Future Challenges of International Victimology

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Abstract

Future Challenges of International Victimology *introduces readers to the study of international victimology because victimology has become an international discipline. The chapters include an overview about international protocols with special reference to the European Union Framework and the general future of victimology as an example in South Africa. The text explores new horizons in victimology, legislative initiatives and general recommendations for Europe. The conclusion clarifies the need for an international cooperation.*

I. Introduction:

*Victimology has become an international discipline*

In terms of the sheer amount and geographic scope of the victimological research that has been produced over recent years, it would readily appear that victimology has become truly international. Appearances, however, can be deceiving. Progress has been made, but far more comparative work is needed. In the brief span of less than three decades, victimology has evolved from a subject studied by a few scattered researchers to one that generates world-wide interest. The work of the World Society of victimology (WSV), beginning with the first years under the presidency of Hans Joachim Schneider, serves as a clear indicator of this expansion. The first symposia organized by the WSV brought together victimologists from a very few countries.

The most recent symposium in Amsterdam (1997) was attended by over 600 victimologists from 67 countries, both record numbers. At earlier national and international conferences, the “hard science” of victimology appeared to consist of empirical research on victims of crime, and in particular on differential victimization, on victim-offender interaction and on the impact of victimization. The victimologists discussing this research came almost invariably from Western Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. When victimologists from developing countries or countries in transition attended such conferences, their papers usually dealt with theory, pure description, or abuse of power and sometimes all trees. Today, this no longer appears to be case.

The best illustration of the spread of the “hard science” of victimology is the international crime victim survey, which by 1997 covers almost 60 countries, including most recently Albania, Belarus, Bolivia, Botswana, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mongolia, Paraguay, Romania, Ukraine and Zimbabwe (Van Dijk, Jan J.M, Pat Mayhew,
Experiences in Crime across the World, 1990). This push towards developing victimology on the international level can also be seen in literature. At the beginning of the 1990s, the Max Planck Institute of Foreign and International Criminal Law produced four thick volumes from studies around the world. The international coverage of victimology has fostered the creation of national societies of victimology in both developing and developed countries. The United Nations General Assembly, in its 1985 resolution adopted the “Declaration” of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power”, recommended that collaborative research be conducted at the interregional and regional levels on ways in which victimization can be reduced and victims aided, and that the exchange of information be promoted as an effective means of so doing.

Despite the efforts of a few scholars, and with the notable exception of the support that the Dutch Government and the United Nations have provided to the second and third sweeps of the international victimization survey (which specifically brought in a number of developing countries and countries in transition), it would seem that this call for international cooperation in research has met with little interest. While the changes in law and practice as a result, victimological research elsewhere is only slowly emerging, and examples of international cooperation remain few and far between (Elias (1993), (Critical Criminology) argues on the basis on the experience in the United States that these changes have to a large extent remained cosmetic. It is true that little evaluative research has been done on the reforms. However, it would seem that at least in Europe, for example the work of victim support groups in a number of countries, guidelines issued to police and prosecutors, and State compensation schemas – even if they have not necessarily always been implemented as originally envisaged – have benefitted a great number of victims.

II. International protocols

1. International protocols, with special reference to the European Union Framework Decision on the Standing of Victims in Criminal Proceedings

The victim is the forgotten party in the criminal justice system. It would be factually wrong if this type of criticism would still be maintained today. It is generally known that criminal justice systems around the world feature vast differences. They vary from strictly adversarial systems in Anglo-Saxon countries to more inquisitorial jurisdictions on the mainland of the European Union. No matter the incompatibilities between the various systems, nowadays they have one thing in common – they all share the ambition of reform on behalf of victims of crime. The roots of these reformist efforts can be traced to the final quarter of the 20th century.

In 1985, virtually simultaneously, to powerful documents were issued urging the international community to enhance the status of victims. The first one of these was the United Nations Declaration of basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power (A/res/40/34, adopted by the General Assembly in 1985). The second one was the council of Europe’s Recommendation on the Position of the Victim in the Framework of Criminal Law and Procedure (R (85)11, also adopted in 1985). Although differences in language and in details cannot be overlooked, the contents of the Declaration and the
Recommendation are to a large extent overlapping and have subsequently been echoed and expanded on in other international protocols of a similar nature (e.g. Statement of Victims’s Rights in the Process of Criminal Justice, issued by the European Forum for Victim Services in 1996). The European Forum for Victim Services (EFVS) is an umbrella organization comprising as members the existing national (voluntary) victim support organizations throughout Europe.

