

## 2016 Charles Taylor Book Award Citation

On behalf of the Interpretive Methodologies and Methods Conference Group, I am pleased to forward the citation for the 2016 Charles Taylor Book Award, presented at the annual business meeting to Daniel Kato, Queen Mary University of London, for

*Liberalizing Lynching. Building a New Racialized State* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

This award is presented for the best book in political science that employs or develops interpretive methodologies and methods. It recognizes the contributions of Charles Taylor to the advancement of interpretive thinking. His 1971 essay “Interpretation and the Sciences of Man” powerfully critiqued the aspiration to model the study of politics on the natural sciences and cogently explained how “interpretation is essential to explanation” in the human sciences. This essay, along with his many other articles, book chapters, and volumes, have long been a source of inspiration for scholars seeking to develop and apply an interpretive approach to the study of politics.

Daniel Kato's *Liberalizing Lynching* demonstrates the power of interpretative research. Kato's study sets out to resolve a mystery. How could the practice of public lynching co-exist with liberal democracy in the U.S.? In investigating the role of the federal government, Kato not only offers a powerful understanding of this conundrum as well as the disappearance of lynching, but offers an empirically substantiated interpretation of American liberalism. This study exemplifies how interpretative methodology can shed light on major puzzles in the study of government. Kato shows that inaction on lynching did not undermine the sovereignty of the federal government. Rather, the federal government chose an active policy of weakness and the judiciary accommodated this nonintervention, creating a situation he terms “constitutional anarchy.”

Kato musters an impressive arsenal of historical documents ranging from court cases to administrative files from the Civil War to the 1960s to substantiate this argument. What makes this book outstanding is how this story is unfolded and the argument developed. In resisting the standard narrative of presentation that exemplifies theory and then substantiates claims by presenting empirical material in a chronological manner, Kato instead takes us on an abductive journey characterized by an active dialogue between historical material and the development of his theoretical model of American liberalism. In short, this book will become a reference point, not only in the discussion of American politics, but as a convincing example for the abductive presentation of research.

### Honorable Mentions:

- Lebow, Richard Ned. 2014. *Constructing cause in international relations*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lluch, Jaime. 2014. *Visions of sovereignty: nationalism and accommodation in multinational democracies*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Award Committee: Christian Bueger (Cardiff University; Co-Chair); Robin L. Turner (Butler University, Co-Chair); James Scott (Yale University)