

DOES PRIORITIZING IMPROVE CRIMINAL JUDGEMENT EFFICIENCY? AN EXAMPLE FROM ITALY

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Abstract

This paper deals with efficiency of criminal judgement in a context of limited resources. It moves from an Italian government bill, which went through Parliament in 2008. The bill allows courts managers to reallocate resources temporally, thus setting priorities in courts schedules. The logic underlying the bill is that reaching the final verdict in a reasonable length of time is more important in the treatment of serious crimes than in the treatment of light or petty crimes. However, a simple overlapping-generations scheme shows that such a reallocation is generally inefficient if criminal offices have different levels of productivity. Although this analysis starts from an Italian case, its results are applicable to all judicial systems allowing the selection of priorities in criminal courts.

Keywords: criminal trial, courts efficiency, prosecutors efficiency, cost-benefit analysis

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