. The midwives especially requested that someone from the social services be attached to their clinic.

Social work scholars Schlytter and Linell (2009) have examined social services measures for victims of honour-related violence. The material for the study included 37 County Administrative Court cases in Stockholm County in 2006, concerning girls 13–21 years of age who were to be taken

¹³ In Sweden, if parents cannot come to an agreement about child custody and residence, they are expected to deal with problems through cooperation talks at the social services' family law department (Eriksson & Hester, 2001).

into state care because of deficiencies in their home environment. In 13 of the 37 cases, the girls' exposure to harm could be linked to the demands of the so-called honour culture. Schlytter and Linell argued that girls with honour-related problems might be in a weaker position in relation to caseworkers and legal representatives, compared with girls who did not have such problems. The social services had a long history of contact with families without honour-related problems. This was not the case with families with honour-related problems, and the handling of such cases was often an emergency call, involving inadequate information about the problem. This led to difficulties in professional assessments and a lack of cooperation from parents. In addition, since none of the girls with honour-related problems chose to face their parents in court, compared to half of the girls without such problems, the court could pay less attention to the girls' accounts. Schlytter and Linell concluded that the social services' lack of familiarity with the honour culture might result in these girls not having access to the same legal protection as other girls.

Children Who Witness Violence

The interest in children who have witnessed domestic violence has grown in parallel to the interest in women who have experienced violence. As early as 1990, Bergman and Brismar (1990 p. 32) stressed that 'children who witness intraparental violence are damaged psychologically even if they are not battered themselves'. In the end of the 1990s, Weinehall's (1997) pedagogy dissertation examined 15 teenagers' experiences with domestic violence. According to Weinehall, all teenagers had very negative attitudes towards authority figures with whom they had been in contact, such as social workers, school psychologists, and counsellors. The teenagers were most negative towards the social services, stating that social workers were unreliable, did not listen, and often broke confidentiality.

Överlien, PhD in child studies, and social work scholar Hydén (2007, 2009) examined children's experiences with domestic violence, using the term 'experienced violence' to stress the children's position as subjects and not as objects, as the term 'exposed to violence' may imply.¹⁴ Överlien and Hydén pointed out that children do not 'witness violence' in the sense of watching it passively from a distance. The empirical data for their study consisted of recorded group therapy sessions and individual interviews with children at a municipal centre for children who have experienced domestic

¹⁴ In 1992, Hydén (1992) presented the second highly disputed dissertation about violence against women in Sweden, 'Woman battering as marital act'. As with Bergman's (1988) dissertation, feminist scholar Lundgren was one of the main opponents of Hydén's work. Lundgren mainly criticised Hydén for giving men's narratives too much space in the dissertation (Lundgren & Mellberg, 1993).

violence. The centre was part of a voluntary outreach programme for abusive men and abused women and children. Specially trained social workers or psychologists ran the children's therapy group sessions. Groups of four to six children and two therapists met for 10 weekly sessions, each lasting 90 minutes. The main message the therapists tried to convey was that the children were not alone — that there were many children with similar stories and grown-ups who wanted to listen.

Sociologist Eriksson has published widely not only on abused women's contact with family law secretaries, but also on how children experience these encounters.¹⁵ The family law secretaries in Eriksson's (2003) dissertation did not connect violent fathers' behaviour towards mothers with their behaviour towards their children. Their assumption was that men who are violent towards women are not necessarily violent towards children. Eriksson and sociologist Hester (2001) argued that very little attention had been paid to the links between men's violence against women and harm to children. Violent men's actions were, according to Eriksson and Hester, viewed as separate from their actions as fathers. An abusive man who was separated or divorced could be considered a nonviolent, good-enough father who should have contact with, if not custody of, his child. Eriksson and Hester concluded that child contact arrangements might act in opposition to protective measures for the mother and undermine attempts to create safety for women and children.

More recently, Eriksson and sociologist Näsman (2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2009) have studied children's participation in family law proceedings. The data for the studies consisted of semi-structured individual interviews with 17 children. The result showed that children's experiences of violence were rarely a topic of conversation between the children and the family law secretaries. Eriksson and Näsman concluded that the most challenging task for family law secretaries was approaching the children as victims and actors — in other words, acknowledging children's vulnerable position while allowing them a high degree of participation. Eriksson (2009) pointed out that the family law secretaries assumed that children needed two parents in order to develop optimally. They believed that children's need for contact with the violent fathers superseded their need for protection and recovery.

Social work scholar Östberg (2010) presented a dissertation on the social worker's role in assessing and making decisions in child welfare cases. The dissertation was based on all reports and requests for support made for children in two municipalities in 2003, as well as interviews with social workers. The study showed that one fifth of the reports led to interventions;

¹⁵ In a recent study, Eriksson (2010) stressed that only the Social Services Act and the Criminal Injuries Act (SFS, 1978:413) (BrSkI) explicitly defined children exposed to violence as crime victims. Although the Criminal Injuries Act (SFS, 1978:413) (BrSkI) now grants children exposed to violence the right to crime victim compensation, no such offence has been included in the Criminal Code (SFS, 1962:700) (BrB).

cases concerning child abuse had the highest probability of being investigated, while cases involving family conflicts or domestic violence (where the children were not directly abused) and antisocial behaviour had the lowest probability of being investigated. A majority of the children came from poor families, mainly single mothers. In many families where domestic violence had occurred, the responsibility to protect the children was often placed on the mother. In one case in which the mother was raped and abused by her child's father, the social worker made the initial assessment that the mother had to move to a shelter. After two phone conversations with the mother, during which the social worker learned that the child's father had been taken into custody and the mother could stay with friends, the social worker deemed the mother capable of handling the situation herself and referred the mother to the family law department. The social worker did not meet the child, believing that he had slept through the abuse and was too young to be affected.

Summary

This research review has shown the lack of research regarding the social services' responsibility and measures for the target groups of section 5:11 SoL. The review found only a handful of studies published from the middle to the end of the 2000s that regarded 'crime victims' as a category (e.g., Hansen Löfstrand, 2009a, 2009b; Sonander, 2008; Svensson, 2007). Most research focused on social services measures for women and children who have been exposed to violence, but overall, there is a lack of research in this area, as well. Men were generally excluded as informants. The studies were conducted mainly in research disciplines such as law, sociology, and political science, rather than social work. Moreover, qualitative studies dominate the field. Many researchers criticise the social services for such transgressions as not acknowledging the criminal dimension of abuse, leaking protected names and addresses, and prioritising the children's need for contact with violent fathers over their need for protection and recovery. Few studies have questioned the role of legal provisions, such as those for crime victims in the Social Services Act (5:11 SoL).¹⁶ This dissertation seeks to fill this gap in the research by examining the legal framework of the social services' work with crime victims. As highlighted by Hollander and Alexius Borgström (2009), those in contact with the social services often depend on social workers to understand and carry out the provisions of the Social Services Act with knowledge and competence.

¹⁶ There is an overall lack of research on the relationship between social work law, policy, and practice (The Standing Committee on Social Affairs, 2009). In 2003, Dellgran and Höjer (2003) reviewed 269 publications in social work. Out of these, only seven were in the area of social welfare law.

Materials and Methods

This study is based on three peer-reviewed research articles and a chapter from an international anthology. Table 2 presents a short summary of the aims, methodology, and research material used in these four studies.

Table 2. Study design and methods.