It follows that statutory organizations with similar objectives are not eligible for full membership, and ultimately the European Union Framework Decision on the Standing of Victims in Criminal Proceedings Council Framework Decision of 15 march 2001. It is impossible – as it is unnecessary – to give a detailed account of all the articles (with the inevitably attached specifications, conditions and exceptions) contained on these main or general bill of rights for victims).

2. Conclusion and evaluation

This conclusion is, however, as robust as it is fair. The preceding paragraphs have made it abundantly clear that similar remarks apply equally to the other member states of the European Union. The lessons to be drawn from this episode are the need to re-examine the basic conditions or requirements for effective implementation of inter or national protocols on victim´s rights. Self-evident as it may seen, as a preliminary we need accurate information. Even though this precondition borders on the obvious, it is a sad truth that reliable data is more often than not completely absent. It is here that the academic discipline of victimology has an important role to play in the future. Victimology could and should greatly enhance the relevance of international protocols and victim´s rights.

Lawmakers and those responsible for shaping and executing policy can only hope to achieve real progress when their actions are closely monitored by independent and critical researchers. This type of evaluation should be organized on a systematic basis, which will usually have to include in-depth studies stretched over a long period of time. One-shot questionnaires are, as a rule, insufficient to yield the kind of knowledge required for the present purposes. This was made painfully clear by the virtual absence of critical follow-up research in the aftermath of the 1985 United Nations Declaration; yet similar deficiencies are now visible in the European Union in connection with the Framework Decision.

Admittedly there are several projects in place and running, but not all of these appear to be well designed and methodologically sound (Studies like Wergens (1999) are based on information supplied by people unknown to the researcher. The reliability and validity of the data can thus not be checked by the researcher, and hence these projects produce inadequate tools for policy formation or adjustment). The community of victimologists should take up this challenge and fill the gaps in existing sets of available data. They can build on results of previously pulished, evidence-based research. Existing studies have releaved that effective reform can only be achieved if there is comprehensive strategy which provides coherence to the various specific measures to be taken. From those perspectives, several critical variables for success or failure have been identified. Without attempting to be exhaustive, a number of prominent ones will the highlighted.
a) Probably more important than the content of the legal rules is the attitude of the officials who come into contact with the victims. This may be particularly relevant for the police (Wemmers, 1996:112, in Victims of Crime in 22 European Criminal Justice Systems). Considering the very high attrition rate in every jurisdiction, most victims will never get beyond the stage of reporting the crime. For this majority, the satisfaction with the criminal justice system will largely depend on the way they have been treated by the police. Police performance in this respect can only be acceptable if the officers radiate a spirit of empathy or then they execute their job on the basis of the conviction that decent treatment of victim’s crime and catching criminals.

b) No matter how important the attitude factor may be, it has to be recognised that good intentions alone do not suffice. The right mindset has been backed up by basic knowledge on victims´ issues. This requires training of police, prosecutors and judges. Many countries have been able to secure mandatory training modules for police officials and prosecutors.

Experience has shown that is much more difficult in persuade the judiciary to accept compulsory courses in this area. Quite often representatives of the courts have invoked their right to independence as an argument to refuse this type of training. Victim support organizations have frequently countered this argument by stating that the right to independence does not include the right to ignorance or the right to arrogance. Of course when this kind of language is exchanged, the debate is not likely to be productive. It is much more useful to look at examples of best practice. In the United Kingdom a project started on “judicial studies”. This new label proved to be helpful in bypassing the initial reluctance to engage in mandatory “training”. Another example is the “Judicial Education Project”, organized by the Office for Victims of Crime in the United States. The goal of this project is to develop a curriculum to provide judges and court personnel with initial and continuing education about the laws concerning victims´ rights, the impact on victims and their families, and how the judiciary can comply with victims´ rights laws without infringing on defendants´ rights.

