

**Title**

A Theory of Injustice

**Abstract**

A core issue in victimology is understanding injustice. In this plenary the presenter returns to Judith Shklar's classic book *The Faces of Injustice* from 1990. Her main issue is that injustice has been wrongly confined to the absence or counterpart of justice. Instead further examination of the relationship between and the difference between "undoing injustice" and "doing justice" - the latter through legal institutions - is in order. Injustice has more intensity than justice and legal rules have only limited power to fight extreme forms of injustice. There is an asymmetry between justice and injustice, as the law introduces values as predictability and regularity that, in concrete situations, are badly equipped to eliminate injustice. In addition injustice is rooted in the idiosyncratic, context-depended perspectives of those who suffered harm and that undoing injustice therefore has a "playful" character, while the law has the character of a game. Finally, where justice is the virtue associated with the relationships between people, injustice has an intimate character: experiencing it primarily concerns the relationship within the self, and only subsequently concerns relationships with others. The presenter will suggest that these issues imply that the extent to which justice processes can be tailored to suit the needs of victims is inherently limited.

**Bio**

*Antony Pemberton* is professor of victimology and director of INTERVICT, the International Victimology Institute Tilburg at Tilburg University in the Netherlands. He is a political scientist and a criminologist. His research interests concern the broad topic of *Victims and Society*, including victims' perspectives on justice, societal reactions to victims and processes of victimization, cultural victimology, narrative victimology and the ethics of victimology. He has published over 80 articles, book chapters and books on the subject of victimology. Most of his current ideas are reflected in his inaugural address in Tilburg, *Victimology with a hammer: the challenge of victimology* (Tilburg: Prismaprint 2015). See for a copy: [https://pure.uvt.nl/portal/files/9026843/150760\\_oratie\\_Pemberton\\_def.pdf](https://pure.uvt.nl/portal/files/9026843/150760_oratie_Pemberton_def.pdf)

