

# Midwest Social Sciences Journal

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## Editors' Note

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## EDITORS' NOTE

The academic landscape, like so many other areas of life, has not been left untouched by the pandemic that began in 2020. The quick spread of the disease, public reaction, our personal apprehensions and struggles, and the heroic sacrifices of public health, medical, and frontline workers have been unprecedented in our lifetimes. Academia has faced its own unique struggles through this crisis, and yet, we are pleased to note, social scientists in our region and elsewhere have been busy asking interesting questions, conducting research, reviewing peer research, and sharing findings with the community.

The papers published in the 25th volume of the *Midwest Social Sciences Journal* (MSSJ) are evidence of a breadth of topics that we had the opportunity to review during the year. We are thankful to the authors for submitting manuscripts to MSSJ, and to the multitude of reviewers who took the time to iteratively provide authors thorough and insightful feedback, to produce work that maintains the highest standards of scholarly work.

This year's volume includes research on how federal bureaucracy can act as a disproportionate barrier to student financial assistance, how incarcerated men perceive prison environments, parenting style and power relationships, performance of individuals experiencing attention-deficit disorder, institutional practices regarding screening for sex trafficking, and the definition of a geographic region along the Mississippi River.

Mungo and Klonowski conduct a discourse analysis of a perceptibly neutral socioeconomic instrument (i.e., the FAFSA form) to demonstrate that the criminal disclosure question in the form acts as a disproportionate barrier to entry to college especially for students of color. They find that, although college completion allows minority youth to leave behind their entanglements with the criminal justice system, access to higher education could be impeded by a single question on a form. Another paper, by Melissa Stacer, investigates the rehabilitative potential of the criminal justice system by surveying male inmates on their perceptions of the prison environment. The findings recommend promoting a prosocial prison environment for effective rehabilitation and positive post-release outcomes.

Kathy Ritchie's research examines the power-assertiveness response of mothers with varying parenting styles. The work advances understanding of maternal response that is conditional upon parenting style, and implications for child behavior. The second paper focusing on behavior, by Rodriguez and Stauffacher, investigates the neural bases of ADHD by conducting performance tests on college students. The study highlights the heterogeneity of neurophysical and behavioral responses across individuals with ADHD and provides a deeper understanding of such individuals' ability to perform at optimal levels.

Elwood et al. make the case for a change in training programs for social workers, to equip them with increased knowledge and confidence to screen young adult victims of sex trafficking, and Telle and Perkins conduct spatial analysis of socioeconomic county-level census data to define a formal geographic region based around the Great River Road in Missouri.

We are also privileged to publish Omar McRoberts's keynote address, "Of Movements and Markets: Religious Competition and the Problem of Black Church Relevance," from the 93rd annual meeting of the Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences, hosted by Indiana University Northwest in October 2022. Roberts makes a compelling case that even in the midst of market competition—from secular institutions and largely White megachurches and from churches that preach a gospel of individual material attainment—the "Black church" has coalesced at moments of political opportunity into "unified public religious action" on behalf of "the people."

We continue our efforts to expand the readership and authorship of the MSSJ across the Midwest region and globally while maintaining the highest standards of scholarly work. The journal continues to maintain an acceptance rate of approximately 35%. Authors from across the Midwest are contributors to half of the papers in the forthcoming volume. Reviewers for the current volume are drawn from institutions across the country and internationally. During the past year, 992 papers from MSSJ have been downloaded by more than 500 institutions. The following are the two most downloaded papers (in order):

1. Monteiro, Delmira, and Mixalis Poulakis. 2019. "Effects of Cisnormative Beauty Standards on Transgender Women's Perceptions and Expressions of Beauty." *Midwest Social Sciences Journal* 22(1):10. <http://scholar.valpo.edu/mssj/vol22/iss1/10>.
2. Clark, Kevin M. 2021. "Double Loop Learning and Productive Reasoning: Chris Argyris's Contributions to a Framework for Lifelong Learning and Inquiry." *Midwest Social Sciences Journal* 24(1):6. <https://scholar.valpo.edu/mssj/vol24/iss1/6/>.

The George C. Roberts Award for best paper published in the MSSJ was awarded to Chae Young Chang for his paper "Effects of States' Laws on Youth Physical Activity Participation and Obesity Prevalence" for Vol. 24 (2021). It can be found at <https://scholar.valpo.edu/mssj/vol24/iss1/5>.

This year, 2022, marks the 75th anniversary of the journal, and we propose to publish a commemorative issue with the theme "Emerging Themes and Perspectives in the Social Sciences." The interconnectedness of the world requires research that is not confined within disciplinary silos, and in publishing this special issue, our goal is to reinforce the mission of the journal to embrace that interconnectedness. We also hope to highlight work that tackles the complexity of contemporary social problems using innovative methodologies and analytical tools. We welcome proposals and recommendations of scholars who can make a significant contribution to this theme and special issue. Authors intending to contribute to the special issue are asked to provide an abstract of the proposed work to the editorial team by January 15, 2023. The following scholars will be the editors of the special issue:

Aimee Adam, Associate Professor of Psychology, Indiana University Southeast

Selena Sanderfer Doss, Associate Professor of History, Western  
Kentucky University

Melissa J. Stacer, Professor of Criminal Justice, University of  
Southern Indiana

Rajiv Thakur, Associate Professor of Geography, Missouri State  
University

Laura Merrifield Wilson, Associate Professor of Political Science,  
University of Indianapolis

We are grateful to our copy editor, Stephanie Seifert Stringham, and our publishing advisor, Jonathan Bull, for their diligence and untiring support. Lastly, we thank Gregg Johnson, Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, for his support of the Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences, and Trisha Mileham, Dean of the Library at Valparaiso University, for her support for hosting the *Midwest Social Sciences Journal* on ValpoScholar.

Nirupama Devaraj and Bharath Ganesh Babu

Coeditors

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