	Study I	Study II	Study III	Study IV
Aim	To give an account of the legal history and content of the 2001 crime victim provisions	To analyse social workers' perceptions of their role in supporting crime victims	To trace the social and political context of the 2001 crime victim provisions	To examine the political motives behind the 2001 crime victim provisions
Method	Legal-dogmatic method	Focus group interviews	Literature review	Case study
Material	Four governmental bills	Three transcribed focus group sessions with social workers within the social services	Secondary sources, such as articles and books	Legislative documents, such as committee directives, referral body statements, and motions

I analysed the four studies in parallel between 2006 and 2010. Since Studies II, III, and IV in many respects built on the preliminary results of Study I, I have not listed the studies chronologically. The intervals between the submission and the publication of the studies also varied. I completed the introductory summary, which binds the articles together, between 2010 and 2011.

Methodological Considerations

The aims and methods of the four studies in this dissertation complemented each other. Study I gave an account of the legal content of the provisions for crime victims in the Social Services Act, and Studies II, III, and IV

examined the relationship between law and society, for instance, analysing where the provisions came from and how they have been implemented.

Study I used the legal-dogmatic method, which entailed an analysis of the different sources of law. In Sweden, the law itself, together with government bills, facilitates interpretation and application of the law. The fact that preparatory material, such as government bills, are available only in Swedish can arguably lead to certain problems, particularly in Study I and Study IV. For example, subtle differences may exist in the meaning of certain words when translated from Swedish to English. To deal with this methodological concern, a native English speaker or a bilingual translator has reviewed the translations in all four studies. I also examined some of the translations in collaboration with the translator to ensure that the meaning of the texts was understood. In Study I, a professional translator translated all direct quotes from the government bills from Swedish to English.

Study II analysed social workers' perceptions of their role in supporting crime victims. The study was based on three focus groups with social workers employed in the social services' Individual and Family Care in Stockholm County. In their work, the social workers dealt with a range of issues, such as child welfare, substance abuse, financial aid, and mediation. Each focus group consisted of three social workers and one moderator. The moderator had a prepared list of general themes (see Appendix 1), and the social workers were encouraged to talk and interact with each other while focusing on those themes. In the analysis, the quotes from the focus groups represented the group; and therefore, no comparisons were made between social workers. Comparisons between the focus groups were also irrelevant, as the three groups were seen as complements to each other.

The social workers' stories in Study II should not be generalised to a broader population of social workers within the social services. This qualitative study aimed not to produce data about how typical the social workers stories are but to shed light on a range of understandings of the social services' work with crime victims. One limitation of the study was that it examined only the perspective of the service providers, not the perspectives of those in whose name the 2001 provisions were enacted (cf. Elman & Eduards, 1991). The section 'Overview of the Research Field' in this dissertation does, however, give crime victims a voice, citing other studies that asked crime victims about social services measures (e.g., Elman & Eduards, 1991; Elman, 2001; Eriksson, 2003; Eriksson & Näsman, 2009; Weinehall, 1997; Weinehall & Jonsson, 2009). Note also that neither Study II nor this dissertation as a whole evaluated the social services' work with crime victims. This dissertation cannot answer questions about whether or not the social services live up to the intentions of the provisions in the Social Services Act. Furthermore, this dissertation does not provide knowledge about whether or not the social services' work with crime victims has improved since the 1980s.

Study III traced the social and political context of the 2001 crime victim provisions. The results were based on a review of the literature concerning recent developments in social policy and the Social Services Act. The analysis in this study, as well as in this dissertation as a whole, was exploratory, in that it regarded the provisions as components of social and political change. The explanations are not causal, however. The analysis examined developments underpinning the reform, rather than the cause of the reform. The presentation of contextual factors that may have laid the foundation for the provisions is also incomplete. Several social and political changes have drawn our attention to crime victims. As Best (1999) pointed out, we can never trace the entire social context of a reform; we can only identify some of the most important links. Note also that the intention of the analysis was not to take a stand on whether or not crime victim provisions should be included in the Social Services Act. Rather, the analysis sought to inspire a critical discussion of the act's origins.

Study IV examined the political motives behind the introduction of crime victim provisions into the Social Services Act. The findings derived from a case study of the preparatory material for the legal changes that were adopted in 2001, such as committee directives, governmental reports, referral body statements, motions, and parliamentary debate (see Appendix 2). With the exception of the referral body statements, all documents were available on the government and parliament's web pages. The referral body statements were ordered from the Ministry of Justice. One limitation of the study was that it relied only on official legislative documents. The analysis would have been deeper and richer if we could have accessed arguments in the form of e-mails, letters, and so forth (cf. Rock, 2004). The sample could also have been extended to include documents and statements from nonprofit organisations or the mass media, both of which might have influenced the lawmaking process. Demands must, however, ultimately be channelled through the lawmaking process if actors are to have any chance of changing the law (Tham, 2001). Also, the referral body statements gave various organisations a voice.

The analysis of Study IV, which used the data analysis software NVivo to organise and keep track of the preparatory documents, encountered some unexpected difficulties. The 66 referral body statements were not available digitally. They therefore had to be manually transcribed and imported into NVivo, delaying the coding process. The classification of each referral body was also time consuming, requiring examination of each organisation's website to gain knowledge about, for instance, organisation type, English name, and abbreviation.

Ethical Considerations

This study seeks to fulfil the requirements set out in the Swedish Research Council's (2002) statement of ethical principles in research. Nonetheless, some ethical issues arose. In Study II, we could not guarantee the social workers' anonymity or confidentiality, as other participants could disclose information that they received during the focus group sessions (Wibeck, 2000). Moreover, since we recruited the social workers through their directors, they may not have participated voluntarily. The focus group sessions also took place at the social workers' workplaces during work hours. To deal with these concerns, we sent a letter to each director and social worker, explaining the purpose and format of the study. In the letter, we underlined that participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw from the study at any time. We also emphasised the importance of confidentiality regarding the information they heard during the session.

The data for Studies I, III, and IV were mainly derived from literature and official documents, such as governmental bills, motions, and debate statements. Nevertheless, the nature of the studies made it difficult to fulfil some ethical principles. According to the 'principle of confidentiality', it should not be possible to identify individuals in a study. This principle especially concerns information that is ethically sensitive (The Swedish Research Council, 2002). To manage this, the dissertation does not include the names of individuals who have participated in lawmaking processes, such as committee or parliament members. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify particular persons from the original sources, such as committee reports and motions. Realising this, can official statements from politicians, referral bodies, and others be considered ethically sensitive? Is a politician not a public figure who has chosen to represent the public? Is the moulding of the law not something that everyone should be able to take part in? These questions aside, the legislative material might contain information that those involved would consider unpleasant. The people who participated in the lawmaking process likely did not expect their statements to be used the way they are in this dissertation. These concerns, however, are superseded by the 'research principle', which maintains that available knowledge should be developed and methods improved (The Swedish Research Council, 2002). In truth, it would be unethical not to conduct research about the history and origins of different legal provisions. After all, the Social Services Act laid out the general principles and guidelines for the social services' work with many vulnerable groups in society.

Research and Advocacy

To be transparent, I must mention that I was devoted to crime victim issues prior to my dissertation work. Before I started my Ph.D. program, I worked

for almost five years (2001-2005) as an operational manager, social worker, and victim advocate at a nongovernmental crime victim support centre (*Brottsofferjouren*). The organisation provides support to crime victims and aims to raise awareness about crime victims' needs. In addition, in 2003, I conducted one of the National Board of Health and Welfare's evaluations of the provisions in section 5:11 SoL, interviewing social welfare directors and social workers about their work with crime victims (The National Board of Health and Welfare, 2004a).

