unsurprisingly it concludes that not only is there still much to be done, but also that it is of the utmost importance to ascertain why crimes of sexual violence occur in the first place.

All in all, the editors demonstrated admirable vision in gathering contributions from a variety of disciplines to establish that interdisciplinarity is a necessary step to further progress in the prosecution of crimes of sexual violence. Cooperation and understanding the needs of different disciplines can only be constructive.

The overall quality of the book is excellent, although some parts will, of course, be of greater interest than others. On a slightly critical note, I would have liked to read further contributions from non-legal academics and practitioners. However, as an attempt to provide a holistic approach to the subject, the work is to be greatly welcomed and should provide a fine starting point for similar cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary initiatives in the future.

Don John O Omale

Restorative Justice and Victimology: Euro-Africa Perspectives

Reviewed by: Alphonse Muleefu, International Victimology Institute Tilburg (INTERVICT), the Netherlands

Restorative Justice and Victimology: Euro-Africa Perspectives is indeed an important study for individuals and institutions interested in learning about victims’ perceptions about restorative justice. It is written in a concise manner that is understandable by both professionals and laypersons. Dr Don John O Omale provides an in-depth analysis of theoretical and philosophical reasons for and against restorative justice. The richness of the book is that, after a literature analysis, it provides a comprehensive discussion of other empirical studies around the globe and Africa in particular, in addition to a qualitative and quantitative analysis of views from Nigerian criminal justice professionals and victims.

The researcher shows persuasively that victims are more interested in restorative justice to reconstruct interpersonal relationships and reconciliation with offenders as opposed to the desire for vengeance. He shows that the majority of victims (rural and urban respondents) and criminal justice professionals, irrespective of their demographic differences (age, education, gender, and belief), perceive restorative justice as an alternative to criminal justice (punitive justice). He demonstrates that the overwhelming majority support restorative justice because of perceived failures of the criminal justice system in Nigeria. For victims, among other things, restorative justice can be: less expensive; expeditious; contribute to reconciliation, peace and harmony; heal the wounds of the crime; encourage truth telling and reparation; and enable a victim’s voice to be heard. Criminal justice professionals equally think that restorative justice can be expeditious, reconcile the offender with the victim, teach offenders to understand victims, prevent crimes, decongest prisons, and encourage truth telling, among other things.

What makes Restorative Justice and Victimology: Euro-Africa Perspectives an interesting work is the honesty of the researcher in recognizing its weaknesses. The sample size of 151 respondents (74 victims and 77 criminal justice professionals) is a small number to represent the views of Nigeria — a country of about 140 million people with about 300 ethnic groups. Accordingly, its contribution to the African perspective about restorative justice is somewhat limited. The
respondents’ views – most of whom did not understand the meaning of restorative justice — might have been a mere judgment passed in disapproval of Nigeria’s criminal justice system as opposed to admiration of restorative justice. The outcome of the study may have been influenced by the following issues found in Nigeria’s criminal justice system: the large prisoner population; the victims’ burden of feeding offenders in preventive detention; and corruption, vulnerability, poverty, governance gaps, and discrimination. As much as it can be said that such problems exist in (most of the) other countries in Africa, I would like to argue that the (in)effectiveness of criminal justice systems in Africa is as diverse as the continent itself: the difference can depend on each country’s size, traditions and beliefs, colonial experiences and governance. The minor critique also worth mentioning is that the ‘euro’ dimension found in the title is redundant; the content of the book, as the researcher clearly states, feeds into the existing international debate. The body of literature studied goes beyond Europe and Africa to include countries from other continents such as New Zealand, Canada, Australia and the United States. Nonetheless, Restorative Justice and Victimology: Euro-Africa Perspectives is a book of great importance in providing an initial illustration of the inadequacy of punitive justice based on the views of some Nigerians, and certainly restorative justice can serve as an alternative mechanism in dealing with criminality.