- Taking care of legitimate victims´ rights and interests is an additional responsibility for the authorities. Since the agencies operating the criminal
justice system have never been over funded or overstaffed, it is obvious that this relatively new obligation can only be executed properly when adequate resources are provided. Simply stated, this basic condition turns out to be hard to meet. Even in the most affluent societies, it is increasingly difficult to earmark funds for this purpose. In the long run, this might jeopardize the viability of any reform project on behalf of victims of crime (According to the Phare Report (2002:59) “The accession states guarantee the viability of properly accredited victim service organizations by apportioning 1 % of their criminal justice budgets to the third sector, having regard for the need for a comprehensive pattern of service delivery”. This author doubts whether this level of funding is available in more than a tiny fraction of even the first world countries).

c) Effective implantation of (inter)national protocols requires close cooperation between all the stakeholders. Government agencies from different departments (justice, public health) the police, the prosecution service, the judiciary, probation, victim support and welfare agencies should all be represented as partners in a network. The network should serve as a platform to exchange information and to smooth out problems.

d) On top of that, strong leadership is essential for success. Two elements may be highlighted here. One is hat in every country, designated senior officials in the relevant ministries and criminal justice agencies should be charged with the express responsibility of identifying and promoting policies and programmes for victims of crime (Phare Report, 2002:57). The second is that the service-providing organizations should act as “problem owners” by permanently appealing to the government when discrepancies between law in the books and the law in action have been discovered.

3. New horizons in victimology – reflections on international development
The exposition on international protocols has uncovered some good news and some bad news. The bad news is that reforme measures on behalf of victims of crime cannot be taken at these measures do not always aspire to actual improvements of their legal system. Sometimes exposing hidden agendas of national representatives charged with negotiation the international agreements can prove this. In other instances this is evidenced by the fact that national governments are satisfied by the mere existence of
legal provisions, without bothering to check whether or not these rules have any significant practical impact.

Finally, there is the danger that promoting victim’s rights is just a fashion of the day. The topic is so popular that no politician or other segment of society could credibly oppose it. This very fact, however, also contains a twofold risk, namely that victims could be replaced by another target group which is suddenly embraced as the next “sexy” issue and, since everybody is (superficially) in favour of expanding victim’s rights, it may be hard to sustain a sense of problem ownership and genuine commitment in the ranks of the powerful decision makers. There is also lots of good news.

There is no way of denying that the international protocols have sensitised national communities that something had to be done to emancipate victims of crime. Consequently, many jurisdictions have brought about more improvements in this area during the last 25 years than during the preceding century. The standards contained in the protocols show progressive insight into the nature of criminal victimisation and how to reduce the resulting adverse effects. Article of the European Union Framework Decision reads: “Every Member States shall support the progressive creation, in respect of proceedings in general, and in particular in venues where criminal proceedings may be initiated, of the necessary conditions for attempting to prevent secondary victimization and avoiding placing victims under unnecessary pressure (Helen Reeves CBE (vice-president of the word society of Victimology and chief executive of the World Society of Victimology and chief executive of Victim Support United Kingdom). This is the first time in history that a legally binding document expressly acknowledges that criminal procedures can actually lead to secondary victimization.

The existence of international protocols has further led to one specific obligation with a particularly positive symbolic value, namely the inclusion in national codes of criminal procedure of separate chapters listing victims’ rights. This kind of legislative technique reflects the statutory recognition of the victim as one of the main “participant” is carefully used in this context; it indicates that the victim is involved in the procedure to an extent like few others, without necessarily the capacity of a party.

Experience with international protocols has also furnished domestic authorities with knowledge on the do’s and don’ts for effective implementation. A government which takes victims´ rights seriously must be aware that it needs a comprehense strategy to achieve its ends. Part of that strategy must be to appoint senior officials in the relevant ministries charged with express responsibility for policies and programmes for the implementation of victim´s rights. South Africa and the international experience taught us that it is extremely difficult to be successful in this area when victim care is regarded as an issue of public health and/or welfare. Victims’ rights and victim care are basically issues of administering justice. Consequently, the justice department should accept primary responsibility for this policy area, or face the risk of jeopardizing in the entire enterprise.

