Law & Society REVIEW



# A Brief Note from the New Editors

Issue 1 of Volume 48 is the first issue to appear under "our watch." We take this opportunity to thank our predecessors, Jonathan Goldberg-Hiller and David T. Johnson, to briefly introduce ourselves, and to speak to some editorial principles we will follow.

Thanks first to Jonathan Goldberg-Hiller and David T. Johnson for their excellent and hard work over the past years. One sign of their success, besides the many stimulating articles published during their editorship, is the substantial increase in the journal's impact factor from 1.4 to 1.8. The impact factor of the *Review* is not the primary indicator toward which our work will be oriented, but we will keep an eye on this measure as one sign of the journal's success. Jon and David's reach certainly extends into this first issue published under our editorship.

The transition from the previous to the new editors is, in one important way, a sign of continuity—even if the contrast between Hawaii and Minnesota may appear startling. Again, the editorial pair consists of a political scientist (Johnson) and a sociologist (Savelsberg), both at the University of Minnesota in the Twin Cities. Johnson's work has focused on how institutional rules and norms affect political behavior. Specifically, he has analyzed the effect of internal institutions on the decision-making process of U.S. Courts, interactions between branches in a system of separated powers, how judges interact with one another in open court, and how attorneys attempt to persuade judges. Savelsberg has addressed a diversity of themes all linked by a focus on effects of institutional arrangements on knowledge, political and legal decision outcomes. They include white-collar crime legislation; sentencing guidelines, examined in light of Max Weber's sociology of law; comparative rates of punishment; sociolegal and criminological scholarship; issues of law and collective memory; and human rights. Between the two of us, we have applied a great diversity of empirical methods. Our data collection efforts have included ethnography, in depth interviews and content analysis of news media, legislative and judicial documents, textbooks and historical archives; while our data analytical methods have reached from qualitative to advanced statistical work.

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The principles we hope to follow build on what a long line of distinguished predecessors have been striving for over the past (almost) half century. They all sought excellence, and we too will work to select only the best work in the law and society field as we fill the pages of the journal. Further, while our disciplinary, substantive, and methodological criteria will be liberal, we understand that the *Law & Society Review* has a tradition as a social science journal, enriched by behavioral sciences and historical perspectives. It is not a law review. Instead, we privilege papers that are theoretically guided and empirically based. Pure theoretical treatises are not excluded, of course, but they would have to hold potential of being truly path breaking in the world of law and society scholarship. We will also pay close attention to the suggested word length of papers. The range of 8,000 to 14,000 words reflects the institutional memory of what is required (and what exceeds the required) to make for a good article. The space provided to the journal is limited, and we hope to include as many as possible of the best among the some 300 submissions we receive each year.

The first months of our work have already shown us the value of the editorial board and of the many reviewers. They volunteer precious and scarce time to get immersed in the work of (often unknown) others and to write thoughtful and helpful comments. We profoundly thank members of the old Board. As is common with a new editor team, we have begun to invite a new group of scholars on board, and the transition process will continue through the coming year. The vast majority of new members are early career scholars, who have nevertheless already proven their outstanding scholarly qualification and their devotion to the law and society field.

A final word of thanks is due to our many colleagues who have reviewed papers at our request over the past 10 months. We thank them more than we can express. We understand that reviewers are, at times, overburdened and at times so much so that they have to decline. In the latter cases, we have been grateful for many suggestions of potential alternates.

We conclude with a word of gratitude and humility. We are mindful of the great responsibility of our task, and we will do our very best to justify the trust the Law & Society Association has invested in us.

Timothy R. Johnson and Joachim J. Savelsberg

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