

Victims still

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



Robert Elias' book, "Victims Still", presents a very controversial stance that the victims' movement is, perhaps, not at all. Elias suggests that all the programs, laws, and institutions that have been created in the 1980s and 1990s have done absolutely nothing to help the victim. Elias also offers explanations as to how the victims' movement doesn't help victims, what the real causes of crime are, and how crime should be controlled. The victims' movement that sprung up during the 1980s and early 1990s seemed to be a step in the right direction for helping the victims instead of the offenders. However, as pointed in "Victims Still", this movement did not and has not helped the victim. The victim movement consisted of new legislation, institutions, and programs designed to help the victim. But when scrutinizing the policies, one notices that many of the policies are deceiving. Rights that are supposedly being given to the victim are just rights that have been taken away from offenders only to strengthen the rights of the officials. Many of the programs designed to help victims are selective when it comes to which victims it will help. For example, there are some rehabilitation programs for drug users that refuse to take in pregnant women. However, when they have a child that is born hooked on drugs, they will be arrested for child abuse. The selectiveness of the programs leads to the policies that, in essence, do not work. The selectiveness of the programs ties in with why the crime is out of control. According to Elias, social inequality, economic inequality, sexism, and racism are reasons why crimes are still being committed. In order to stop crimes from happening, everyone needs to feel equal to one another. Hate crimes are common against women and minorities. However, if all people thought that no one was better than

anyone else was, crime, such as hate crimes, would decrease dramatically as would their victims. Also suggested by Elias is that if laws would focus on all victims, not just those who were involved in a serious crime, it is possible that the number of victims of serious crimes would go down. The same idea would work for domestic abuse as well, if it is handled the first time it happens, there would be a lesser chance of things escalating and one's spouse becoming a victim. However, in "Victims Still", the crimes have already taken place and now the victim needs justice. As suggested by Elias, many victims do not want revenge, they just want the offender to receive help that he or she needs. There are many different ways for a victim to have say in what happens to the offender, such as victim opinions. Victims may send in a statement or even talk directly to a judge at the sentencing. Elias feels that a victim's statement should have something to do with the sentencing, but that sentencing should fit the harm and not the person. He also feels that criminal penalties should be reduced, because imprisonment only generates more crime. Most important Elias feels strongly against the war on drugs. He feels that drug wars cause more crime and more violence leading to more victims. And if victimless crimes such as drug use, possession, homosexuality, gambling, and prostitution were legal, law enforcement would have more time to spend on more serious crimes. The drug wars would also be able to come to an end, reducing violence. Overall, I agreed with Robert Elias' feelings on victim's rights. Victims really do not have any when a close look is taken at the policies. In theory they are nice, but things always look better on paper than in actuality. I agree that the only way to solve the problem of crime is not to apply force, but to understand

and eliminate the causes of crime. This book was a great eye opener to a new prospective of our criminal justice system, and interested me in another aspect of the system. I would highly recommend this book to others who are fascinated and curious about victimology and the rights (or non-rights) of victims.