From the editor

Biopolitics—still descriptive?

> biopolitics, *n.*
>
> With *sing.* concord. The interaction between politics and biology; *spec. (a)* politically motivated intervention in the growth or development of a population; *(b)* the use of biological science to explain human social or political behaviour; *(c)* environmental policy.
>
> – *Oxford English Dictionary*

Though the dictionary definition still applies to scientific research in politics and the life sciences (see definitions *b* and *c* above), use of the term *biopolitics* is now much more common among postmodernists and critical theorists than scientific researchers. This is the finding of Laurette Liesen and Mary Walsh in their lead article on the competing meanings of "biopolitics" in political science. Tracking such scholarly shifts is both interesting and important, as it allows us to take stock of disciplinary developments and identify trends in research that may otherwise go unnoticed.

Labels have never delimited research in politics and the life sciences but they do help identify the scope of scholarship conducted under the general heading of biopolitical research. An updated understanding of the term clearly must now encompass critical or postmodern approaches, which may not sit well with some scientific investigators or policy analysts.

Reactions to the widening use of *biopolitics* will appear in the next issue with three commentaries that respond to Liesen and Walsh's observation that we have lost control of the term. The consensus: It's time to move on—but with some appreciation for the inroads that earlier generations of biopolitical scholars have made in political science more broadly as well as the contributions of cultural scholars to understanding politics from a Foucauldian perspective. If a forum materializes on "biocitizenship" in a future issue of the journal, it will be a direct outgrowth of this discussion.

Ideas for special forums featuring a set of articles organized around a common theme relevant to politics and the life sciences research are welcome. If you have an active research agenda in a particular area of biopolitics, whether from a social scientific, policy, or philosophical perspective, and would like to propose a special forum, please send a short synposis of your idea to me directly at erik.bucy@ttu.edu.

In characteristic fashion, this content-rich issue features research articles that illustrate the breadth of biopolitical research: the impact of presidential illness on the administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower, public attitudes toward biofuels, the political economy of disease control in Mexico, and the influence of moral constraints on emotion research. There is a life sciences communication theme embedded in the issue as well, with pieces on media use and science knowledge, hypernews and biological authenticity, and the issue attention cycle for media coverage of a nanoparticle-related incident.

Despite varying meanings of biopolitics in political science, research in the field, however circumscribed or defined, remains strong.

Finally, a few housekeeping notes. To put our tardy publication schedule back on track, we are presenting this issue as a double issue—31(1-2). Doing so allows us to publish the hard copy of the journal in the same calendar year as the announced publication date. Look for the spring 2013 issue to appear by next May, and at regular six-month intervals henceforth.

Careful readers will once again note a change of locale in my tagline below, as I move back into the academe as the Marshall and Sharleen Formby Regents Professor of Strategic Communication in the College of Media and Communication at Texas Tech University in Lubbock—birthplace of Buddy Holly and home today of a vibrant music scene and distinctive West Texas sound.

Rave on.

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