Politics and the Life Sciences
The Rise of a New Framework

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Some would argue there is a global movement afoot to study "biopolitics." More and more scholarly reports that help shape our understanding of the political domain from this perspective are filling the pages of research journals. This is an important era of increasing scholarly interest in the intersection of the political and biological worlds and the rapidly evolving analytical innovations available to explore this still under-explored domain. With the arrival of these new opportunities comes a new editorial team at *Politics and the Life Sciences* (*PLS*). It is a team that extends its appreciation to the Council of the Association for Politics and the Life Sciences for the trust they put in it to steer the journal forward at this interesting and critical time. As well, it is a team that expresses its heartfelt gratitude to its immediate predecessors, Tony Wohlers, Maggie Kosal, and their editorial colleagues, for their determined leadership of the journal over the last three years and the easy transition they facilitated for the new team. They clearly laid a firm foundation for the next stage of the development of the journal.

This note describes the new framework that this editorial team will employ in its stewardship of the journal. Its emergence is the result of a gradual evolution that has developed from input from a range of stakeholders over an extended period of time. This framework yields a number of goals and objectives, both continuing and new, that will guide the editorial team as it begins its stewardship of *PLS* with this volume.

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The Continuing

The journal continues to welcome new, original research manuscripts that rigorously assess the relationship between biological mechanisms, broadly construed, and political behavior, political institutions, and public policy. *PLS* will continue to champion rigorously conducted empirical research, both quantitative and qualitative, that tests clearly articulated theoretical assertions as well as rigorously argued theoretical and ethical essays that stimulate further scientific research and thought. The journal is interested in scholarship that analyzes politics as a domain in which environmental and biological factors interact and that uses theories of the natural sciences in its analyses. It is also interested in research that addresses global problems related to biological issues from perspectives such as epidemiology, population studies, environmental science, and biotechnology.

The range of appropriate submissions is extraordinarily wide, and to support the full range of submissions the editorial team welcomes an equally wide range of scholarship. Scholars working in fields related to politics, psychology, economics, evolution, the life sciences, medicine, health policy, psychophysiology, behavioral genetics, criminology, ethics and philosophy, international security, environmental science, political and environmental history, media/communication, and law are invited to submit their research. Put otherwise, *PLS* is a broadly interdisciplinary social science journal that publishes rigorous theoretical arguments and credible empirical evidence that probe the intersection of politics and the life sciences. One caveat is that the journal is not suited to consider scholarship identified as biopolitical in the post-modernist

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tradition (see Liesen & Walsh, 2012), and in these instances the team recommends submission elsewhere.

To be accepted for publication, a manuscript must offer new knowledge or a new understanding of existing knowledge or provide new evidence regarding previously published research such as in replication studies. It must be both "political" and "life scientific" in its implications, if not in its methods, and the symbiosis between the two approaches must be clear. Scholars of politics must take care to ensure that the life sciences content of their submissions is well-researched and supported, and scholars of the life sciences must take equal care to ensure that the political content of their work is theoretically sound, historically accurate, and philosophically aware. Editorial decisions will be informed by double-blind peer review and judgements regarding the worthiness and appropriateness of the subject, the scientific contribution of the manuscript, the rigor of the arguments and analyses, and the overall quality of the manuscript.

The New

To accommodate the new opportunities, the editorial team will promote a substantially expanded portfolio of types of articles to consider for publication. The types of manuscripts include the following:

- **Research Articles** (up to 15,000 words) present novel empirical and/or theoretical findings that are based on rigorously conducted quantitative or qualitative research. Research Articles present complete Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results, and Discussion sections.
- **Research Notes** (up to 5,000 words) present summaries of novel findings that do not meet the level of theoretical and/or empirical contribution expected in Research Articles but do provide advances in research that are likely to stimulate further investigation.
- **Meta-Analysis Reports** (up to 5,000 words) present rigorously conducted meta-analyses of previous research, both published and unpublished, that are designed to derive conclusions about a well-defined question.
- **Replication Reports** (up to 5,000 words) present summaries of rigorously conducted replications of previously published research findings, including replications with negative results.
- **Research Tool Reports** (up to 5,000 words) introduce and describe best practices, innovations, or emerging research methods and techniques that can advance biopolitical research.
- **Perspective Essays** (up to 10,000 words) develop and advance in a rigorous, systematic way new theory that is relevant to and advances scientific biopolitical research.
- **Book Reviews** (1,000–1,500 words) and **Review Essays** (2,000–3,000 words) critically inform readers of the contents of a book and the arguments of its author(s). Review Essays review, critique, and integrate the arguments of two or more books.

It is important to note that the editors especially welcome the submission of pre-registered studies and registered reports.

While the journal is well situated in topics such as biopolitical behavior and psychology, the editorial team encourages submissions on some highly pertinent but relatively untapped topics including biocriminology, public health policy and history, environmental politics, and health and medical ethics. Beyond expanding topically, the editorial teams is mindful of the importance of differences in the political arena around the globe. To this end, the editors particularly encourage submissions from Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America to ensure that biopolitical scholarship in its widest form is disseminated in the pages of the journal.

The journal will strive to emphasize its commitment to the best principles of scholarly integrity and transparency such as is demonstrated by its association with the highly respected Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). In a related effort, the editors will review and as appropriate begin the process of implementing the Center for Open Science's Transparency and Openness Promotion (TOP) Guidelines. This process, and ultimately becoming a TOP signatory, will place demands on limited editorial resources, so implementation must be thoughtful and resourceful. Finally, the journal will strongly encourage, but not require at this time, authors to submit their data and replication files to a publicly available data archive. The editorial team believes transparency is not only good for science, it is also good for the journal and its authors.

The Invitation

PLS is well situated to contribute to and benefit from the acceleration of biopolitical research. It enjoys

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the enthusiastic support of its esteemed publisher, Cambridge University Press, which has devoted considerable time, energy, expertise, and other resources to expand the journal's reach and quality. It also reaps the benefits of the abundant generosity of its scholarly society, the Association for Politics and the Life Sciences, which, among other contributions, has committed considerable financial resources to funding research, some of which appears in the pages of the journal. Overall, the editorial team sees a great number of opportunities to build the journal and is optimistic about its future. The editors invite your submissions and feedback as the journal moves to become the vibrant center of scientific biopolitical research in the academic world.

References

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