The observation of international protocols is directly related to the main trends and developments. The relationship between restorative justice and the traditional criminal system cannot be envisaged how restorative justice could survive as a genuine alternative paradigm; the real question shall turn out to be how to institutionalize restorative justice
elements in the currently existing systems. Evidence-based knowledge on implementation issues will then be valuable to the point to being indispensable. As far as the threat of terrorism is concerned, experience with international protocols has shown that quick legislative responses, inspired by the spur of the moment, are usually not the cleverest ones. Two big dangers are then likely to materialize. One is that the new statutory provisions raise hopes and expectations, which will be dashed shortly after. This is a well-known cause of secondary victimization.

The other hazard is that the incident-driven measures may have unforeseen negative side effect, which can even outweigh their potential benefits. The International Criminal Court and the other international tribunals have been presented as examples of best practice in the historical development of victim care. The link with the subject matter of the section on international protocols is obvious. National governments would be wise to study the provisions in the International Criminal Court Statute and appended Rules of Evidence and Procedure and actually consider them as inspirational standards, as benchmarks, which should be taken into account as if they were included in international agreements binding on national jurisdictions. The problems emanating from the multicultural composition of modern-day societies shall never completely resolve.

In an era of massive migration they ought to attract increasing attention from researchers in the field of victimology. In the light of the developments outlined above, it is clear that victimology is not an ideology, it is an academic discipline. Yet the objectives of this branch can only be fully achieved if research is conducted with conviction, compassion, commitment and courage. It is exciting to be a victimologist in the first quarter of the 21st century (Young 1992).

4. Legislative Initiatives and best Practice in Europe

Based on the number of legislative initiatives Belgium, England and Wales, France, Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden reach the highest scores. England and Wales, the Netherlands, Sweden followed closely by Zurich, achieved the best practice followed by England and Wales, Norway and Belgium. We need to reflect on the current position of victims within the criminal justice system. The question of procedural justice for victims is still as it was 15 years ago, when the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation. The research shows without a doubt that victims are still frequently confronted with a criminal justice system that largely neglects their rights and interests. Many victims are deprived of information, though it is a right and a service that does not conflict with the rights to the offender in any way.

Criminal courts order or award compensation to the victim had in far fewer cases than possible under national law. However it is an elementary requirement of justice that the offender compensates the victim for his losses and injuries suffered as a result of crime. Furthermore, many victims are not assisted in the enforcement of compensation. State compensation schemes are available in 16 jurisdictions; however, they differ greatly with respect to who can claim compensation, the period of limitation and the amount awarded for comparable offences. In addition, victims are not necessarily aware of the schemas they qualify for. Regarding the questioning of vulnerable victims, in particular children, significant efforts are being made. The protection of victims against intimidation or
retaliation and from publicity is still by and large inadequate (Victims of Crime in 22 European Criminal Justice Systems, Brienen/Hoegen, P. 1162).

5. General Recommendations for Europe

In Recommendation the Council of Europe advises its member states to conduct comparative research on the practical consequences of victim-oriented reforms, and on the solutions that exist in the different legal system. The underlying research is essentially an analytic and comparative study that draws up an inventory of the ways in which the Recommendation is implemented in the 22 jurisdictions. Where relevant national criminal justice statistics (empirical) studies were available we incorporated them in this study. However, in many jurisdictions such data are missing. Furthermore, the criminal justice statistics are generally for comparison (Victims of Crime in 22 European Criminal Justice Systems, Brienen/Hoegen, P. 1169). Statistics, for example, do not always include the same points of reference: some only contain data on felonies, other include data on both felonies and misdemeanors.

More importantly, however, no accurate data are kept on essential data that would allow for a detailed comparative analysis. Only if statistics are kept on a standardized basis can they be compared and definite conclusions are drawn. We, therefore, strongly recommend that national empirical studies are carried out, and criminal justice statistics are standardized in all member states of the Council of Europe to allow for further, more detailed, studies on the position of the victim in criminal law and procedure.

The criminal justice authorities should record the number of victims who reported a crime and who wished to be informed of their rights and opportunities. In addition, the number of victims who were provided with basic information, referred to victim or social services, and notified of relevant developments during the proceedings should be recorded. These data need to be registered in the same way as data on the number of the reports, prosecutions and penal sanctions imposed on offenders. The authorities should also monitor the treatment and protection of victims.

