
Introduction: [Conference on the Teaching of Urban Legal Studies]

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INTRODUCTION

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The urban riots in the mid-1960's kindled the belated discovery of poverty and racial tensions in North American cities. The concern of law teachers to introduce courses in the area of urban studies can be traced to that time. Just as International Law courses had proliferated during the previous decade in response to a desire for international order, lawyers were now expected to provide prescriptions for social control (later to be known as 'law and order') and perhaps even for social change, on the urban level.

Law teachers, however, were not wholly prepared for this task. Their teaching tools consisted largely of appellate judgments and the odd statute. Urban legal studies, however, seemed to demand more flexible techniques and knowledge of human phenomena that could be acquired better from disciplines other than law. For example, in order to examine the structure of public welfare, the law by itself provides little enlightenment. In order to discover what 'poverty' or 'need' might mean, writings in the field of economics might have to be considered. Similarly, in order to understand the lifestyles of the 'lower classes' and to know something of the limits of bureaucratic responsiveness, it would be necessary to consult sociology. Many other questions about institutional design and decision making would have to be asked in a spirit of intellectual speculation perhaps alien to the traditional legal approach that feels more secure in a structured situation and the presence of a concrete plaintiff, defendant and judgment.

Whatever the initial motives for the creation of legal courses in the urban area, their introduction has presented both law and legal education with a profound challenge. Motivated by a desire to accept this challenge, a conference on *The Teaching of Urban Legal Studies* was held at Osgoode Hall Law School, York University, Toronto, on October 17-19, 1969. The papers that follow were presented at that conference, which consisted of six sessions. The subject matter of those sessions, and the authors of the papers reproduced in this Journal are as follows:†

- 1) Law and Social change in an urban environment
(Lawrence Friedman and Daniel Mandelker)
- 2) The scope of urban legal studies (Norman Redlich)
- 3) The scope of interdisciplinary collaboration
(Johann Mohr, Harold Kaplan, Julian Levi, Glendon Schubert)
- 4) The role of the lawyer in today's city (Adam Yarmolinsky)

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†Seven other papers are not reproduced here for technical reasons. They were delivered by John Wofford, Jane Jacobs, Jack Ladinsky, Clinton Bamberger, Norman Dorsen, John Ferren and John Hogarth.

- 5) Clinical training as a teaching tool (No papers reproduced here)
- 6) The use of field work in urban legal research (Joel Handler)

Marshall McLuhan has noted that Julius Caesar's first act upon assuming power was to restrict the night movement of wheeled vehicles in the streets of Rome, in order to permit sleep. Some problems that we regard today as an integral part of our modern urban crisis, such as noise pollution, are age-old problems which we have either neglected or, unlike Caesar, lacked the capacity to deal with effectively. Other problems, such as those that have at their root issues of race, class, or bureaucracy, are of more recent origin, and await our consideration. It could be that the structure of urban government is itself a cause of many city problems. Urban legal studies will begin to confront issues such as these. It is hoped that the papers that follow will stimulate thought on this subject as a new area of law and as an opportunity to refashion our approaches, skills and techniques as lawyers, legal scholars and teachers.