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Senior Editor in Chief's Note

Kenneth D. Colburn
Butler University

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SENIOR EDITOR IN CHIEF'S NOTE

I am quite pleased to present the inaugural issue of the *Midwest Social Sciences Journal* (formerly *Journal of the Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences*). This change in journal name was first approved by the IASS Board of Directors in February 2018 and was reaffirmed by the Board at its February 2019 meeting. To acknowledge the Journal's roots and preserve its continuity with JIASS, I continue with consecutive numbering of issues from JIASS; this first issue of the *Midwest Social Sciences Journal* (MSSJ) is Volume 22 (2019). As a historical note, the name change from *Proceedings of the IASS* to the now former title *Journal of the IASS* was approved by the Board of Directors back in 1998–1999, when the current numbering of issues began.

The Journal's name change reflects several developments in recent years, the most important of which is the fact that our journal's non-Indiana authors, topics, and readership have grown considerably and frequently reflect a regional, Midwestern focus. We are gratified that many authors and articles published in this journal (as well as authors and presentations at the annual meeting) reflect a national or international background or focus. The world has not only become "smaller" but has also become more connected and interconnected. Indiana in 2019 is thus connected and interconnected in many ways with regional, national, and international economics, culture, environmental concerns, politics, and media. It is not possible to understand Indiana today without simultaneously understanding the other parts of this equation: regional, national, and global. Although we do not intend to lose our "Hoosier" outlook and interest in Indiana, going forward, we hope to publish even more social science research that addresses regional, national, and international contexts and perspectives. This is the major impetus for changing our name and brand as we move forward in the 21st century.

Our interdisciplinary commitment remains fixed and unchanged, representing the *sine qua non* of our identity, and it reflects our unique contribution to understanding phenomena from diverse social sciences. Disciplinary specialization and its institutional correlates, institutionalization and professionalization, threaten to shortchange the promise of the social sciences to provide deep knowledge and understanding to guide constructive social policies that promote human potential and social justice. Our journal remains one of the very few places one can find high-quality academic research from across the social sciences in one location.

This year's volume offers 12 research papers (including one student paper) and two essays exploring a wide variety of topics and exhibiting a range of disciplinary approaches. This volume leads off with Professor Quinn Dauer's paper on natural disasters and crime-disorder narratives in the context of Argentina's 1861 Mendoza Earthquake, which destroyed this provincial capital. Professor Tina Ebenger and Tracey McCabe examine the issue of political corruption in a study of East Chicago government and the Sidewalk Six scandal involving vote-buying to help reelect the city's mayor. Dr. Sarah Heath offers the reader an interesting social history and analysis of extremist groups in the 1960s, especially the John Birch Society and its efforts to infiltrate and undermine the National Parent Teacher Association.

Changing focus back to South America, Professor Ryan Lee analyzes Colombian trade agreements and related economic areas such as tariffs from 2007 to 2013. Professors Lulla and Dwyer examine racial segregation in Indianapolis from 1990 to 2010 with the application of KDE methodology to analyze census data for the Indianapolis area. Professors Lynn, Hughes, and Adam offer an analysis of four films having various degrees of accuracy with respect to slavery or the civil rights movement, also surveying about 100 viewers of the four films with questions about race and civil rights. Psychologists Delmira Monteiro and Mixalis Poulakis share results of a timely qualitative study exploring the effects of cisnormative beauty standards on transgender women's perceptions and expressions of beauty. Professors Old and Fields undertake a study of antidiscrimination civil rights ordinances using an event-history analysis to test the validity of various theories of municipal policy processes. Professor Stella Ress shares a case study of power dynamics in a middle-class 19th-century "Yankee" family transplanted to the Midwest.

Professors Weller, Parkison, and Cox, along with student Micheal Plummer, share the results of their survey of undergraduate and graduate students' perspectives on sexual harassment and misconduct. Currently incarcerated scholars Molly Whitted and Michelle Williams offer an interesting study of the very first cohort of women at the Indiana Reformatory Institution for Women and Girls between 1873 and 1884. To complete the lineup of research articles, student Zachary Havlin examines measures of parent-child interactions for identifying problematic parenting behaviors in children's development.

This volume concludes with two essays on topics of public interest, the first being an essay by Calvin Bellamy concerning his experience over the past dozen years with the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission, which serves 24 member communities in Northwest Indiana. The second essay, from Katie Smolucha and Dr. Tyler Counsil, examines the promise and reality of forensic DNA analysis, especially regarding recent developments in the use of family genealogy databases for criminal investigations and DNA's utility in helping to close cold cases. All in all, this volume offers a very strong and engaging set of monographs on many important social and political issues of our day.