It would be advisable to include all these data in the criminal justice statistics. Statistics must also include data on the frequency in which victims act as private prosecutors, civil claimants, compensation order beneficiaries and / or auxiliary prosecutors; the number of victims who have suffered losses and injuries as a result of crime; the number of victims who want to be compensated; the number of victims who inform the courts of their need for compensation; the amount of money claimed or needed to cover the losses; the number of victims who are the beneficiaries of a court decision on compensation; the amount of compensation ordered or awarded by the courts; the number of victims who receive payments from the offender, whether they are compensated in full or in part, and within what period of time the received the money; and frequency in which protective measures are used by the authorities.

Research should be undertaken on a national and comparative level to allow policy to propose victim-oriented reforms and to evaluate any such reforms or policies in order to effectively remedy any shortcomings. Also, implementation by the criminal justice authorities of new reforms should be monitored. Phenomena that are taken for granted and seldom questioned should be studied. Member states should undertake studies to
measure, inter alia, the need for, and effectiveness of, private prosecution in all member states of the Council of Europe (Victims of Crime in 22 European Criminal Justice Systems (Brienen/Hoegen), p. 1170; to evaluate the (dis)advantages of different legal systems and compensation models for victims; to study potential benefits of other systems; and to carry out in-depth examinations of the reasons why the prosecuting authorities and the judiciary are generally so unwilling to deal with victims and their need for compensation within criminal proceedings.

In addition, research should be carried out to study indicators that influence the functioning of the criminal justice system and the determination how is funded. As far as funding is concerned, clearly, the criminal justice authorities should have adequate resources and the allocation of resources should no longer be exclusively related to offender-related activities. Many questions remain to be resolved. What is the rationale behind the allocation of funding for the police forces, prosecution services, the courts and criminal justice partners? Which decisive factors cause reallocation of funding towards victim-oriented duties? What is the amount of resources needed to improve the position of victims in the criminal justice systems, compared to the actual funding? These and other questions need to be addressed in national and comparative studies.

Concerning the functioning of the criminal justice system, officials should promote the creation of criminal justice steering groups composed of representatives of the criminal justice and partners. Steering groups that meet on a regular (monthly) basis are essential to the provision of key-services to victims, cooperation between the agents and job demarcation. The state, in cooperation with the criminal justice authorities and partners, should promote the creation of a national victim support organization where lacking. These organizations not only improve the provision of free and easily accessible assistance to victims, but they are also important partners for the criminal justice authorities in providing information, legal assistance, and practical help to victims. Furthermore, the criminal justice authorities should set up systematic referral systems to victim support and social services. The attitudes of all officials involved, in particular the criminal justice authorities, should be supportive of victim-oriented reforms and measures. Judges and lawyers should inspire the law with life (Victims of Crime in 22 European Criminal Justice Systems (Brienen/Hoegen), p.1171).

**III. The future of victimology**

In 2003, Xth International Symposium on Victimology was organized in Stellenbosch, South Africa. The overarching conference theme was “New horizons in victimology”. Under this heading, attention was focused on the issues of victim’s right’s, victim services and transnational victimisation. These themes were well chosen because they clearly underline that victimology as an academic discipline has matured, as it has by now acquired an undisputable international dimension.

When victimologists from around the globe gather to discuss the issues mentioned, it is clear that the presentation of their research findings and their insights will be relevant for colleagues from all continents. Hence contemporary reflections on fundamental questions in this area are of equal importance to colleagues from South Africa and from Europe. The present contribution proceeds from the same assumption. There are some prominent international protocols concerning the rights of victims of crime and abuse of power.
Given the universal nature of the values and objectives underlying these documents, the European Union Framework Decision on the Standing of Victims in Criminal Proceedings will be used as a special example to elucidate some points, which also apply in the South Africa context. The subsequent section covers some of the main trends in recent victimology.

