

NATE ELA

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

- 2017-2020 Visiting Scholar, American Bar Foundation
- 2019 Instructor, Northwestern University Law School
- 2015 Adjunct Professor of Sociology, Lasell College
- 2007-2008 Teaching Fellow, Harvard Law School
Clinical Litigation Fellow, Harvard Law School Human Rights Program

EDUCATION

- 2018 Ph.D., Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Dissertation: "The Land Fix: Experiments with Property, Land, and Welfare in Chicago, 1895-2017"
Committee: Erik Olin Wright (chair), Gary Green, Joel Rogers, Monica White, Alfonso Morales (Urban and Regional Planning)
Preliminary exam fields: sociology of law, economic sociology
- 2012 M.S., Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison
M.S. paper: "Litigation as Dilemma: The Human Rights Class Action and Social Movement Mobilization"
- 2007 J.D., Harvard Law School
Cum laude
- 2000 B.A., Political Science, Columbia University
Magna cum laude

HONORS AND APPOINTMENTS

- 2017 Honorable Mention, Best Scholarly Article Award, ASA Section on Human Rights
- 2017 Graduate Student Member, Section Council, ASA Section on Sociology of Law

- 2016 Distinguished Graduate Student Paper Award, American Sociological Association Sociology of Law Section
- 2016 Honorable Mention, Graduate Student Paper Prize, Social Problems Theory Division, Society for the Study of Social Problems
- 2015-2017 Associate, Harvard University Department of African and African-American Studies.
- 2014-2015 Graduate Research Fellow, Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin - Madison.
- 2011-2013 Honorary Graduate Fellow, University of Wisconsin Law School Institute for Legal Studies.
- 2007-2008 Visiting Researcher, Harvard Law School.

FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

Research and Writing

- 2016 Mellon-Wisconsin Summer Dissertation Fellowship.
- 2014-2015 National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant (Award ID SES-1423371).
- 2014-2015 Lincoln Institute of Land Policy C. Lowell Harris Dissertation Fellowship.
- 2012 Social Science Research Council Dissertation Proposal Development Fellowship.
- 2008-2009 Henigson Human Rights Fellow, Harvard Law School.
- 2007-2008 Litigation Fellow, Harvard Law School International Human Rights Clinic.
- 2006 Harvard Law School Human Rights Program Summer Fellow.

Training and Travel

- 2017 Law and Society Association International Meeting Graduate Student Travel Subsidy.
- 2016 Graduate Student Travel Award, Department of Sociology, UW-Madison.
- 2015 Funded participant, Harvard Law School Institute on Global Law and Policy, 2015 Workshop (Doha, Qatar).
- 2014 Funded participant, Harvard Law School Institute on Global Law and Policy, Workshop on Global Poverty and Heterodox Development Pathways, Sciences Po Law School.
- 2013 Funded participant, Summer Institute in New Economics.
- 2012 Graduate Student Travel Award, Department of Sociology, UW-Madison.

PUBLICATIONS

Articles (* = peer reviewed)

- Forthcoming * Nate Ela, "Use-Based Welfare: Property Experiments in Chicago, 1895-1935." *Social Science History* ([preprint](#))
- 2017 * Nate Ela, "Litigation Dilemmas: Lessons from the Marcos Human Rights Class Action." *Law & Social Inquiry* 42(2): 479-508. ([LSI](#) | [preprint](#))
- *Distinguished Graduate Student Paper Award, ASA Sociology of Law Section (2016)*
- *Honorable Mention, Best Scholarly Article Award, ASA Section on Human Rights (2017)*
- 2016 Nate Ela, "Urban Commons as Property Experiment: Mapping Chicago's Farms and Gardens." *Fordham Urban Law Journal* 43(2): 247-294. ([FULJ](#) | [preprint](#))
- 2012 Nate Ela, Edo Navot, and Emanuel Ubert. "Reviewing Walker's First Year: An Agenda for the One Percent." *Social Policy* 42(1):12-19.
- 2007 Lauren Coyle, Nate Ela, and Zinaida Miller. "Introduction: Reveling in Resistance, Imagining Reconstruction." *Unbound: Harvard Journal of the Legal Left* 3:i-v.

Book Chapter

- 2017 Nate Ela and Greg Rosenberg. "Land Tenure for Urban Farming: Toward a Scalable Model." In *Good Food, Strong Communities: Promoting Social Justice Through Local and Regional Food Systems*, edited by Steve Ventura and Martin Bailkey. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press. ([MUSE](#) | [chapter content as website](#))
- To be reprinted in *The International Community Land Trust Reader*, Line Algoed, John E. Davis, and Maria Hernandez, eds. (2020)

Under Review

Nate Ela. "The Promise of Property: Cultivating Legal Optimism and Collective Efficacy in Chicago's Urban Agriculture District."