Researchers have stressed that victimology has become dominated by victim advocates seeking to promote policy reform (Cressey, 1992; Fattah, 1992; Fattah, 2000). According to Fattah (1992), this has opened the door for politics to dominate a field that previously tried hard to enhance our understanding of the dynamics of crime through objective and scientific inquiry. Concern about lost neutrality is not specific to the discipline of victimology. For example, gender research is often criticised for being too political, ideological, and unscientific. Today, most researchers would agree that research is inevitably tainted by personal and political sympathies (Becker 1967, 1998). According to Harding (2004), certain kinds of politics and social values can even stimulate and guide research and advance knowledge. Or, as Elias (1996) pointed out, if victimologists do not choose their politics, their politics will be chosen for them.

My knowledge in the field has been a valuable asset in my dissertation research. However, I have had to take care to keep my analysis from becoming too tainted with my own beliefs. To that end, throughout my doctoral studies, I have kept a reflective journal to document my experiences, ideas, and conclusions. The journal has been a useful tool in the analysis and interpretation of the results of each study, helping me to examine, clarify, and challenge my own thoughts. It also documented when and how I gained my ideas and insights and how they have progressed over the years. When I worked at the victim support centre, I advocated for crime victims' right to assistance from the social services; I assumed section 5:11 SoL guaranteed this right. However, every time I referred a crime victim to the social services in our municipality, the social workers claimed that only those who could not satisfy their needs on their own or through other means had a right to assistance. Similar to many other practitioners and scholars, I concluded that the social services was not able to live up to the requirements of the law. When I began the follow-up study for the National Board of Health and Welfare in 2003, I did not realise that the incorporation of the crime victim provisions, as described in section 5:11 SoL, represented an ideological perspective. I saw the provisions as objective prescriptions for the social services. My task was to evaluate whether the social services did what they were supposed to do according to the law.

To keep my preconceptions from impacting my research, for the research methodology in Study II, I selected focus groups, which are more open-ended and less directed than individual interviews (Wibeck, 2000). For the

same reason, I left the focus group sessions unstructured. During the sessions, I tried to limit my influence on the discussion by encouraging the participants to talk to one another rather than to me. This dissertation also includes many quotes from the preparatory material and the focus groups so that readers can form their own impression of the texts.

Study Results

This section summarises the aims, methods, and results of the four studies that form the foundation of the dissertation.

Study I: Crime Victims in the Swedish Social Services Act

Ljungwald, C., & Hollander, A. (2009). Crime victims in the Swedish Social Services Act. *The International Review of Victimology*, 15(3), 299–326.

Study Aims

This article aimed to give a detailed account of the legal history of section 5:11 of the Social Services Act. It also examined the legal content of the provisions, for instance, what should be done on the behalf of crime victims. The results were based on an analysis of the four government bills that set out the provisions in section 5:11 SoL.

Conclusions

When section 5:11 was introduced into the Social Services Act in 1998, it addressed only women who have been subjected to violence. The general provisions for crime victims were introduced in 2001, and the provisions for children who have witnessed violence or other abuse were introduced in 2006. The most recent amendment was made in July 2007, when the wording was sharpened to replace ‘should’ with the more obligatory ‘shall’ in the second and third paragraphs.

The main objective of the provisions was to clarify the social services’ responsibility to crime victims, primarily women and children. According to section 5:11 SoL, the social services should actively work to support and help those who have been subjected to crime and those close to them. The bill did not mention specific measures for crime victims and their next of kin, but instead stipulated general rules concerning collaboration between the social services and local and nongovernmental organisations (Government Bill, 2000/01:79). Regarding women subjected to violence, the bills provided a more detailed description of measures that should be

undertaken by the social services, such as help with practical matters and safe housing, financial support, counselling and supportive conversations, information, a contact person, and help making contacts within the criminal justice system (Government Bill, 1997/98:55, 2006/07:38). As for children who have witnessed violence, the bill stated that the needs of these children may vary; they may need protection against a family member who has been violent, or they may need to share their experiences of violence (Government Bill, 2005/06:166).

The provisions did not, however, change the social services' legal responsibility to crime victims, nor did they strengthen the social rights of this group. The social services already assumed responsibility for crime victims under other provisions in the Social Services Act. The bills clearly indicated that the provisions did not involve any legal change. Rather, they constituted a strong recommendation to the social services to take steps to ensure support for crime victims.

Nonetheless, a person subjected to crime still has the right to apply to the social services for assistance under section 4:1 SoL, just as they did before the introduction of section 5:11. Under these provisions, an individual need not be defined as a crime victim. The right to assistance is not tied to a specific situation, cause, or group affiliation, nor is it unlimited. An individual's inability to provide for his or her needs must be corroborated by an individual means test. Individuals must use all means at their disposal to provide for their needs, for example, seeking employment or help from relatives or friends. If social services are denied, 4:1 SoL allows parties to appeal to the County Administrative Court, which will examine both the legality and the reasonability of the social services' decision (16:3 SoL). If the court interprets the individual's needs differently, it may annul the social services' decision in favour of a new decision, which must be implemented. This procedure aims to control the exercise of public authority and the rule of law.

Study II: Crime Victims and the Social Services — Social Workers' Viewpoint

Ljungwald, C., and Svensson, K. (2007). Crime victims and the social services — Social workers' viewpoint. *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, 8(2), 138–156.

Study Aims

This study aimed to analyse how social workers in the social services describe crime victims, as well as their own role in helping and supporting

these victims. The study was based on three focus groups with social workers employed in the social services.

Conclusions

The study showed discrepancies between the social workers' categorical definition of crime victims and their assessments of individuals in need. The categorical definition was connected to weakness and innocence, and the discussions focused on women and children. According to the social workers, a crime victim is 'someone that is not responsible' or 'without any participation or blame and has been exposed to crime'. However, when the social workers moved beyond this definition and described real persons they had met in their work, they revealed a more complex picture of crime and victimisation. According to the social workers, it was often difficult to make the distinction between offenders and victims, where one is guilty and one is innocent. They also said that they almost never came in contact with 'ordinary' crime victims or people who had 'only' been exposed to crime. At the same time, it was clear that they regularly met people who had been exposed to crime. They explained that abuse and violence were very common among substance abusers and social welfare recipients. The social workers did not categorise these persons as crime victims. In this way, the social workers' definition of 'crime victims' excluded people they met in their work. In general, the social workers acknowledged that they were unfamiliar with the concept of the 'crime victim' and did not normally use that 'label' for their clients.

Overall, the social workers positioned themselves as non-experts in regard to supporting crime victims. They considered themselves able to connect individuals in need with resources, but they did not regard themselves as those resources. The social workers defined their role as that of a coordinator or 'a spider in the web'. The social workers identified who should receive assistance and support from the social services according to two criteria: the individual's needs and resources and whether the individual could be categorised as a child, adolescent, family, or substance abuser — but *not* a crime victim. According to the social workers, the definition of a crime victim did not delimit who was entitled to assistance from the social services. The study concluded that the 'crime victim' category had not gained acceptance among the social workers participating in the study.

Study III: The Idea of the Crime Victim as Trojan Horse in the Social Services Act

Ljungwald, C. (2010). The idea of the crime victim as a Trojan horse in the Swedish Social Services Act. In S.G. Shoham, P. Knepper, & M. Kett (Eds.), *International handbook of victimology* (669–692). Boca Raton: CRC Press.

Study Aims

This study aimed to explore the social and political context of the 2001 reform, when crime victims were introduced as a target group in the Social Services Act. The results were based on a review of the literature concerning recent developments in social policy and the Social Services Act. The study also gave a brief overview of crime victim legislation in Sweden.

