Victimology, in this book, is understood through the lens of Ubuntu. As South Africans we are faced, consequently, with the question: if a person is a person only through other persons, what does this mean for our notions of crime, offending, and specifically, the construction of victimhood? This book addresses itself to this question.

*Victimology in South Africa* presents both local and global discourse regarding the field of victimology, and the notion of victimhood, and the implications these discourses have for the development of multiple fields, ranging from criminology, to victimology, to legislation, to psychology. Dr. Robert Peacock appears frequently in the lower and higher courts of South Africa as an expert witness, is an Executive Member of the World Society of Victimology, is involved locally and internationally with Victim Empowerment, and was the resident criminologist for the SABC 3 series, *Solving It*, which dealt with South African crime stories.
This book is divided into four sections, which cover, respectively, victimology in context; specific patterns of victimisation; marginalisation and multiple victimisation, and the future of victimology.

The first section, victimology in context, deals with introductory issues in victimology, including an overview of the concept of victimology, as well as other salient concepts. A brief look is taken at the history of the development of the concept of victim, as well as the field of victimology. In this section, different theoretical approaches and perspectives are also discussed. These range from older approaches, such as the lifestyle/exposure model of personal victimisation, as developed by Hinderlang, Gottfredson and Garofalo (1978), to more recent explanations such as those which consider both macro and micro level implications for becoming a victim. The extent and nature of victimisation in South Africa is also discussed, such as the data sources of criminal victimisation, issues in victimological research, and challenges which face researchers in the field. South African laws and policies which support victims’ rights are included, as well as recent legal changes in the field, such as the implementation of the Children’s Act (38 of 2005). An interface between South African laws and international precedents is also considered.

In this first section, attempts and approaches to victim empowerment are also expanded on. In the light of the fact that the South African Constitution enshrines certain valuable human rights, such as the right to safety, security and freedom, victim empowerment programmes have been furthered to address the needs of victims of crime. In this chapter on empowerment, the needs and rights of victims of crime are discussed, the benefits of victim empowerment and support are weighed up, key developments in South Africa are considered, and a critical assessment is made of the Victim Empowerment Programme as it currently functions in our country.

Furthermore, in this first section, the challenges of the criminal justice system face when addressing the need of victims (as well as witnesses) are faced. These include the challenges of secondary victimisation within the criminal justice system, the provision of information to victims and witnesses, the legislation and policy initiatives relevant to victim compensation in South Africa, and the relationship between the needs of witnesses and those of victims in the criminal justice system. Stemming from these challenges, is the issue of restorative justice. Restorative justice is developed in terms of the needs of crime victims, such as autonomy, order and relatedness. Further, the influence of restorative justice on South African policy is considered, especially in the light of the last decade of victimological and legal research. The relevance and value of restorative justice, as well as the pitfalls, are also highlighted. A new chapter is also included in this second edition, which focusses on restorative justice internationally in the cases of mass victimisation. This chapter is especially interesting with regard to its introduction of new ideas, such as community responses to crime and conflict resolution, the use of peace circles in restorative justice efforts, and issues of transitional justice.
Having created an extensive context for victimology in the first section, the second section then delves deeper into specific patterns of victimisation. First, a call is made for (re)considering gender-based violence, where the differences between sex and gender are discussed, the use and construction of gender in criminological and victimological theory is called into question, the social and structural conditions which result in violence against women are highlighted, the differences between male and female offending and victimisation are considered, and finally, the contributions of feminist and masculinities theory to gender and victimology are pinpointed. As someone with personal interest in the constructions of gender and how these narratives impact how we live our lives, I found this chapter open-minded and respectful of the topic. I did, however, at times find myself wishing for a more comprehensive discussion on the postmodern ideas of construction of gender, and the notions of woman- and manhood. Perhaps these may be worked into a third edition?

A second pattern of specific victimisation is that of the elderly, and this section provides a broad overview of the phenomenon, the context of the victimisation of the elderly, and future endeavours regarding the prevention of such abuse. In light of many recent news stories regarding the abuse of the elderly, the expansion of this chapter seems particularly relevant in drawing attention to this situation.

This second section also includes chapters which focus on victims of commercial crime, which include crimes of corruption, bribery, extortion, theft and fraud. Especially relevant in a South African context, victimological research with regard to motor vehicle hijacking is discussed in detail, from the development of an offender profile, to discussing the possibilities of reducing incidents of future hijackings.

In the first edition of this book, individual victimisation, marginalisation and multiple victimisation were all discussed in the same section, as already discussed above. In this second edition, a third section was developed, namely marginalisation and multiple victimisation. This section includes a discussion and in-depth probe of some of the most salient victimological issues currently encountered in Southern Africa. These are, the victimisation vulnerability of street children, the plight of child soldiers in war-torn countries in Africa, human trafficking patterns in Africa, victims of hate crime, the multiple victimisation of sex workers, and military veterans as victims. Also discussed in this section is the phenomenon of offenders themselves becoming victims, as they are exposed to situations of victimisation within South African prison systems. The impact of this institutional victimisation is highlighted.

The final, fourth section of this book examines the future of the field of victimology. The International Criminal Court is discussed in terms of victim participation, the role of victims in this court system, the needs and acknowledgement of victims, and the application process for victims of International Criminal Court cases. This section also includes a discussion on international protocols of victim’s rights, and reflections on important recent developments in victimology. These new developments covered include restorative justice, mediation, terrorism, cultural diversity and criminal
justice, and the scope of victimology. Finally, the editor concludes with some remarks about the nature of victimology as it stands in South Africa.

*Victimology in South Africa* is one of the few criminological texts in South Africa to deal exclusively with the topic of victimology. It engages victimology from different perspectives, providing insight into dimensions of community, psychology and criminology. As such, it is in my opinion a very useful and comprehensive text to own. Compared with other offerings, both locally and internationally, it stands head and shoulders above, and would be a useful addition to any scholar interested in the field.

As a reader, I found this book easy to understand, with the sections and chapters meaningfully divided and explained. Having made extensive use of the first edition in undergraduate studies, I was appreciative of the expansions in areas where new work has been done, or where new issues were necessary for attention. This book provides a comprehensive overview and development of our understanding of victimology, and is sensitive to the construction and political understandings of victimhood in doing so. In final reading, the ‘victim’ is less of a victim, instead she or he is humanised and respected, and we walk away with a feeling of empowerment and restoration.

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