

Book Reviews

Jürgen G. Backhaus

Published online: 2 December 2008
© Springer Science+Business Media, LLC 2008

Magdalena Pöschl: Gleichheit vor dem Gesetz. Wien, Springer, 2008, 980 pp, ISBN: 978-3-211-23876-9

Claus Leggewie, Elke Mühlleitner: Die Akademische Hintertreppe. Campus Verlag, Frankfurt/New York, 2007, 295 pp, ISBN: 978-3-593-38153-4 € 22

The principle of equality under the law is the subject of this habilitation thesis. The focus is on the Austrian constitution, the German constitution (Grundgesetz) does not even appear in the deep index. Although the work extends over almost one thousand pages, no opportunity is taken to use an economic analysis. This is particularly obvious—and a shortcoming—when the author discusses the benefit principle which is important for the determination of fees for public services or goods. How can the benefit principle actually be applied in the case of public goods? Is there no welfare loss if the fee takes on a positive value? Does the principle of equality not collide with the benefit principle?

The production of this massive book in softcover is pitiful, despite the price of € 139.95.

On the other hand, the publisher campus, which used to stand for truly shoddy productions of scholarly works, has produced a truly beautiful book that matches its witty and thoughtful content: The academic backstage is an alphabet from abstract to Zunft (German for guild, here standing for the academic profession).

The contrast between these two productions shows with stupendous clarity that publishers requiring printing subsidies tend to produce poor results. This is not a surprise, since printing subsidies provide the wrong incentives.

J. G. Backhaus (✉)
University of Erfurt, Erfurt, Germany
e-mail: enrico.schoebel@uni-erfurt.de