Conclusions

The study suggested that the crime victim provisions in the Social Services Act were strongly linked to efforts to confront men's violence against women, as are many other reforms involving crime victims. It is, however, also important to investigate whether the provisions were part of a trend in the Social Services Act in which ideals of solidarity and equality are replaced by ideals of individual responsibility. Research in other countries has shown that crime victim reform has been a way of blocking solidarity and justifying penal repression (Elias, 1993; Garland, 2001). Characterising the provisions for crime victims in the Social Services Act as the result of such a trend would, however, be an oversimplification. Values such as solidarity and universalism have remained strong in many areas, such as Swedish health care (Bergmark, 2008). However, change can be limited to some areas. The provisions for crime victims in the Social Services Act might signify *one* sign of a trend emphasising individual responsibility in the area of Swedish social policy. Public support has been strong for welfare programs such as health care, education, and parental leave, whereas means-tested programs, such as social assistance from the social services, have been less popular (Bergmark, 2000; Rothstein & Lindbom, 2004).

Study IV: The Emergence of Crime Victims as a Target Group in the Social Services Act

Ljungwald, C., & Elias, R. (2010). The emergence of crime victims as a target group in the Swedish Social Services Act. *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, 11(2), 170–188.

Study Aims

This study aimed to examine the political motives behind the introduction of the crime victim provisions in the Swedish Social Services Act. The findings derived from a case study of the preparatory material for the legal changes adopted in 2001, such as committee directives, governmental reports, referral body statements, motions, and parliamentary debate.

Conclusions

The explicit purpose of the crime victim provisions in the Social Services Act was to improve support for those who have been exposed to crime. The main strategies for addressing crime victims' needs involved service, support, information, attitude changes, education, and cooperation. Punitive reactions to offenders could only be found in referral body statements, motions, and debate statements from the centre-right opposition, principally the Moderate Party.

The motives for introducing the provisions were unclear. If the purpose of the provisions was to 'improve the support to crime victims', why did the social democratic government enact a policy that explicitly ruled out any legal changes? The government did not provide the municipal social services with any resources to aid in their work with crime victims, a concern pointed out by referral bodies in motions and reservations. In addition, why was the basic data behind the decision to introduce the provisions so poor? Most studies in this area focused on the social services' work with women subjected to violence, who were already a target group in the Social Services Act. Several key referral bodies which presumably had knowledge about social services and the Social Services Act, also rejected the provisions.

To some degree, the decision to incorporate provisions for crime victims into the Social Services Act was symbolic. In fact, most actors involved in enacting the law made clear that their motives were communicative and symbolic. Support to crime victims was a complicated issue for the social democratic government. By the end of the 1990s, the need to address the interests of crime victims had become a 'political necessity' (Demker & Duus-Otterström p. 6). Adopting effective policy measures for this group was, however, difficult. The economic crisis of the early 1990s ruled out reforms that might bring increased costs. Yet expanding crime victims' rights at the expense of the offender (e.g., toughening penal law and promoting victim impact statements) was not in line with social democratic ideology. By introducing the provisions for crime victims into the Social Services Act, the government sent a signal that it cared about crime victims. At the same time, the reform did not strengthen crime victims' rights or involve any increased costs. In this way, the provisions for crime victims in the Social Services Act solved a political dilemma for the social democratic government.

Concluding Discussion

This dissertation aims to explain how crime victims emerged as a target group for the social services in the Social Services Act in 2001. This final section discusses the key findings of the four studies. First, the section examines the legal content of the 2001 provision. Second, it analyses the social and political context in which the provisions were enacted and how they have been implemented. In summary, this dissertation will argue that the inclusion of crime victim support provisions in the Social Services Act reflected the state's increasing concern with violence against women and individual responsibility

The Legal Content of the Law

This study showed that the 2001 provisions for crime victims both duplicated and contradicted pre-existing provisions in the Social Services Act. The explicit purpose of the 2001 reform was to consider measures to 'improve the support to those who have been exposed to crime' (Government Bill, 2000/01:79 p. 1). According to the provision in the Social Services Act, the social services should actively work to support and help those who have been subjected to crime and those close to them. The bill did not mention specific measures for crime victims and their next of kin, but rather stipulated general rules for collaboration between the social services and local and nongovernmental organisations (Government Bill, 2000/01:79). The social services can, for instance, open special care or counselling units for crime victims, such as support centres for young crime victims, which are often seen as more accessible than child protection and other forms of assessment units (cf. Bergmark & Lundström, 2007). The social services can also finance the activities of non-governmental organisations, such as local women's shelters and victim support centres.

Nonetheless, the 2001 reform neither changed the social services' legal responsibility for crime victims, nor strengthened the social rights of this group. The provisions did not specify demands that the individual is entitled to make of the social services. The preparatory material clearly indicated that the social services already assumed responsibility for crime victims under other provisions of the Social Services Act (without naming them). The 2001 provisions *clarified* the social services' responsibilities for crime victims,

and strongly recommended that the social services take steps to ensure support for this group. Though, persons subjected to crime still have the right to apply for assistance pursuant to the provisions in section 4:1 SoL, just as they did before the introduction of section 5:11 SoL. Under section 4:1, the individual need not be defined as a crime victim. The right to assistance is not tied to any specific situation, cause, or group affiliation, nor is it unlimited. To understand the social services' legal responsibility for crime victims, it is thus not enough to analyse the provisions in section 5:11 SoL; we must analyse the Social Services Act as a whole.

Conflicting imperatives are often placed side by side in welfare legislation (Braye & Preston-Shoot, 2006). Arguably, the provisions of the Social Services Act contradict each other (cf. Åström, 1988). On one hand, the target groups named in section 5:11 should have particular consideration; on the other hand, under the provisions of section 4:1, these groups should not be taken into account. Expressed differently, the Social Services Act was not designed to be target group oriented; yet it is becoming a collection of target group-oriented provisions. The complexity of the Social Services Act can make it difficult for social workers to interpret and apply. It can also make it challenging for people to understand their rights. Section 5:11 SoL can easily be misinterpreted to mean that *all* crime victims have a right to unlimited assistance from the social services. Since this is not the case for other persons in need, the conditions for crime victims seem to conflict with other citizens' rights to social services. This could explain the excessive expectations and consequent disappointments in regard to the social services' work with crime victims.

The Social and Political Context of the Law

This study illustrated that the crime victim provisions were partially a case of symbolic law and politics. The provisions suggested that a reform had occurred and that crime victims' needs would be met, although no significant change had actually taken place (cf. Aubert, 1980). Most actors involved in enacting the law made clear that their motives were symbolic. Incorporating the 2001 crime victim provisions into the Social Services Act may seem to have been a modest reform. Symbolic politics are not empty, however; they can have important social functions, such as reconciling conflicting interests and creating an image of order and predictability (Aubert, 1972). It is difficult to find policies that are completely free of symbolism, and even the symbolic elements of a policy can have concrete effects, as they shape moral values and attitudes (Santesson-Wilson, 2003). Every symbol stands for something else by evoking attitudes, feelings, and beliefs (Edelman, 1985; Gusfield, 1986).

To understand what the 2001 crime victim provisions may symbolise, they must be understood in relation to shifts in wider social and political

conditions. Moreover, we must take into account both the basis for the provisions and how they have been implemented. The significance of law and politics derive from not only their intrinsic properties but also what they come to imply for actors, such as professional social workers or local government officials (Gusfield, 1986).

Violence Against Women

Recognising of the influence of the women's movement is essential to understanding the emergence of the 2001 crime victim provisions in the Social Services Act. The female domestic violence victim has been the archetype in many of the laws passed to protect crime victims' interests in Sweden (Sahlin, 2004; Åkerström & Sahlin, 2001). This sharply contrasts with policy circles centred on crime victims in some European countries, such as the United Kingdom, where woman's organisations were largely absent (Rock, 2004).

