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A special issue devoted to Visions of Law and Social Change

Guest Editors Zuhairah Ariff Abdul Ghadas & Ida Madieha Abdul Ghani Azmi



A scientific journal published by Universiti Putra Malaysia Press

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# **Preface**

In 1927, Roscoe Pound from Harvard Law School, in his address before the Indiana Conference on Social Work, titled Law and Social Change, discussed the need to bridge the gap between what the law is and what the law ought to be due to social changes. What Poscoe was propounding is the need to train lawyers to be social fighters, seeking to advance social justice and not just legal justice.

What Poscoe propagated is not something new. The law must constantly evolve to be relevant to the society, otherwise it runs into the danger of being obsolete. The alignment of legal position with social reality must not take place at the Parliament alone but also at the courts as well as legal firms. That was the core thesis of Poscoe, i.e. even lawyers must be sensitive of changes in cultural symbols, rules of behaviour, social organisations or even value systems.

This special issue is a culmination of a two-day discussion at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Law and Society 2016. The conference which was organised by four faculties from 3 different countries within the ASEAN region i.e. Faculty of Law and International Relations, University Zainal Abidin, Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws and Universitas Muhammadiyyah Yogyakarta, hosted more than 60 academics to examine the broad theme of the conference titled Visions of Law and Social Change. The theme aptly describes the challenges currently confronting legislators and policy makers to keep national countries law up to date with social changes. The Conference which took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at the beautiful campus of Fatoni University, Pattani, Thailand, was a convergence of like-minded academics discussing the impact of social change on legal framework with heated passion and enthusiasm.

The specially selected 26 papers in this Special Issue examines the linkage between law and social change from a wide variety of angles including family, medical, company, international, contract, constitutional, human rights and land law. Readers may find that although the term 'social' appears only in three titles, the majority of the papers focus on contemporary social issues that necessitate a fresh look into the existing legal framework. In the context of human rights, for example, one cannot overlook the many social values that drive norm setting or mull over the social benefit of equal opportunity rule in take over and mergers. In other areas, the social need is even more wanting such as children's right to education, religious freedom, constitutional democracy, refugee crisis, shareholders activism and shareholders' power, internet policing, apology as a mode of resolution of medical disputes or even philanthropy and social justice in waqf administration.

In the context of Shariah, social changes may also challenge the existing legal norms that have become *sine qua non* to many Muslim scholars. In this issue, one paper seeks to

revisit the understanding of the concept of punishment and propose for the imposition of community service as an alternative punishment in *Shariah*.

Not to be forgotten are proposition of new technologies that have revolutionised business practices. Two papers in this special issue address how information technology can be used to the advantage of small businesses, such as the usage of mobile apps for enhancing legal knowledge or e-accounting system information system for small legal firms.

So intimate is the relationship between law and social changes that socio legal study has become one of the entrenched research methodologies. Law in its black letter alone is no longer sufficient, instead it must be understood in its context; hence, the socio-legal approach. In this Special Issue, two papers adopt this socio-legal approach in examining family law i.e. claims of intangible interest as matrimonial property and cross border marriages.

As final words, it is hoped this collection of papers would provide a better understanding of how social change could contribute to a better vision of law in Malaysia.

Happy reading!

#### **Guest Editors:**

Zuhairah Ariff Abdul Ghadas (*Prof. Dr.*) Ida Madieha Abdul Ghani Azmi (*Prof. Dr.*)

October 2017