

The New Faces of Victimhood

Globalization, Transnational
Crimes and Victim Rights

Edited by
Rianne Letschert
Jan van Dijk



STUDIES IN GLOBAL JUSTICE
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Globalization, Transnational Crimes
and Victim Rights

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THE NEW FACES OF VICTIMHOOD

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Aims and Scope

In today's world, national borders seem irrelevant when it comes to international crime and terrorism. Likewise, human rights, poverty, inequality, democracy, development, trade, bioethics, hunger, war and peace are all issues of global rather than national justice. The fact that mass demonstrations are organized whenever the world's governments and politicians gather to discuss such major international issues is testimony to a widespread appeal for justice around the world.

Discussions of global justice are not limited to the fields of political philosophy and political theory. In fact, research concerning global justice quite often requires an interdisciplinary approach. It involves aspects of ethics, law, human rights, international relations, sociology, economics, public health, and ecology. Springer's new series *Studies in Global Justice* up that interdisciplinary perspective. The series brings together outstanding monographs and anthologies that deal with both basic normative theorizing and its institutional applications. The volumes in the series discuss such aspects of global justice as the scope of social justice, the moral significance of borders, global inequality and poverty, the justification and content of human rights, the aims and methods of development, global environmental justice, global bioethics, the global institutional order and the justice of intervention and war.

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Preface

This volume originated from a shared interest of different senior and junior members of Tilburg Law School in analysing victimization by crime from different angles. When the idea came up to combine our mutual research interests, it became clear that in each and everyone's research field, processes of globalization increasingly posed new complexities and questions that have not yet been sufficiently addressed. Our discussions started somewhere in 2007, leading ultimately to a common theme of globalization, transnational crimes and victim's rights.

The authors are all research fellows or staff members of the International Victimology Institute, a research institute in The Netherlands focusing on interdisciplinary research on victims that can contribute to a comprehensive, evidence-based body of knowledge on the empowerment and support of victims of crime and abuse of power. We thank our colleagues for their willingness to cooperate in this book project and their patience in awaiting the final result.

This volume is part of the series 'Studies in Global Justice' of Springer Publications. We thank the series editor, Prof. Deen Chatterjee as well as the independent peer reviewers for their thoughtful and insightful remarks to the first draft of the manuscript.

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Part I
Introductions and Overviews

Chapter 1

New Faces of Victimhood: Reflections on the Unjust Sides of Globalization

Rianne Letschert and Jan van Dijk

1.1 Introduction

In the UN Secretary-General's report endorsing the findings of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change, six key security challenges are listed as the foremost challenges of the contemporary age. These are: economic and social threats, including poverty, infectious disease, and environmental degradation; inter-state conflict; internal conflict, including civil war, genocide, and other large-scale atrocities; nuclear, radiological, chemical, and biological weapons; terrorism; and, last but not least, transnational organized crime. The panel concluded that now "threats are from non-State actors as well as States, and to human security as well as State security."¹

The newly coined umbrella concept of *human security* stresses the need of putting the interests of people rather than of states in the center of attention and it highlights the interrelationships between the threats to personal security such as by global crimes and other security risks such as those of extreme poverty or health. The individual human being is not only defined in terms of his or her vulnerabilities, but also as a person that should be empowered to fend for him or herself. A central feature of the debate on human security is the call for preventive or remedial action from the world community against all kinds of threats to the core of people's lives ("responsibility to protect").²

According to the victims' movement, criminal justice systems across the world should serve the interests of those directly harmed by crime besides or even before

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¹United Nations (2004). A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility, *Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change*, p. 15. Available through <http://www.un.org/secureworld/report.pdf>.

²It goes beyond the scope of this chapter to synthesize the many discussions relating to this concept. For critiques on the usefulness of the concept in providing a basis for substantive change of the system of international security, we refer to a recent contribution by Ryerson Christie (2010).