



Woman in Culture and Arts

A Criminological Analysis of the Representation of Woman Victimization in the Light of Lifestyle in Subdued (Rage Khab) Movie

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Article type:</p> <p>Research Article</p> <p>Article history:</p> <p>Received: 9 April 2023</p> <p>Received in revised form: 13 March 2024</p> <p>Accepted: 9 June 2024</p> <p>Published online: 1 July 2025</p> <p>Keywords:</p> <p><i>Criminology, Lifestyle, Representation, Subdued (Rage Khab) Movie, Victimization of Women.</i></p>	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Cinema, as a cultural phenomenon and a key element in the depiction of societal issues, plays an influential role in enhancing public awareness and diminishing cognitive biases. Particularly, in the context of social issues such as violence against women, cinematic representation holds significant power. The portrayal of violence, especially in relationships outside the legal framework of marriage (cohabitation), reflects both the dynamics between the offender and the victim, and the varying forms of victimization women face. These forms include emotional, physical, sexual, and economic victimization, all of which have distinct legal implications. Victimization in this context is often categorized based on several parameters: the nature of victimization, which includes emotional, physical, and economic aspects; the victim hierarchy, which distinguishes between "ideal" victims (those perceived as innocent) and "blameworthy" or "non-ideal" victims (those judged for their behavior); and the level of victimization, ranging from primary (direct harm) to secondary (resulting from societal reactions) and repeated victimization.</p> <p>This research aims to critically analyze the criminological aspects of the cinematic representation of women's victimization, particularly in the context of lifestyle choices outside marriage. The selected case study, the Iranian movie Subdued (Rage Khab), delves into how personal and societal factors contribute to the victimization process. This study seeks to answer crucial questions about the focus of victimization in cinematic portrayals: What specific components of victimization are highlighted? How are the different types of victimization, particularly in the context of lifestyle choices, depicted? Additionally, how are the influential factors, both personal and societal, represented in the cinematic narrative?</p> <p>In Iranian cinema, studies focusing on violence against women have traditionally underscored the vulnerability linked to gender, the heightened risk of victimization, the tendency to conceal crimes to maintain social reputation, and the prevalence of "dark figures" in violent crimes—crimes that go unreported or unrecognized. However, limited research exists on the criminological examination of women's victimization in films that portray non-traditional relationships like cohabitation. This gap, especially when viewed through the lens of victim typology and etiology, presents an opportunity for novel analysis in the present study.</p> <p>Methodology</p> <p>The research methodology adopted in this study is qualitative content analysis. Content analysis is a systematic approach to analyzing textual information, categorizing, coding, and interpreting data to identify patterns or themes. It allows for the in-depth examination of content and the extraction of meaning from complex texts. This method is particularly effective for analyzing media representations of social issues, as it enables the researcher to deconstruct narratives and identify the underlying criminological factors influencing victimization (Iman & Noushadi, 2010).</p> <p>The film selected for this study, Subdued (Rage Khab), directed by Hamid Nematollah and written by Masoumeh Bayat, has been critically acclaimed for its portrayal of contemporary social issues. Released in 2015, the film centers on Mina, a divorced woman navigating the complexities of modern life and her vulnerable position in society. The film won several awards for its narrative and performances and was well-received by both audiences and critics alike. In this study, the film is analyzed through the lens of criminology, focusing on the typology and etiology of victimization, particularly as it relates to Mina's relationship with Kamran. The qualitative content analysis method facilitates the exploration of the film's portrayal of victimization, examining textual indicators related to the victimization process and its broader social and legal implications.</p>

Results

Subdued (Rage Khab) tells the story of Mina, a young divorced woman who encounters Kamran, the manager of a restaurant, while she is searching for a job and stable housing. Kamran, exploiting Mina's vulnerability and emotional instability, gradually draws her into a dependent relationship. Mina, characterized as an ideal victim due to her passive nature, is repeatedly subjected to both emotional and physical abuse. Kamran's manipulation escalates when, dissatisfied with Mina's performance at work, he coerces her into moving into his non-residential apartment under the pretext of providing her with a job. The relationship, however, lacks any form of legal or moral security, leaving Mina increasingly vulnerable.

Mina's victimization reaches its peak when she becomes aware of Kamran's affair with Mrs. Mansour, the owner of the restaurant, while simultaneously dealing with the emotional trauma of an aborted pregnancy. Isolated and emotionally devastated, Mina returns to her father's house, only to face further despair as her father dies shortly after. The film portrays Mina as a victim caught between tradition and modernity, her vulnerability exacerbated by societal norms that stigmatize her lifestyle choices and offer little protection.

The film's depiction of victimization is multifaceted, highlighting emotional victimization (through Kamran's public humiliation of Mina), physical victimization (through scenes of domestic violence, including the beating that causes Mina's miscarriage), and economic victimization (through Mina's unpaid labor and financial dependence). These instances underscore how Mina's victimization is not only a result of her personal decisions but also the structural inequalities that define her socio-economic environment. The absence of legal protections for women in non-marital relationships further compounds her suffering, reflecting the broader societal failures to protect vulnerable women.

In a criminological context, Mina's victimization is analyzed through various contributing factors. Her emotional instability, fear, loneliness, and dependency on Kamran make her an easy target for abuse. Furthermore, the structural and social conditions, including gender inequality and the power dynamics inherent in male-dominated societies, play a significant role in reinforcing her victimization. The film illustrates how societal disapproval of Mina's non-traditional lifestyle, coupled with the lack of legal safeguards, contributes to her repeated victimization. This repeated cycle of abuse, both primary and secondary, ultimately positions Mina as a blameworthy victim, according to societal standards, due to her perceived failure to conform to traditional values.

Conclusion

The findings of this research highlight the complex interplay between societal norms, lifestyle choices, and victimization. In particular, the portrayal of cohabitation relationships in cinema reveals a significant gap in legal recognition and protection, leaving women like Mina vulnerable to abuse. The study aligns with existing research on violence against women in Iran but offers a new perspective by incorporating a criminological analysis focused on typology and etiology.

Cinema has the potential to not only reflect societal issues but also to influence social change. By depicting the risks associated with certain lifestyle choices and the consequences of victimization, films like Subdued (Rage Khab) can raise public awareness and contribute to the development of policies aimed at protecting vulnerable individuals. The research suggests that investment in social cinema, particularly films that address risky lifestyles and promote self-awareness, can be an effective tool for social reform. By fostering a cultural environment that accepts diverse lifestyles and addressing legal and structural inequalities, society can take meaningful steps toward reducing both primary and secondary victimization of women.

The case of Subdued (Rage Khab) illustrates how cinema can provide a critical lens through which to examine the complexities of victimization in modern relationships. The lack of legal protections for women outside of traditional marriage frameworks, combined with societal stigmatization of non-traditional lifestyles, underscores the urgent need for legal and cultural reforms to better support vulnerable women.

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