Works in Progress

Nate Ela. *Cultivating the Useful City: Chicago's Experiments with Land, Property, and Social Policy*. Book manuscript in progress.

Nate Ela. "Making Property Useful." Manuscript in preparation to submit to law reviews.

Nate Ela. "Properties of Urban Resilience."

Nate Ela. "Reclaiming the Commons: An Institutional Genealogy." Working paper. ([SocArXiv](#))
- *Honorable Mention, Graduate Student Paper Prize, Social Problems Theory Division, Society for the Study of Social Problems (2016)*

Nate Ela. "Expanding the Franchise via Compulsory Voting: Kansas City, 1889-1896."
Manuscript in preparation for social science journal.

Nate Ela. "Can Cities Require Residents to Vote?" Manuscript in preparation to submit to law reviews.

Blogging

2014-2015 Regular blogging for the [Legislation Law Prof Blog](#).

Policy Publications

2015 Erika Allen and Nate Ela. "Cultivating Productive Landscapes: A Vision for Urban Agriculture in the Millennium Reserve." Chicago Food Policy Action Counsel report submitted to Coastal Program of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Steering Committee of the Millennium Reserve. ([Report](#) | [Appendices](#))

2012 Nate Ela, Satya Rhodes-Conway, and Marion Reitz. "Assessing Food Systems Sustainability and Resilience." Mayors Innovation Project.

2009 "Cultivos Contaminados, Culturas Amenazadas: La Situación de los Transgénicos y Los Derechos Humanos en Pueblos Indígenas de Colombia." 2009. ([online](#))
[Lead author, "Contaminated Crops, Threatened Cultures: Genetically Modified Organisms and the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Colombia." Submitted by Colombian indigenous and environmental organizations to the U.N. Special Rapporteur for Indigenous Issues. English translation submitted as parallel report to the 44th Session of the U.N. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, May 2010. Available on [CESCR website](#)]

2009 Nate Ela. "Ya sabemos que el TLC es ilegal. Ahora, ¿Qué hacer?" ("We know that the free trade treaty is illegal. Now, what to do?") *Revista Semillas* 40-41: 34.

2006 Nate Ela. "On Salvaging." *Philippine Human Rights Update* 20(2). ([TFDP](#))

TEACHING

Spring 2019 Instructor, Northwestern University Law School
Teaching International Law, a general doctrinal course.

Fall 2015 Adjunct Professor of Sociology, Lasell College
Instructor for Social Policy, an upper-level undergraduate seminar.

- 2007-2008 Teaching Fellow, Harvard Law School
Worked with Professor Lucie White to teach the course Community Action for Social and Economic Rights; supervised and evaluated student projects with community-based organizations in the Boston area.
- 2007-2008 Clinical Litigation Fellow, Harvard Law School Human Rights Program
Supervised student work on party and amicus briefs in human rights litigation filed in the U.S. Supreme Court and lower federal courts under the Alien Tort Statute; organized and led fact-finding mission to South Africa.
- 2000-2002 Secondary School Teacher, Sussendenga, Mozambique
Taught Geography and English as a Foreign Language as a Peace Corps volunteer.

Guest Teaching

- 2015 Guest advisor on interviewing and fieldwork techniques, Harvard Law School International Human Rights Clinic simulation on field research, Oct. 16.
- 2008 Guest lecturer (with Meghan Morris), “The Practice and Ethics of Human Rights Litigation in United States Courts.” Universidad de los Andes Law School. Bogotá, Colombia, Nov. 12.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

- 2014-2015 Project Assistant, Community and Regional Food Systems Project
Ethnographic research on land tenure and urban agriculture in Chicago, focusing on the emerging role of land trusts and alternative business forms. Funded by U.S. Department of Agriculture grant 2011-68004-30044.
- 2010 Project Assistant, Interdisciplinary Study of Wisconsin Institutes for Discovery
Interviewing and archival research concerning creation and early history of a new public/private scientific institute at UW-Madison.
- 2009-2010 Apprentice Farmer, Maysie’s Farm and Conservation Center
Worked on small organic farm in the exurbs of Philadelphia.
- 2003-2004 Investigator, New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board
Investigated complaints against police officers, interviewing complainants, officers, and witnesses. Recommended disposition of allegations.

