



Access to Justice

Beyond the Policies and Politics of Austerity

Edited by
Ellie Palmer, Tom Cornford,
Audrey Guinchard and Yseult Marique
With a Foreword by the Rt Hon Sir Stephen Sedley



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“Running parallel to the steady erosion, at least in England and Wales, of what we had come, perhaps complacently, to regard as an entrenched human right, the seminar series on which this book is based looked carefully and realistically at both sides of the issue: the shrinking availability of public funds and the practical possibilities of doing more with less. The volume seeks in particular to distinguish between those inroads into access to justice which are unacceptable on any principled view and those which are either unavoidable or at least negotiable. Wherever possible it does so, in contrast sometimes to central government, from an ascertained evidence base.”

From the Foreword by the Rt Hon Sir Stephen Sedley

Building on a series of ESRC funded seminars, this edited collection of expert papers by academics and practitioners is concerned with access to civil and administrative justice in constitutional democracies, where, for the past decade governments have reassessed their priorities for funding legal services: embracing ‘new technologies’ that reconfigure the delivery and very concept of legal services; cutting legal aid budgets; and introducing putative cost-cutting measures for the administration of courts, tribunals and established systems for the delivery of legal advice and assistance. Without underplaying the future potential of technological innovation, or the need for a fair and rational system for the prioritisation and funding of legal services, the book questions whether the absolutist approach to the dictates of austerity and the promise of new technologies that have driven the Coalition Government’s policy, can be squared with obligations to protect the fundamental right of access to justice, in the unwritten constitution of the United Kingdom.

THE EDITORS

Ellie Palmer is a Professor of Law and Tom Cornford, Audrey Guinchard and Yseult Marique are Senior Lecturers in Law, all at the University of Essex.

CONTENTS

Introduction

Tom Cornford, Audrey Guinchard, Yseult Marique and Ellie Palmer

Part I: Access to Justice: Theoretical, Legal and Policy Background

1. Access to Justice: The View from the Law Society
Andrew Caplen

2. The Meaning of Access to Justice
Tom Cornford

3. Principles of Access: Comparing Health and Legal Services
Albert Weale

4. Europe to the Rescue? EU Law, the ECHR and Legal Aid
Steve Peers

Part II: Pressure Points on the Justice System

5. Access to Justice in Administrative Law and Administrative Justice
Tom Mullen

6. Immigration and Access to Justice: A Critical Analysis of Recent Restrictions
Robert Thomas

7. The Impact of Austerity and Structural Reforms on the Accessibility of Tribunal Justice
Stewart Wright

8. Thirteen Years of Advice Delivery in Islington: A Case Study
Lorna Reid

9. Complexity, Housing and Access to Justice
Andrew Brookes and Caroline Hunter

10. Access to Justice in the Employment Tribunal: Private Disputes or Public Concerns?
Nicole Busby and Morag McDermont

11. Renegotiating Family Justice
Mavis Maclean CBE

12. Access to Justice for Young People: Beyond the Policies and Politics of Austerity
James Kenrick and Ellie Palmer

Part III: Alternative Approaches to Funding Legal Services

13. A Revolution in ‘Lawyering’? Implications for Welfare Law of Alternative Business Structures
Frank H Stephen

14. CourtNav and Pro Bono in an Age of Austerity
Paul Yates

15. The French Approach to Access to Justice
Audrey Guinchard and Simon Wesley

16. How Scotland has Approached the Challenge of Austerity
Sarah O'Neill



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