Victimology is rapidly moving forward and it has attracted many academics and practitioners from different backgrounds and with widely diverging interests. The resulting avalanche of publications in this field plainly asks for some analysis. What are the most important issues which are likely to dominate victimological debate in the next decade? (This contribution is geared to the future. An overview of the past is presented by Schneider (2001)). Which fundamental choices need to be made when we want to preserve (or to establish?) some coherence in victimology as a respectable academic discipline? Some inferences will be drawn from the content of the preceding parts of the present contribution.

IV. Victimology in South Africa: the way forward
Internationally and also in South Africa, every attempt possible is being made to expand the rights of victims and their participation in the formal legal system and to encourage the use of restorative justice principles. Despite the major milestones for victims of crime in terms of legislations, policies, administrative changes to improve their participation in the criminal justice system and victim empowerment in general, wants to bring closure to the above discussion for victimologists in South Africa (Karmen 1990)

a) Victimology has been been many faces, reflecting victimologist’s fields of interest. It is, however, true that a significant percentage of these fields of interest is guided by crimes that they are very prominent and that often receive great media attention. Although any form of victimization or injustice warrants research, care should be taken not to neglect crimes with a low profile that are often more difficult to control and research. Postgraduate students and other researches in the field of victimology should be encouraged to put these issues on their research agenda.

b) Victimology in South Africa still needs to make a shift from theory and policy to practice. It is a dynamic tension between theory and practice that produces change and without change, there is stagnation (Friday P., 1992 the faces of victimology: general report – part 1. In David, S & Kirchhoff, G International faces of victimology, Monchengladbach; World Society of Victimology Publishing). Research needs to underpin legislation and policy. A good example of the major challenges in this regard is the limited research done on human trafficking that skews the information that should inform legislation, policy and practice. Researchers and practitioners
should also collaborate more and the objective knowledge provided by researchers should be coupled with the passion and compassion of the direct service professional (Gaboury M.T. 2003 Role and current status of higher education and research in victim services. Paper sented at the XIth International Symposium on Victimology, 13.-18 July). Despite the tension between “formal” and “informal” victimologists and the risk of transforming victimology work into an activist rather than a scientific discipline will truly be able to assist victims in more and better ways.

c) From a policy perspective, care should be taken not to use victims of crime for political purposes and as a vehicle that serves only the interests of opportunistic politicians (as can be seen by the banners focusing on the reduction of crime during the 2004 election). The real objectives of government policies on victims and victim empowerment are often questioned. The minimum Standards on Services for Victims of Crime that were developed to strengthened victims´rights, as contained in the South African Victims´ Charter of Rights, and to make these rights a reality is a major milestone for crime victims in South Africa. The document of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development not only outlines the basic rights and principles but also supplies detailed information that enables victims to exercise their rights and service providers to uphold these rights.

The integrated Victim Empowerment Policy issued by the Department of Social Development (that´s the policy that informs, guides, regulates and coordinates services for victims of crime and violence) is another attempt by government to illustrate its commitment, to the plight of crime victims in the country (Department of Social Development 2004 Preamble), Integrated victim empowerment policy (4th draft). A giant step forward to ensure that victim´s´rights in South Africa do not remain paper rights and that policies and legislation supporting victims rights do not succeed only in providing “window dressing for criminal justice reform”, or largely serve as a mere symbolic function in the overall attempt to reform criminal justice practice, will be the establishment of a Statutory Victim´s Office that will, once established, oversee the implementation of Victim´s Charter and other measures that seek to empower victims (Artz & Moult 2004).
As a final remark on the scope of victimology, it is ultimately not productive to put too much weight to the exact meaning of words. The real problems of the people who have been victimized should direct the focus of our attention. Crime and violence in South Africa is often accepted as a normal way of life. Public tolerance of violence that supports, justifies and legitimizes victimization should rather be challenged. Public education is very much needed in this regard and consciousness should be raised that violence begets violence. Since violence is embedded in our history and has become woven in the emotional make-up of many South Africans, its causes, effect and remediation and, even more importantly, its impact on victims of crime must continue to be the subject of research. Every attempt should be also be made to break the cycle of violence and to change the conditions, the attitudes, the practices and the behaviours that are the origin of violence or that contribute to it. The victim movement is maturing and efforts to improve the plight of victims have gained momentum.

