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Finding a new folk devil: (mis)constructing anti-capitalist activists

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Abstract

The paper will offer an account of how political activists are (mis)constructed as “folk devils” through an examination of recent media coverage in the UK and Czech Republic. It will seek to show how their construction as violent criminals and dangerous anarchists has influenced the treatment of those involved in protests by public authorities in the UK and Prague. The paper will also offer, in juxtaposition to this representation of the current anti-capitalism movement, a discussion of the accounts of activists themselves. In particular it examines the activists’ own perceptions of their engagement in the global social movement against capitalism. The paper is based on evidence derived from preliminary findings from interdisciplinary research into global social movements, and in particular the Prague World Trade Organisation action in September 2000.

Personal Injury Litigation: Playing the Role of "Invalid"

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Abstract

As human beings, we have normative ideas about healthy bodies. In general, a physical injury is seen in a negative way, as a violation of how bodies should be. In order to give meaning to this violation, narratives must be constructed about it. Injury narratives will be constructed by the person who suffered the injury and other people who are affected by it (such as family, friends and workmates). Our legal system provides mechanisms by which some injured people may claim compensation for their injury. This paper will concentrate on one of these mechanisms: civil actions for negligent infliction of personal injury. The paper proposes that the law, as it is applied by personal injury lawyers and judges, creates certain universal legal injury narratives against which individual plaintiff injury narratives are compared and judged. The analysis focuses on the role of the injured person in those narratives, and suggests that the plaintiff is required to conform to the role of “invalid” in order to be successful in his or her claim for compensation. The paper also discusses the psychological ramifications for the injured person in conforming to that role.

Social policy development, the media and ‘law and order’ politics

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Abstract

In a recent letter to the Australian, Fr Joe Caddy (Catholic Social Services, Melbourne, 12/5/01 p 16) wrote the following: “As we celebrate our Centenary of Federation, it is proper and timely that we re-dedicate Australia as a land of fairness for all, a place of justice and inclusion, where human rights are upheld and promoted and where all are afforded the opportunity to participate to the best of their capacity.”

This paper picks up on this theme in relation to the process of policy debate and development more generally, and the links between crime and its prevention by social policy development. If one believes that the connections between social development policy and justice outcomes are strong but rarely made, this paper attempts to explain why this may be the case, and how that issue can be addressed.

Taxation in a globalised economy: what are the implications for the developing world?

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Abstract

The phenomenon of globalisation challenges national sovereignty. One consequence is that it is causing tax policy-makers to rely more heavily on relatively immobile natural person resident individuals as a source of revenue. In part this is because taxation of the profits of localised subsidiaries and permanent establishments of MNEs has become increasingly problematic. In addition, the countries of the developing world want foreign investment but fear that they might not get it if they try to tax it. The consequence is the ‘race to the bottom’ in which countries engage in harmful tax competition to attract footloose capital. Yet the norms of international taxation, particularly the principles governing the granting of foreign tax credits and the reciprocity of withholding taxes in bi-lateral double tax treaties, currently impede countries in the development of tax policies relating to corporate and shareholder taxation that will cope adequately with globalisation. Hence a fundamental reconsideration of the norms of international taxation relevant to cross border investment is called for. This paper argues that source countries are going to find it increasingly difficult to tax foreign investors in any event, and that increasing reliance will be placed on taxation of resident natural persons. It concludes that, even if comprehensive reform of the norms of international taxation is unlikely, pragmatic considerations may mean that all countries would be better off with simpler corporate tax systems that have lower compliance costs.