The current issue represents the ninth volume I have edited since I first assumed the role of editor for 2010–2011. I am proud of our accomplishments over this extended period, including the journal's new title, the establishment of a double-blind review system, and the move to having an online edition of the Journal in addition to a print publication. The Journal was transferred to the Berkeley digital commons platform two years ago, and I am pleased to report that as of this past Labor Day weekend, the Journal's articles had more than 24,000 downloads from across the nation and globe—more than 14,000 of them in the past year alone.

Since my first year as editor, beginning with Volume 14 (2010–2011), papers submitted to MSSJ are no longer limited to those presented at the annual meeting and conference. While authors of papers presented at our annual conference continue to be encouraged to submit their work for possible publication, authors and social scientists from anywhere in the world are encouraged to submit their research papers for review. Additionally, the Journal no longer identifies papers as it once did, by disciplinary subject heading. This is because we no longer attempt to publish at least one paper

from each or most of the disciplines represented by the IASS in every volume. Since 2011, we have published papers strictly on the basis of merit, with the result that in every volume published, some disciplines have more than one paper represented and other disciplines have none. We encourage submission of exceptional research from students and over the years have published several outstanding examples of student scholarship. To ensure quality and fairness, articles submitted for possible publication undergo, after a preliminary review by the editorial staff, a double-blind peer-review process involving at least two referees. The quality of submitted and accepted papers has remained high during my tenure as editor, resulting in a journal that has earned respect across wide academic circles for adhering to rigorous standards of social science scholarship.

Since the development of the online edition of the journal, print copies are no longer mailed to members; instead, copies are available for members to pick up at the annual meeting (print copies may be ordered for additional cost plus a shipping-and-handling charge). Volume 22 will, as usual, be indexed and available through EBSCO and will be listed in *Cabell's Directory* (of special interest for scholars in business, economics, and finance). All of these developments represent important milestones for both the Journal and the Academy and will ensure their successful transition to the 21st century of scholarly communication.

I have been fortunate during the past nine years to have been able to work with a talented and dedicated staff of coeditors, referee-reviewers, and, of course, authors. I would like to publicly acknowledge and thank my editorial staff for their assistance, insight, and guidance throughout this past year. There have been some changes in the editorial staff over the past year. Nirupama Devaraj (Valparaiso University) joins our team as deputy editor; I have enjoyed her support and assistance over the past year and look forward to working with her over the next year. Surekha Rao has departed from our team, and I thank her for her service as deputy editor. I continue to be fortunate and grateful for the excellent editorial assistance of Stephanie Seifert Stringham, who has been our copy editor since 2011 and Volume 14 (2010–2011). Stephanie continues to be a major editorial presence and resource behind the scene, ensuring that every single line of text, graph, table, and bibliographic reference meets the highest professional and technical standards prior to publication. Stephanie's dedication, competence, and attention to detail have helped to make every paper we publish shine. Many thanks are in order. Over the years, I have also enjoyed the support of Dr. Mary C. Moore (University of Indianapolis) as managing editor. Her administrative assistant, Julie Cripps, was invaluable this year in assisting with mailing of journals to various persons and organizations. Thank you both!

I also want to publicly recognize and thank our many **referee-reviewers**, who serve without fanfare, reading and evaluating papers submitted for publication, and helping assure that every issue maintains the highest standards of scholarly excellence. Our reviewers' names are published at the end of the journal; these reviewers deserve a moment of attention and everyone's thanks. Quite simply, MSSJ would not be possible without their professional dedication and commitment.

Last but not least, I acknowledge and thank Jay Howard, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Butler University, for his strong support over the years of

both IASS and my role as JIASS-MSSJ editor. Dean Howard provides funding and advocacy for my work as editor, and I am grateful for his friendship and support.

Life is change, and my role as editor is no exception. My current term as senior editor expires in October 2020, and I have informed the Board that I believe ten years in the role of editor is more than enough for any one scholar and I therefore do not plan to continue as senior editor beyond the expiration of my current term. I have asked the Board to begin the search for a new senior editor-elect to be in position, if at all possible, by October 2019. This will permit a year of transition for the new editor to learn about and become familiar with the requirements of the job while I am still in place to assist with this process.

Kenneth D. Colburn, Jr., PhD
Senior Editor in Chief
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BUTLER UNIVERSITY
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