CONFERENCE ORGANIZING

- 2018 Organizer, “Law & Social Welfare Distribution,” open session, Sociology of Law Section, American Sociological Association annual meeting, Philadelphia, August 12-13.
- 2017 Co-organizer (with John Robinson, Washington University in St. Louis Dept. of Sociology), “Reimagining Access: Institutional Experiments in the Postindustrial City,” session co-sponsored by the LSA collaborative research networks on Legal Geography and Technology, Law, and Society, and by the International Research Group on Law and Urban Space; Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, Mexico City, June 20-23.
- 2016 Co-organizer (with Thomas Mitchell, University of Wisconsin Law School), service panel, “The Sociolegal Researcher as Social Justice Advocate: Challenges and Opportunities,” Law and Society Association annual meeting, New Orleans, June 2-5.
- 2015 Co-organizer and co-chair (with Thomas Mitchell, University of Wisconsin Law School), service panel, “Bending Toward Justice? Reflecting on the Role of Sociolegal Research in Advancing Social Change,” Law and Society Association annual meeting, Seattle, May 28-31.
- 2015 Co-organizer (with John Robinson, Northwestern University Dept. of Sociology), Legal Geography Collaborative Research Network sponsored session, “Re-envisioning the City: The Limits and Possibilities of Property,” Law and Society Association annual meeting, Seattle, May 28-31.
- 2014 Co-organizer (with Monica White, University of Wisconsin-Madison Dept. of Sociology), two panel sessions on the history of urban agriculture, Growing Power Urban & Small Farms Conference, Milwaukee, Nov. 6-9.
- 2012 Co-organizer (with Erik Olin Wright, University of Wisconsin-Madison Dept. of Sociology), Workshop on the Sociology of Urban Agriculture, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Oct. 5-7.
- 2007 Co-organizer, *Unbound* spring symposium, “Resistance and the Law: Radicalism, Extremism, Legitimacy, Cooptation,” Harvard Law School, March 16-17.

PRESENTATIONS

- 2019 “Properties of Urban Resilience”
Scheduled for session organized by Socio-Legal Approaches to Property research network (CRN 49), Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, May 30-June 1.
- 2018 “Making Property Useful”
Socio-Legal Approaches to Property (CRN 49) session, Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, Toronto, June 9-11.

- 2017 “Visions of a City Transformed: Urban Farming in Progressive-Era Chicago”
Newberry Library Urban History Workshop, Nov. 11.
- 2017 “Use-Based Welfare: Property Experiments in Chicago, 1895-1935.”
American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Welfare State Regular
Session, Montreal, Aug. 12-15.
- 2017 “The Promised Land? Englewood Reckons with an Urban Agriculture District”
Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, Mexico City, June 20-23.
- 2017 “Experimental Fields: Inventing the Urban Agriculture District.”
American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, Boston, Apr. 5-9.
Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, Mexico City, June 20-23.
- 2016 “Use-Based Welfare: Property Experiments in Chicago, 1895-2015.”
ASA Economic Sociology Section Pre-Conference Workshop on the New
Economy, Seattle, Aug. 19.
Boston College Environmental Sociology Working Group, Apr. 1.
Workshop on Economic Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Mar. 31.
- 2016 “Reclaiming the Commons, Activating Space: A Dual Genealogy.”
Critical Theory Regular Session, American Sociological Association Annual
Meeting, Seattle, Aug. 20-23.
Society for the Study of Social Problems annual meeting, session on “Critical
Theories of Social Problems,” Seattle, Aug. 19-21.
Workshop on Economic Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Feb. 25.
- 2016 “Urban Commons as Property Experiment: Mapping Chicago’s Farms and Gardens.”
Society for the Study of Social Problems annual meeting, Critical Dialogue
session on “Connecting the Dots in Institutional Ethnographic Research,” Seattle,
Aug. 19-21.
First Thematic IASC-Conference on the Urban Commons, Bologna, Nov. 6-7,
2015.
- 2015 “Reclaiming the Commons: Genealogy of a Sociolegal Imaginary”
First Thematic IASC-Conference on the Urban Commons, Bologna, Nov. 6-7.
Law and Society Annual Conference, Seattle, May 28-31.
- 2015 “Claiming land by cultivating identity? The search for common ground in Chicago’s
farms and gardens.”
Rural Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Madison, WI, Aug. 6-9.
- 2015 “Commoning as an Urban Social Practice.”
Workshop on Economic Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Mar. 25.
- 2015 “Regulating the Resilient City: A Project to Study Socio-Ecological Urban Governance.”
Workshop of the Harvard Institute for Global Law and Policy, Doha, Jan. 2-10.