Although our discipline is growing at a tremendous rate and the philosophical debates on the scope and challenges for victimologists are keeping the discipline vibrant, it is clear that victimology has yet much to learn “It is our responsible to review and evaluate past work in this field and to develop a future agenda that will spur, guide and support future research and policy interventions”. (Viano, E.C. 2000, Victimology today: major issues in research and public policy. In Tobolowsky PM. Understanding victimology, selected readings, Cincinnati, OH: Andersson 9-22). “There could be no better time to analyze evolution, take stock of past achievements and prepare for the problems, the hurdles and the challenges than the present time” (Fattah, E.A. 1997 Criminology past, present and future, a critical overview). It is hoped that the contributions, all for whom are passionate about the plight of the victims in South Africa, did exactly this.

V. The need for international cooperation
International cooperation can benefit victimology in both developed and developing countries. Encouraging such cooperation requires us to overcome the two difficulties already noted the lack of resources and the egocentricity of victimologists, or for that
matter, the egocentricity of governments (Joutsen 1996, Managing International Technical Assistance Projects in Criminal Justice, HEUNI papers no. 8, Helsinki). In respect of resources, the main problem is that governments in developing countries are swamped with priorities.
A variety of economic, social and political problems has to be addressed: unemployment, poverty, infant mortality, disease, inequality, and the need to develop a sound economic base and democratic institutions. Victim services and initiatives, and more generally crime prevention and criminal justice often tend to be looked at as peripheral issues, and not as integral parts of plans for national development. Although Governments understand the need to “do something about crime”, it would appear that the preferred Government response (in the East as in the West, in the North as in the South) is to increase the repressiveness of the system, rather than to see whether the repressiveness itself may have been – and may well continue to be – part of the problem (Hatchard John (1991) Victims of Crime an Abuse of Power in Africa: An Overview, in: Günther Kaiser, Helmut Kury and Hans-Jörg Albrecht (1991), Victims and Criminal Justice, Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law publications nos. 52/2, Freiburg i. Breisgau, pp 689-732).
In line with the United Nations Victim Declaration, Governments should allocate funds to the training of researchers and to research itself responding to this problem. Governments should also provide a greater priority to the compiling of adequate criminal and victimological data. For example, national and local victimization surveys should be instituted as a regular part of policy information. The Government of the Netherlands deserves considerable praise for its support of the international contacts between the developed countries and other parts of the world. The sad fact is that, for most of Africa, Latin America, Asia and Central and Eastern Europe, the riches of Western victimological research and experience are out of reach, due to practical problems of finance and in knowing how to access the data. Initiatives such as the World Criminal Justice Library Network and the use of Internet to disseminate data should be strengthened. International research projects should be carried out by multinational teams representing a diversity of views. Monocultural teams may also be more subject to the risk of cultural misunderstandings. Bringing together practitioners from more than one culture can help in identifying and overcoming these dangers.
Finally, victimologists should consider how they could contribute to the development and evaluation of victim policy. Much has been learned in Western industrialized countries over the past years about what works and what does not work in victim policy, but considerably more evaluative research is needed. What is also needed is research that could help in identifying promising practices that could be replicated in other jurisdictions, after sufficient cultural tailoring to the specific economic, legal, political and social circumstances. The United Nations is currently preparing a guide to implementation of the United Nations Victim Declaration, which could serve as a basis for new research projects. Such research would go a long way towards assisting practitioners and policy makers in developing countries and in countries in transition in re-evaluating their criminal justice system, and in developing suitable responses. Ultimately, this could help in achieving a major reduction in the amount of victimization, and considerable progress in securing international justice for the victim.
The corruption charge alleges that Chief Selebi received money from a convicted drug trafficker who was then on trial for murder (McGreal 2008). In exchange for the money it is alleged that Selebi protected drug shipments and passed on confidential information on both the murder trial and current drug operations (McGreal 2008). In addition to being the police chief in South Africa, Jackie Selebi was also president of Interpol, the international police organization. Interpol acts as a clearinghouse for information on crime and maintains a database of fingerprints, mug shots, and more (Naim 2001). He resigned this position at the same time as his position as chief of police (McGreal 2008). Selebi was elected president of the Interpol General Assembly in 2004, becoming the first African elected to the position (Interpol 2004).

References


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