

Natural Law refers to the original guiding legal principle developed during the Roman empire. According to the Natural law, everybody has a sense of right and wrong, irrespective of their knowledge of specific laws and practices. 'Ignorance of the law is no excuse' is in fact a statement which is based upon the existence of natural law.

According to the principle of legal realism, the legality of a current case is largely determined by previous legal decisions. This can give the legal system an appearance of stability and continuity. The concept that Judges are guided by previous court cases in a current case is known as stare decisis. It requires that judges pay strict attention to previous legal precedents when adjudicating a current case. Judges who ignore precedents can risk having their decision overturned at a higher court.

Categories of Law

Criminal Law concerns the relationship between the government and a citizen accused of breaking the law. The government is the only agent which can punish the person within criminal proceedings. Civil Law, on the other hand, governs the relations between individuals and corporations. In such a case, the



Government plays only the role of referee. The individual (or corporation) is responsible for investigating the case and presenting the necessary evidences.

Civil Suits can satisfy the plaintiff's need for monetary compensation and vindication (for an official body to recognize that what the defendant had done to the plaintiff was truly wrongful).

Primary VS Secondary Authorities

In law, a Primary authority is a document that establishes the law on a particular issue. Examples of primary authority in the US include the verbatim texts of:

- Constitutions;
- Statutes;
- Court opinions;
- Rules of court procedure;
- Rules of evidence;
- Rules governing the conduct of lawyers;



- Administrative regulations;
- Executive orders;
- Treaties and certain other international law materials;
- Municipal charters and ordinances.

On the other hand, a secondary authority is an authority purporting to explain the meaning or applicability of the actual verbatim texts of primary authorities.

Primary legal resources are the products of official bodies with the authority to make law. They have the power to affect legal rights. Secondary sources, in contrast, are background resources that do not have the power to affect legal rights.

Styles of Justice

Lawyers and Judges play different roles in the American and British justice systems. Adversarial justice is the style in the American system. Lawyers are



expected to be totally loyal to their client, and only present favorable evidence. They exist to protect their client. Judge and Jury play a much more passive role of observer.

Inquisitorial Justice is the style in the British system. The judge takes a very active role in examining witnesses and arranging evidence.

Tools

Westlaw is the primary online legal research services for lawyers and legal professionals in the US. It provides proprietary database services, giving subscribers unique search technologies and tools that help them find, understand, and apply the law and legal concepts in the service of their clients. Note that the West Key Number System is a master classification system of US law which is claimed to be "the only recognized legal taxonomy."

Searching case digests allows one to start case law research from a wider perspective. Generally speaking it is easier to search through large volumes of case law with digests. Most digests come with a comprehensive classification scheme to make it easier to retrieve similar cases.