- 2014 “Jensen’s Dream, Deferred.”
Growing Power Urban & Small Farms Conference. Milwaukee, Nov. 6-9.
- 2014 “Commoning as an Urban Social Practice.”
Midwest Law and Society Retreat, University Wisconsin-Madison, Oct. 24-25.
- 2014 “The Urban Agriculture Land Trust as a Vehicle for Commoning.”
Urban Agriculture Law Conference, University of Maryland School of Law, Sept. 19.
- 2014 “Cultivating a Commons? Urban Farming and Property Law in Chicago, 1893-1920.”
Fifth Workshop on the Ostrom Workshop (WOW5) conference, Indiana University, June 18-21.
- 2014 Participant, Roundtable on Global Development and Heterodox Development Pathways.
Sciences Po Law School Intensive Doctoral Week, Paris, May 19.
- 2013 “Cultivating a Commons?”
University of Chicago Law School, Nov. 19.
- 2013 “Modeling Progressive Law for States and Cities: The American Legislative and Issue Campaign Exchange.”
Northwestern University Law School, Nov. 7.
Shaking the Foundations Conference. Stanford Law School, Nov. 2-3.
IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law, Sept 7.
Northern Illinois University College of Law, Sept. 4.
John Marshall Law School, Chicago, Feb. 25.
- 2013 “Cultivating a Commons? Urban Farming and Emerging Property Norms in Chicago, 1909-1920.”
Association for Law, Property, and Society Annual Conference. Minneapolis, April 26-27.
Law and Society Association Annual Conference. Boston, May 30-June 2.
- 2013 “Jensen’s Dream, Deferred: Urban Farming and Property in Chicago, 1909-1920.”
American Society for Environmental History Annual Conference. Toronto, April 4-6.
- 2012 “Law, Land, and Urban Farming in Chicago.”
Midwest Law and Society Retreat. Madison, WI, Sept. 20-21.
- 2012 “Urban Agriculture Growth Coalitions: Laying the Legal Groundwork for the Garden Cities of Tomorrow.”
Law and Society Association Annual Conference. Honolulu, June 5-8.
- 2012 “Introducing ALICE: The American Legislative and Issue Campaign Exchange.”
Rebellious Lawyering Conference. Yale Law School, Feb. 18.

Society of American Law Teachers Norman Amaker Retreat. Loyola Chicago Law School, Feb. 25.

- 2011 “How to Analyze Alien Tort Litigation and Social Movement Mobilization? Lessons from the Marcos Human Rights Class Action.”
Law and Society Association Annual Conference. San Francisco, June 2-5.
- 2011 “Four Ways of Thinking About Alien Tort Litigation and Social Movement Mobilization.”
Conference on Renewing Radical Scholarship. Upham Woods, WI, May 27-29.
- 2010 “The Resilience Research Center.”
Workshop on the Social Economy. Upham Woods, WI, Dec. 11-12.
- 2009 “Transgénicos y los Derechos Humanos de los Pueblos Indígenas en Colombia.”
[“Genetically Modified Organisms and the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Colombia.”]
Universidad Libre Law School. Bogotá, Colombia, Aug. 21.
- 2007 “The Globalization of Collective Litigation: A Structural Approach.”
Visiting Researcher Colloquium, Harvard Law School, Nov. 28.

SERVICE

Internal

University of Wisconsin-Madison:

Sociology Department Social Committee, 2012-2013.

Center for Culture, History, and the Environment (CHE).
Graduate affiliate, 2010-present.

Planning committee, 2013 place-based workshop on urban agriculture.

Harvard Law School:

Unbound: Harvard Journal of the Legal Left. Co-editor-in-chief, 2005-2007; Member, 2004-2005.

Harvard Law Student Advocates for Human Rights. Vice President for Projects, 2006-2007; U.S. interest group leader, 2005-2006.

HLS Peace. Founding member, 2005-2007.

External

American Sociological Association, Section on the Sociology of Law

Graduate Student Member, Section Council, 2017.

Member, Distinguished Student Paper Award committee, 2017.

Law and Society Association

Chair and discussant, panel on “Inter/Action in Environmental Law Settings: Constituting and Understanding Social Action,” 2011 Annual Conference, San Francisco.

Occasional Peer Review:

International Journal of Transitional Justice; National Science Foundation.

Policy/Community

Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council, 2011-2015

Co-Organizer (with Erika Allen, Growing Power) of roundtable discussions on potential urban agriculture land use in the Millennium Reserve, September 2014 - February 2015.

Co-Organizer (with Erika Allen, Growing Power) of discussion session on land tenure strategies for urban agriculture, Chicago Food Policy Summit, March 2014.

Co-Organizer (with Erika Allen, Growing Power) of panel discussion on land use and urban agriculture, Chicago Food Policy Summit, March 2013.

Comparative policy research on urban agriculture zoning, land trusts, and urban farming incubator programs, 2010-2012.

Urban Pathways Project, 2015

Research support concerning business models for community organizing process to develop community-controlled cooperative for commercial urban farmers in Englewood neighborhood in Chicago.

Northwestern University Conference on Human Rights, Jan. 2012.

Chair and Discussant, Session on “Defining the Right to Food.”

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Sociological Association, 2012-

Law and Society Association, 2011-

Rural Sociological Society, 2012-

American Constitution Society for Law and Policy, 2013-

LANGUAGES

English Native speaker

Spanish Proficient (speaking, writing, reading)

French Proficient (speaking, reading); Working knowledge (writing)

Portuguese Proficient (speaking, reading); Working knowledge (writing)

BAR ADMISSION

Massachusetts, 2007-