CURRENT ISSUES IN VICTIMOLOGY RESEARCH

SECOND EDITION

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To Craig Kevin, Michael John, Mark Daniel, James Patrick,  
Stephen Andrew, and John Michael—  
May you have a world of wishes at your command,  
God and his angels close at hand,  
Friends and family their love impart,  
And Irish blessings in your heart  
(An Irish Blessing)—LJM

To my Family and Special Friends—  
Your support makes everything possible. RAJ
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Preface

Current Issues in Victimology Research focuses on topics of concern for those who study victims of crime or what we refer to as victimology. There is a myriad of topics that we could have included in this second edition, and thus it was tough narrowing the scope of the book. We focused on manuscripts that either summarized the existing literature on the topic, giving the reader an update on where we are on the issue, or on manuscripts that contributed because of the uniqueness of the topic. For example, in the first chapter, Karel Kurst-Swanger provides an excellent overview of victim services. Probably something we take for granted as a given but Professor Kurst-Swanger lays out the history of the victim service movement, allowing us to get a good sense about how well the system is working to help victims. There are many more chapters that address unique topics or topics that have been only minimally addressed in the literature including truancy and victimization, internet victimization, child fatality, adolescent victimization, the intimidated witness, to name but a few.

The reader begins with an overview of victim services where Kurst-Swanger reminds us that “Since the early 1970’s the crime victims’ movement has truly come of age, emerging as an influential political and social agent of change.” She presents the past, present, and future of victim services in the United States providing a cursory review of some of the historical perspectives guiding the evolution of victim assistance programs, illustrating the types of issues that have confronted crime victims and explaining how such services help to minimize the impact of crime, and exploring some of the challenges and opportunities that victims will face in the future.

The next chapter addresses how victimization impacts perceptions of crime seriousness testing specific theoretical models. Williams, Clark and McShane make the point that conventional wisdom supports the idea that “… politicians seem to believe that crime victims see crime as more serious after they are victimized. Given the exceedingly vocal efforts of a small number of victims (or their relatives) of well-publicized crimes, this perception would have the appearance of truth.” They conclude that “over time new laws and crimi-
nal statutes with ever-increasing degrees of punishment were enacted in almost all states in response to this belief that crime victims view crime seriousness at higher levels than non-victims. Williams et al. conclude, rarely do victims “connect their victimization experiences to perceptions of increased crime severity” and thus policies that are written to “get tough on crime” as a way to alleviate fear of crime may be having the exact opposite effect on victims.

Chapter 3 examines batterer intervention programs—what some refer to as BIPs—to determine how well these programs are succeeding in reducing domestic violence recidivism. As the authors point out, after reviewing the literature and reporting what others have found when conducting meta-analyses, it may very well be that researchers are not asking the right questions when they evaluate BIPs. The authors noted that methodological issues have severely limited the strength of the evaluations, and they suggest that focus should shift to other program variables when conducting evaluations. They specifically mention that all the goals of a program should be evaluated and that treatment fidelity should be one major component of any evaluation.

Witness intimidation is something we think about on the federal level, with organized crime coming to mind. However, as Michon Moon reports in Chapter 4, witness intimidation is not limited to just federal cases. Of course we have the most resources to protect federal witnesses but Moon argues that local and state level witness intimidation is just as important and resources are needed to protect them as well. Her chapter is very interesting as she presents the limited research available, and also provides insights from her own experience.

To illustrate the importance of hate crime victimization, two chapters address the topic. However, both chapters advance different arguments about the victimization with Lisa Thomas Briggs focusing on one specific type of hate crime victimization—arson in Black Churches—and Stephanie Manzi and Kathleen Dunn focusing on the legal aspects of hate crime victimization. As they point out, even though we have statutes to augment the penalties when an offender is convicted of a hate crime, there are tremendous obstacles to implementing such penalties, the least of which may be getting prosecutors to actually employ the statutes.

In Chapter 7, Robyn Diehl Lacks provides some insight into reducing adolescent victimization. In her study, she interviews adolescents who "experienced penetrating trauma;” meaning that they were shot, stabbed, or otherwise seriously injured. Most of these adolescents were injured as they participated in the drug culture. Lacks examined two groups of individuals who experienced penetrating trauma—those in the hospital for the wound and those who were
housed in juvenile facilities. She concludes, “These juveniles have demonstrated that no harm, not even penetrating trauma, outweighs the importance of the possible economic gain” and thus ponders how to educate these juveniles that the economic gain is not nearly as high as they think it will be. She provides some intervention strategies that may be helpful, and suggests that follow up study be conducted to see the impact of the interventions.

The next chapter addresses elder abuse with a focus on elderly patients with Alzheimer’s disease or dementia, using Routine Activities Theory. The authors point out that elderly patients with dementia are almost twice as likely to be victims of elder mistreatment. In their study, routine activities theory is used as a guide to understand the differences between elder mistreatment cases involving Alzheimer’s patients and non-Alzheimer’s patients. Results suggest slight differences between Alzheimer’s and non-Alzheimer’s cases.

Internet victimization is a topic that causes much public consternation. Part of the problem is the limited knowledge that the public has about the internet, computers, and technology, in general. In Chapter 9, Christine Bryce-Rosen provides an overview of the technologies involved in internet victimization, the types of crimes that can occur over the internet, the statistics related to these types of crime, and strategies for preventing and dealing with such victimization. With Bryce-Rosen’s experience as a former Computer Forensic Investigator with the State Police, the chapter provides insightful information about internet victimization with specific crime precaution strategies presented.

