

**Howard League for Penal Reform – annual conference**

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**Title: Victims' access to justice 1675 to the present day: Some reflections on the political economy of victim policy framing over time**

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**Abstract**

This paper derives from an ongoing ESRC funded project entitled 'Victims' access to justice through English criminal courts, 1675 to the present' (ES/R006962/1). This is first study of its kind to take a long view of victimhood and the processes shaping the changing nature of access to justice over time. There are a number of challenges for work of this kind not least of which is making sense of the changing nature of the political and economic context in which policy responses to 'victims' have been constituted over and through time. The purpose of this paper is to explore what we have discerned about this process. The changing relationship between the citizen and the state throughout this time period sets the framework for this presentation within which it is possible to identify four main phases: paternal capitalism 1675-1850; liberal capitalism 1851-1945; welfare state capitalism 1946-1979, and neo-liberal capitalism 1980 to date. The paper explores how 'victims' were represented, framed and imagined within criminal justice policies and reforms over these four periods. (171 words).