Men's violence against women was a long-standing blind spot in the Swedish welfare state. Historically, as Pringle (2010) pointed out, labour and poverty have been the hallmark targets of the Swedish welfare system; issues such as gender, violence, and sexuality were brought to light only when they intersected with poverty or labour issues.¹⁷ Welfare and oppression were also mainly analysed in terms of class (Elman & Eduards, 1991). According to Elman (2001), Swedes attributed the lack of assistance for abused women to low demand; if services did not exist in the generous social democratic Swedish welfare state, there must not be a need or constituency for them.

Violence against women was established as a policy problem in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Wendt Höjer, 2002). According to Elman (2001), many women came forward and claimed that the compassion of the social democratic welfare state was an illusion in that it failed to acknowledge violence against women. As Elman pointed out, the emphasis on poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, and alienation of migrant populations concealed the gender specificity of male violence against women. Some feminist scholars argued that violence occurred regardless of class, ethnicity, occupation or level of education (e.g., Lundgren, Heimer, Westerstrand, & Kalliokoski, 2001).¹⁸ Poverty and social exclusion were not the causes of men's violence against women; they were the result (Elman 2001). Peter

¹⁷ Feminist scholars have criticized Esping-Andersen's (1990) well-known typology of welfare regimes for neglecting gender issues. In more recent work, Esping-Andersen, Gallie and Hemerijk (2002) have provided more gendered typologies, but they have not profoundly changed the patterns he initially suggested (Hearn & Pringle, 2006).

¹⁸ On the basis of these studies, as Estrada and Nilsson (2004), pointed out, the Council of Europe has declared it proved that the incidence of domestic violence increases with income and level of education. According to Estrada and Nilsson, this conclusion is somewhat remarkable, given that so many other research studies and victim surveys show evidence to the contrary; that weaker socio-economic groups present the highest levels of victimization.

(2005) argued that men's violence against women became subject to political reform after it was something that affected us 'all' rather than merely 'others'.

The Basis for the Provisions

During the 1990s, public support for efforts to confront men's violence against women grew rapidly. In 1993, the government appointed the Commission on Violence Against Women (Committee Directives, 1993:88), which was chaired by a Member of Parliament (the Liberal Party), who later became the general director of the Swedish Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority. One of the commission's proposals was that women victimised by violence should be introduced as a target group in the Social Services Act (SOU, 1995:60). In 1998, the Women's Peace bill passed and the provisions became law (Government Bill, 1997/98:55).

Concurrently, support to crime victims was increasingly framed as an important political issue. In 1988, the Swedish Association for Victim Support, an advocacy organisation for crime victims, was formed and called for reform to meet crime victims' needs. A few years later, the Ministry of Justice initiated an inquiry into the measures taken to help crime victims in the previous decade (Committee Directives, 1995:94). In 1998, the Crime Victim Commission proposed provisions for the Social Services Act 'affirming the responsibility' of the social services for victims of crime (SOU, 1998:40 p. 31). In 2001, the provisions became law (Government Bill, 2000/01:79).

The Crime Victim Commission and the Commission on Violence Against Women had close ties.¹⁹ The Crime Victim Committee also derived their proposal from the 1998 provisions in the Social Services Act, by recommending that the provision be revised to include women as well as men (SOU, 1998:40). Also, the government justified the 1998 provisions by citing the shortcomings of the social services in their work with violence against women (Government Bill 1997/98:55). When preparing the 2001 bill, the government applied this reasoning to provisions for the social services' responsibility to 'everyone who has been exposed by crime' (Government Bill, 2000/01:79). However, neither the government, nor any other actor, showed that the social services' work with crime victims, other than women and children subjected to violence or sexual abuse, had been insufficient. The research review in this dissertation also found no studies indicating shortcomings in the social services' work with 'crime victims' as a category before the 2001 reform. It is even difficult to understand how claims of shortcomings of the social services' work with violence against

¹⁹ For instance, two expert panellists in the Crime Victim Commission also participated as members of the Commission on Violence Against Women. Another expert panellist in the Crime Victim Commission directed the National Centre for Battered and Raped Women (*Rikskvinnocentrum*). The centre was established in 1994 in a response to the proposal of the Commission on Violence Against Women (SOU 1994:56).

women were substantiated. When the provisions were proposed in 1995 (SOU, 1995:60), only a few studies had been conducted in this area (e.g. Bergman & Brismar, 1990; Elman & Eduards. 1991).²⁰

Through the 2001 provisions' connection to the 1998 Women's Peace bill support to all crime victims was accorded the same value as support to women exposed to domestic violence. The categorisation expanded the scope of the Women's Peace bill to include all crime victims. At the same time, it blurred essential distinctions; taking a position in support of crime victims was interpreted as taking a position in support of abused women. This type of 'cross-fertilisation', by which statements about a specific group of victims are modified to represent a broad range of victims, is not unique to the 2001 reform (Best, 1999). Best (1999) pointed out that advocates for different victim groups often borrow language, explanations, and solutions from each other.

The government, however, differentiated between women subjected to violence and other crime victims in terms of the social services' responsibility. For women subjected to violence, the government provided a detailed description of measures that should be undertaken by social services. For other crime victims, the government merely stressed the importance of collaboration between the social services and other local and nongovernmental organisations.

Implementation of the Provisions

There are indications that women who have been exposed to domestic violence have a unique position beyond the preparatory material for section 5:11 SoL. Until 2011, the government's commissions to the National Board of Health and Welfare regarding the implementation of section 5:11 SoL, exclusively concerned women and children (Government Communication, 2007/08:39). The same applies to the board's guidance to the social services in the form of general guidelines (SOSFS, 2009:22),²¹ handbooks and web portals (The National Board of Health and Welfare, 2009a, 2009c). Moreover, the board's (e.g., 2004a, 2005d) evaluations of section 5:11 SoL showed that changes implemented in the social services, such as joint action groups and action plans, have almost exclusively concerned violence against women. Recent studies have also found that the social services' victim

²⁰ This is also evident in more recent studies. Ekbrand's (2006 p. 63) dissertation established that 'It is well supported that there are serious deficiencies in the social services work with abused women.' However, apart from Elman and Eduards' (1991) article, Ekbrand cited only government inquiries, books, and articles in women's shelter magazines.

²¹ Already in 1998, the government commissioned the National Board of Health and Welfare to develop general guidelines for the implementation of the provisions for violence against women in the Social Services Act. At that the board argued that the provisions were too vague. The board did not present general guidelines for the social services' work with violence against women until 2009 (SOSFS, 2009:22), at which time the verb 'should' had been replaced by the more obligatory 'shall' in section 5:11 SoL.

assistance focuses mainly on women, children, youths, and sexual violence (Carlsson, Wennerström, Borelius, Grundvall, & Sahlin, 2010).