The next chapter addresses child fatalities. Robyn Diehl Lacks and Arthur Westveer provide information about how to distinguish between intentional and unintentional fatalities. They provide a law enforcement perspective to the understanding and reporting of fatalities that are criminal. Their chapter provides specific ways to differentiate among SIDS, SUDI, abused children, accidental deaths, suicides, and homicide.

Campus crime is another topic that is addressed in two chapters. Both Christina Barnes and Max Bromley have chapters that concentrate on campus crime but with different foci. Barnes admonishes that “It is important to recognize that there is no one perfect measure of campus crime” and thus her chapter focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of three primary sources of campus crime data: the Clery Act statistics, Uniform Crime Report statistics, and campus crime logs. Barnes concludes with an example of actual data from the three sources in order to demonstrate how the triangulation of available campus crime statistics aids in obtaining a comprehensive and more accurate picture of campus crime.

Max Bromley’s chapter builds on Barnes’s but focuses on approaches to addressing college crime victimization. He provides a brief history of campus
crime during the 20th Century, examines the role of the media in highlighting serious campus crimes, examines the most current national-level research on serious campus crime, and discusses the various legal responses, civil lawsuits and the enactment of new campus crime laws. This is followed by a discussion of the administrative responses to campus victimization and concludes by noting several challenges that campus crime victimization presents to higher administration.

Chapter 13 presents information about female stalkers. Toni Dupont-Morales updated and rewrote the original chapter on female stalkers. As she states, “When this chapter was originally written, stalking was emerging in the legal and criminal justice literature. Victim advocates were primarily concentrating on stalking within domestic violence leaving the victim of acquaintance or stranger stalking struggling for services and justice.” Dupont-Morales updates the chapter synthesizing the current literature on female stalkers. She presents national and international findings, contrasts stalkers by gender, and presents stalking typologies that are applicable to female stalkers.

Patricia Hylton Grant and Paula Otto examine missing persons and the media. A unique team in that Grant is a criminal justice professor and Otto is a mass communications professor. They provide invaluable insight into the perceptions created by the media when focusing on missing persons. Their chapter draws attention to missing persons that are not often big news makers for the media. Specifically they examine how the media reports on minority victims. They sort through the perceptions or misperceptions to illustrate reality.

In the next chapter Elizabeth Quinn DeValve examines repeat victimization. As she reports, “Just as a small proportion of all offenders represent a large amount of crime committed (Moffitt, 1997), so too do a small proportion of victims represent a surprisingly large (and therefore disproportionate) amount of victimizations (Farrell, 1992; Farrell and Pease, 1993; Farrell and Bouloukos, 2001; Farrell and Pease, 2001). Even more compelling is that this pattern of disproportionality of major offenders and repeat victims is found across crime types and methods of research (Farrell, 1992). Accordingly then, we should be able to provide services to these victims. DeValve examines community policing and problem-oriented policing to determine how to address repeat victimization. She concludes with, “It appears that the best approach to dealing with repeat victimization is problem-oriented policing as the degree of understanding needed to identify repeat victimization can be found only within the problem-oriented policing strategy.”

Chapter 16 presents the results of a study conducted on victim service providers in California. Bernadette Muscat was part of a team that developed
the California Victim Assistance Academy where they had to create the academy including developing the curriculum. In order to know what knowledge areas were key for California victim service providers, Muscat surveyed these individuals. The results of the study are presented here, and they serve as a starting point for anyone interested in identifying important issues and content areas for victim service providers.

Truancy and victimization, the topic of Chapter 17, written by Nicolle Parsons-Pollard takes a unique look at truancy. Parsons-Pollard has been evaluating truancy programs in the city of Richmond, VA for over two years, and she brings her insights about truancy and truancy prevention to this chapter. She helps the reader to see that our concern about truancy needs to expand much further than just a child missing class. She demonstrates the links between victimization leading to truancy as well as truants who victimize.

The last chapter is written by Mario Thomas Gaboury and Duane Ruth-Heffelbower. They examine correction-based victim services and restorative justice programs providing a brief overview of the status of corrections-based practices in the United States. They present information about three specific restorative programs: Victim Impact Panels, Victim Awareness Classes, and Victim-Offender Dialogue Programs. For each program the most current research is reviewed.

This reader is a compilation of many varied topics that normally are not found in one collection. Since the field of victimology is emerging and topics of interest within it are wide and diverse, we find the reader to add to the expanding body of literature, and to serve well as a companion to any traditional victimology text book. We hope you enjoy reading the book as much as we have enjoyed collaborating with the authors and compiling it.

Laura J. Moriarty
Robert A. Jerin
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We are indebted to many individuals who have supported us through the completion of this second edition! First, we thank the authors; truly there would be no second edition without your willingness to work with us and to revise your work to fit our expectations of the book. We are pleased that once again we have been able to publish the work of some of the best known scholars in the field of victimology. Second, we recognize the support of our institutions—Virginia Commonwealth University and Endicott College. Our colleagues, students and administrators have been instrumental in providing advice and counsel on how to reach the goal of completing this second edition. Third, we like to thank the staff at Carolina Academy Press especially Keith Sipe, Taylor Arnold, Robert Conrow, and Beth Hall. CAP is an excellent publishing company to work with, allowing us the freedom to compile the second edition with very little interference. We appreciate the support. Fourth, we like to thank our families and friends. Like Bob said above, “your support makes everything possible.” Finally, but most importantly, we would like to recognize the tremendous courage of the survivors of criminal violence. We hope this book provides greater insight into their fight for understanding and justice. If nothing else, we hope a greater awareness results.