

Abstract

Justice campaigns and pressure groups against miscarriages of justice represent an important counter discourse against justice in error and can further support reform to the criminal justice system. Some campaigns have succeeded in contributing to change in criminal justice legislation and in raising public awareness of miscarriage of justice in England and Wales. As a response to wrongful conviction a frequent decision taken by appellants and their families is to set up a campaign against miscarriage of justice in order to engage in extra-judicial activities that dispute the conviction and sentence. The core aim of this study is to examine the personal, interpersonal, social and organisational dynamics of participants campaigning against miscarriage of justice. The issues covered include the early experiences of campaigners and the strategies and tactics of resistance used during campaigns. The study will further examine pressure group politics and examine political dimensions including issues of democracy and decision-making within groups. The study draws on miscarriage of justice, victimology, pressure group and media discourses and has employed a multi-method approach to data collection including participant observation, semi-structured interviews and the analysis of documentary evidence. The study identifies a complex interplay of factors contributing to campaigns against miscarriage of justice. Campaigns provide primary and secondary victims of miscarriage of justice with the support to sustain the appellant's fight against wrongful conviction. Additionally, campaigns can stimulate the activism of campaigners and contribute to extending their protest against other areas of perceived injustice. In short this study examines the intimate relationship between victimisation and mobilisation.

KEYWORDS: miscarriage of justice, wrongful conviction, factual innocence, justice campaigns, pressure groups, victims, survivors, reflexivity