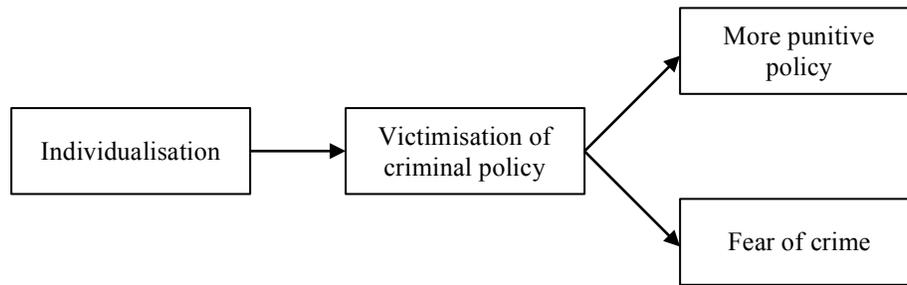
The social worker's stories in Study II focused mainly on women and children. 'Woman' was the word most frequently used after the term 'crime victim'. The social workers' discussions about the needs of or possible interventions for 'crime victims' were vague and loaded with obvious statements. They expressed the need to 'find strategies' and said that 'the question of crime victims has to be lifted to a higher level' and 'the question is very important'. They got more specific only when talking about abused women and domestic violence. The social workers mentioned that the women mostly asked for concrete help, such as a place to live or financial assistance. They rarely turned to the social services merely for support or counselling.

The Return of Individual Responsibility and Control

The introduction of the 2001 crime victim provisions in the Social Services Act in 2001 cannot be solely explained by an increased focus on violence against women. Recall that women subjected to domestic violence have been a target group for the social services since 1998. By the end of the 1980s, the interest in violence against women had grown stronger in conjunction with a more individualist conception of society and an expansion of penal legislation. The economic crisis in the beginning of the 1990s also severely tested the rationale of the Swedish welfare state. The political rhetoric, even under social democratic government, shifted away from 'solidarity and equality' and towards 'individual responsibility', 'privatisation', and 'efficiency'. In addition, increasing calls for an evidence-based practice, which requires precise knowledge of a limited number of methods and target groups, have counteracted holistic approaches to social problems (Bergmark & Lundström, 2007).

A recent study (Demker and Duus-Otterström, 2009) suggested that the loss of a collectivist conception of society fed into a situation in which addressing crime became a question of safeguarding the rights and interests of individual victims. Moreover, the study argued that the conservative Moderate Party led the transformation to a more victim-centred criminal policy. Taken together, according to Demker and Duus-Otterström, the focus on crime victims and individual responsibility resulted in a more punitive approach to Swedish criminal policy.

Figure 1. The Rise of a Victim-Centred Criminal Policy (Demker's & Duus-Otterström 2009 p. 290).



The meaning of ‘individualisation’ keeps shifting, but it is often referred to as the disintegration of social forms, such as class (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Hence, one consequence of individualisation, according to Demker and Duus-Otterström, is that crime is no longer seen as an offence against society, but rather as an aggression of one individual against another. Given this perspective, as Demker and Duus-Otterström pointed out, policies become more focused on ‘the crime victim’ as an individual, to whom the state should offer sympathy and support.

This study found that the 2001 reform was weakly punitive. Calls for punitive reactions to offenders could only be found in referral body statements, motions, and debate statements from the centre-right opposition, principally the Moderate Party. As in other European countries (cf. Rock, 2004), the main strategies for addressing crime victims’ needs involved service, support, information, attitude changes, education, and cooperation. Nonetheless, there are indications that the 2001 crime victim provisions resulted from increasing calls for individual responsibility.

The Basis for the Provisions

In the 1990s, domestic violence increasingly became framed as a ‘crime’ within the context of criminal law, rather than as a ‘social problem’ within the context of the welfare system (Eriksson, 2010; Wendt Höjer, 2002). Efforts to look beyond poverty and unemployment as the key causes of domestic violence allied some feminists with right-wing forces. Voices were now raised against the social services for failing to acknowledge the criminal dimension of domestic violence (e.g. Elman and Eduards, 1991). The Commission on Violence Against Women (SOU, 1995:60) also objected to the social services’ perception of violence as an aspect of other issues, such as substance abuse and relationship problems. The social services needed, as Joelsson (2005) underlined a few years later, to recognise ‘violence as violence’, ‘perpetrators as perpetrators’, and ‘crime victims as crime victims’. In other words, the critics did not argue that the social services

rarely encountered or supported abused women. Rather, they disapproved of the social services' 'gender-neutral' and 'non-blaming' holistic approach, through which the women's sufferings were not seen as a result of 'crime'.²²

Based on this development, it was not enough for the government to specify abused women as a group in need of support, as in the 1998 provisions to the Social Services Act. It was also vital for the government to define these women as victims of 'crime'. Some actors involved in the 2001 reform clearly stated that they did not see the provisions as an extension of the social services' responsibility to all crime victims, but as a way to emphasise that abused women's status as 'crime victims'. One motion from members of the Green Party lauded the inclusion of the 1998 provisions under the heading 'Crime Victims', pointing out that this heading stressed 'that women who have been exposed to violence are crime victims' (Motion So53). The Crime Victim Commission also noted that the proposed crime victim provisions would push the social services to pay attention to people 'who are in need of help and support', specifically 'because they have been exposed to crime' (SOU, 1998:40 p. 353). In 2006, the government broadened the crime victim category by adding provisions for children who have witnessed domestic violence or other abuse to section 5:11 SoL. The government explicitly justified the provision with the statement that it would be 'positive if it became natural to consider children who have witnessed violence as victims of crime' (Government Bill, 2005/06:166 p. 18). As Eriksson (2010) pointed out, it is only the Social Services Act and the Criminal Injuries Act (SFS, 1978:413) (BrSkI) that explicitly define children exposed to violence as crime victims. No such offence has been included in the Criminal Code (SFS, 1962:700) (BrB).

It was also the Ministry of Justice that raised, elaborated on, and proposed the idea of introducing crime victims as a target group for the social services. Data for the reform was poor, founded on references to other legal reforms and political documents rather than research.²³ Most studies that were cited focused on the social services' work with women who have been subjected to violence, which had been a target group in the Social Services Act since 1998. The Crime Victim Commission based their report (SOU, 1998:40) on surveys of police, lawyers, district courts, public prosecutors, local crime, women's shelters and victim support centres. Although the 2001 amendment to the Social Services Act was one of their main legislative proposals, the

²² Murray (2006) highlighted that although the so-called family system-focussed approach to treating family violence, which examines the role a behaviour plays in a system rather than labelling it good or bad, can be effective, it has been banned by several laws that regulate abuser treatment programs in the United States.

²³ The Department of Criminology at Stockholm University (1998) pointed out that the Crime Victim Commission (SOU, 1998:40) referred to only a small fraction of victimological research, despite the fact that the Commission had asked for and received such information from the Department of Criminology and others.

Crime Victim Commission did not conduct any surveys of social services representatives.²⁴

The 2001 reform was also not driven by social work research, nor was it a result from pressure from professional social workers. On the contrary, several key referral bodies, which presumably had the most knowledge about the social services and the Social Services Act, rejected the 2001 provisions in the Social Services Act (e.g. the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities). Most arguments against the provisions pointed out that the social services' responsibility *already* embraced crime victims. But, opponents did not reject the provisions solely because they were unnecessary or redundant. The referral bodies also warned that detailed target group provisions could affect the design and fundamental values of the Social Services Act, such as equality and the right to assistance according to need. They also stressed that if the Social Services Act kept changing to highlight the special needs of different groups, it would risk returning to the detailed legislation that preceded social services reform in the early 1980s. The National Board of Health and Welfare also rejected the 1998 provisions for women victimised by violence. Intensified state supervision regarding demands for quality and competence in the social services was, according to the board, preferable to detailed regulations in the law (Government Bill, 1997/98:55).

The argument that special provisions for different groups threaten the fundamental values of the Social Services Act goes beyond the referral bodies' arguments in this study. For instance, the referral bodies' arguments are almost identical to the Social Services Committee's critical remarks about target group provisions in the beginning of the 1990s (SOU, 1994:139). In the Parliamentary Committee on Social Affairs' (2009) recent analysis of Swedish social services legislation, several social work scholars levelled criticism at the Social Services Act's target group provisions. According to the scholars, detailed legislation would be difficult to put in practice, and since the Act's original design gave all citizens the right to apply for assistance, there was no need prioritise special groups in the law. The scholars also pointed out that the special provisions jeopardised the holistic approach to social problems. One of the main conclusions in the report was that the Social Services Act should *not* prioritise certain groups. Similar to the National Board of Health and Welfare (2000, 2004a, 2005d, 2009b), the scholars argued that sufficient resources, rather than detailed provisions in the law, are the key to preventing the social services from neglecting any one group. This would also give social workers more opportunities to apply their expertise.

²⁴ It is also striking that so few actors in the lawmaking process discussed the provisions in the Social Services Act: 15 out of 67 referral bodies, 5 out of 31 motions, and 4 out of 34 debate statements.

The preparatory material for the 2001 reform, however, did not address structural obstacles in the social services' work with crime victims, such as a lack of affordable housing, staff, and time. In fact, the government did not provide the social services with any resources for their work with crime victims, a concern raised by referral bodies and in motions and reservations. The 2001 reform thus offered little in terms of social provisions, and crime victims were expected to compete with other citizens for the municipalities' limited resources.

Moreover, the measures and services proposed in the 2001 reform were reactive rather than proactive in terms of responding to crime victims' needs. Although the 1995 committee directives (1995:94) stated that exploring the use of preventive measures was a top priority, the preparatory material did not identify crime prevention as crucial to crime victims' situation. The Crime Victim Commission (SOU, 1998:40) clearly de-emphasised the use of preventive measures. The commission also excluded actions aimed at the structural causes of victimisation, such as social inequality, poverty, and unemployment. According to the commission, crime prevention included physical protection, visitation restrictions, increased punishment for interference in a judicial matter, and an obligation for prisons and institutions to provide information to victims when inmates are away from the units.

The Implementation of the Provisions

In the mid-2000s, a few studies suggested that the social services had not yet completely accepted the idea of the 'crime victim'. According to Joelsson (2005), practically all social services programs working with men's violence against women were based on a 'holistic approach', whereby abused women were not seen as 'crime victims'. The National Board of Health (2004a p.16) showed that the 2001 crime victim provisions had not led to any major changes in the social services' activities. As one social worker said, '/.../ we have considered the need of the individual both before and after the amendment'. In Svensson's (2006) study, a social worker argued that the crime victim support provisions had not had any significance. According to the social worker, the social services support anyone in need, regardless of whether the problem is sexual abuse, substance abuse, or a crisis after a death. The social workers in Study II also acknowledged that they normally not use the label 'crime victims' for their clients. The social workers claimed that an individual should not receive support from the social services solely because he or she falls into the category of crime victim. The social workers stressed that the social services should focus on individual needs, rather than on fixed categories.

The social workers resistance to acknowledging crime victims could be interpreted as a commitment to a holistic approach to social problems, which was and remain the imperative of the Social Services Act. However, as Bergmark and Lundström (2007) pointed out, efforts to implement the

holistic view in the form of integrated social services units (dealing with a variety of social problems) can be regarded as a short-lived parenthesis in Swedish social work. According to Bergmark and Lundström, almost all clients come in contact with units highly specialised in, for instance, social assistance, child welfare or substance abuse units.

Rather, as suggested in Study II, the social workers were not trying to assess individual needs, but to define crime victims in relation to the social services' traditional categories (cf. Bernler & Johnsson, 1993). The social services have long focused on child and family issues and on women as mothers, which may partially explain the focus on abused women and children. In one of the National Board of Health and Welfare's evaluations, a social services director called the work with abused women and children as one of the social services' 'traditional tasks' (The National Board of Health and Welfare, 2004a). Moreover, the social services have mainly used specialisation to respond to crime victims' needs. As a matter of fact, the National Board of Health and Welfare (2007a) pointed to measures for crime victims as one of the areas that most clearly illuminated the trend towards increased specialisation.

Since the mid 2000s the social services' specialised units for 'crime victims' have increased dramatically in number, in conjunction with a more punitive and controlling approach to, for instance, young offenders (cf. Tärnfalk, 2007). For example, between 2004 and 2011, the number of support centres for young crime victims nearly tripled from 11 to 30 and between 2006 and 2010, no fewer than 20 Children's Houses opened. Bergmark and Lundström (2007) proposed that increased specialisation might be a response to demands from outside actors, such as the media and the criminal justice system. A high inflow of reports and referrals from the police, as Bergmark and Lundström pointed out, could require the social services to demonstrate efficiency by creating special units for assessment and investigations.

Many of the social services' newly adopted victim-centred units clearly function as an extension of the criminal justice system. Some social services measures for crime victims explicitly aim to create subjects that can report crime, improve the quality of police investigations, and bring more perpetrators to court (cf. Rock 2004). Research has shown that support workers at the support centres for young crime victims saw themselves as intermediaries between the police and young crime victims (Burcar, 2005; Hansen Ljöfstrand's 2009a, 2009b). The National Board of Health and Welfare (2005b) stated that because young crime victims and witnesses were more inclined to stand by their statements while receiving support, victim support often resulted in better police investigations and made it easier to bring cases to court. Furthermore, support workers argued that young crime victims should be given priority for limited resources such as children's psychiatrists, doctors and lawyers. Due to budget cuts and conflicting ideas about who should receive support services, the cooperation between some

support centres and other social services departments had been strained. Some social workers within other departments of the social services described the centres for young crime victims as a 'luxury activity' (The National Board of Health and Welfare, 2005b).

Concerning Children's Houses, the National Board of Health and Welfare (2006b) stressed that the social services should assess the child's need for support and protection independent of the police and prosecutor's judgements. The social services should not focus on the crime but on the best interests of the child. Despite this mandate, the board (2008c) concluded that the criminal law perspective dominated in the Children's Houses.

The Crime Victim as Vehicle for New Ideology

This study has argued that the state's increased focus on violence against women and individual responsibility laid the foundation for the 2001 crime victim provisions in the Social Services Act. Growing demands for individual responsibility principally left their mark in the 2001 provisions by dividing the social services' clients into 'victims' and 'offenders', who are held responsible from a criminal law perspective. This reinforced the traditional boundary between the deserving and the undeserving, which the Social Services Act was meant to eliminate.²⁵

The 2001 provisions for crime victims may be not only a symbol but also a crucial driver of this development. Law and language shape our view of the world and can persuade people to act a certain way. In other words, although the new provisions did not involve any legal changes or create new rights for crime victims, they may yet encourage the adoption of a new identity and inspire legal reforms. International research has shown that crime victim reforms have served as way of justifying measures of penal repression and social control (Garland, 2001). Simon (2007) argued that turning the public's focus to crime enabled political leaders in the United States to transform the ambitions of the government. According to Simon, through the creation of laws stating that everyone is a crime victim or potential crime victim, lawmakers redefined the 'common' or 'ideal' citizen as a crime victim for whom the government was responsible.

It is important not to generalise policy patterns in other countries, such as the United States, to Europe or Sweden. National trends must be considered (Lacy, 2008; Young, 2003). However, similar to Simon (2007), Demker and Duus-Otterström (2009) argued that the crime victim discourse served as a 'window of opportunity' for the Moderate Party to put forward a more

²⁵ The construction of 'offenders' also appears in scholarly works on domestic violence. As Weinehall and Jonsson (2009 p. 421) argued in a research article about women living under protection: 'From our victimological perspective, the perpetrator is responsible for the violence, regardless of the circumstances.'

punitive criminal policy focusing on individual responsibility. A rhetoric that emphasises crime victims can correspondingly be a vehicle for making significant amendments to the Social Services Act.

We may soon see this development unfold. Based on the provisions in section 5:11 SoL, the National Board of Health and Welfare have stated that the social services can calculate a higher 'national standard' (riksnorm) for basic living costs if an individual temporary incurs higher costs as a result of crime. The board has also established that the social services can grant assistance for a more expensive home and new home equipment if an individual must move because he or she has been subjected to crime (SOSFS, 2003:5). Strictly speaking, to grant more welfare benefits, the social services must not only assess needs, but also determine guilt or innocence. This conflicts with the right to assistance as it stands today in the Social Services Act, which is tied not to cause and fault but rather to needs that cannot be met any other way. The board's guidelines may thus be setting the stage for limiting the right to assistance from the social services.

The concept of the crime victim is not alone in changing the way we think about social problems. The 1982 Social Services Act was enacted as a collection of compelling concepts, such as solidarity and equality, which aimed to redirect our focus from individual to societal responsibility. Over the years, social workers have adopted a range of victims, such as 'victims of society' and 'victims of substance abuse'. For instance, the preparatory material for the 1982 Social Services Act discussed 'unemployed people' as a needy group (Government Bill, 1979:80:1). The 1994 inquiry A New Social Services Act (SOU, 1994:139) devoted a section to 'children of unemployed parents'. Considering how the Social Services Act has been redrawn lately, however, it is doubtful that either 'unemployment victims' or 'children of unemployed parents' will make their way into chapter 5 as a target group in the foreseeable future.

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Appendix 1

Interview Questionnaire Guide, Study II (Translated)

Focus Group Session Structure

- The moderator informs the participants about confidentiality, the objective of the study, the participants' role in the research project, the voluntary nature of their participation, the planned presentation of results, and that the focus group session will be recorded.
- The moderator seeks informed consent from the participants.
- The participants present their name, age, education, position, social services department, and years of experience as a social worker.
- The participants discuss the themes of the study.
- The moderator closes the section and gives each participant the opportunity to express his or her final view on the topic.
- The moderator again emphasises that comments made during the focus group session should be kept confidential.

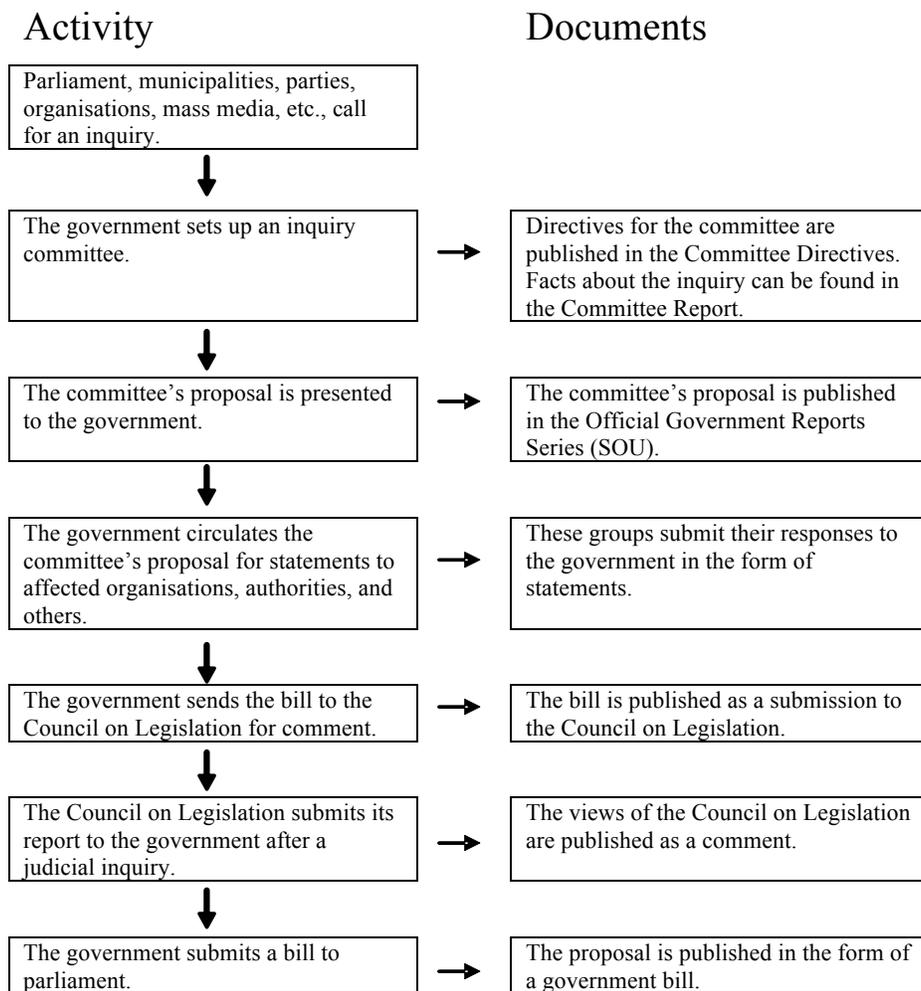
General Themes

- Why were crime victims introduced as a target group for the social services in the Social Services Act?
- What was the purpose of the provisions for crime victims in the Social Services Act?
- What are the role and responsibility of the social services in the provision of support to crime victims?
- Who or what is a crime victim?
- Does the social services come into contact with crime victims? If so, how?
- What do crime victims need? How are these needs identified and assessed?
- Does the social services work to support crime victims? If so, for which crime victims and how?

Appendix 2

The Swedish Lawmaking Process

Figure 2. The Swedish Lawmaking Process.



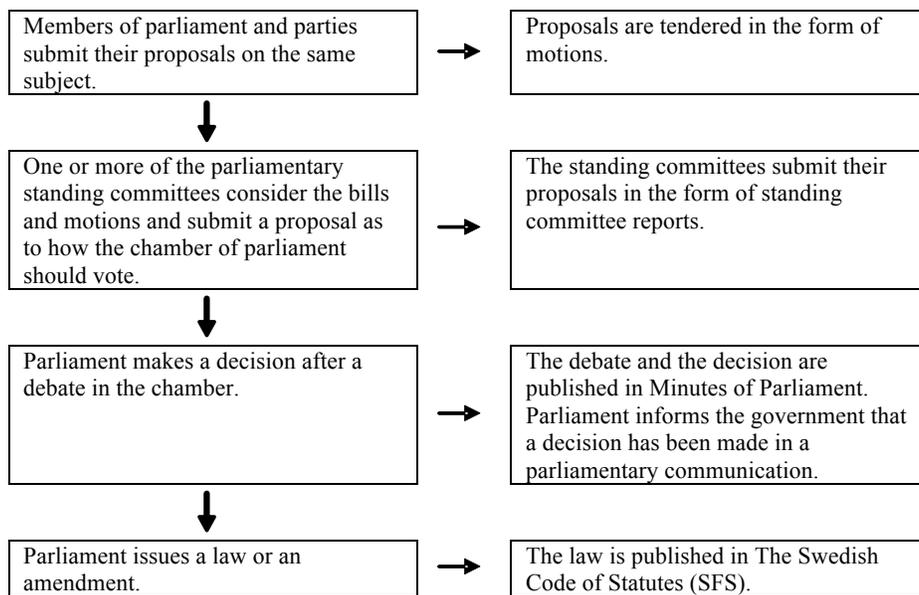


Figure 2 is a description of the Swedish lawmaking process (the Parliament Library, 2006). The right-hand column lists the documents that were analysed in Study IV.