

## The Charles Taylor Book Award 2017

Committee: Jutta Weldes, Chair: Lahra Smith, Daniel Kato.

27 June 2017

Rationale for awarding the 2017 Charles Taylor Award for “the best book in political science that employs or develops interpretive methodologies and methods” to **Sarah Marie Wiebe, *Everyday Exposure: Indigenous Mobilization and Environmental Justice in Canada’s Chemical Valley, Vancouver and Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2016.***

The committee received and evaluated 25 nominations and agreed unanimously that, in a very strong competitive field, Wiebe’s book most successfully embodies the criteria for the Charles Taylor award. We loved this book!

*Everyday Exposure* is an interesting, surprising and outstanding text offering an exceptional interpretive analysis that takes the questions of environmental justice for the 850 Anishinabek people in the Aamjiwnaang Reserve, or Sarnia Reserve 45, in Canada's so-called Chemical Valley and makes it “home”. Wiebe’s deployment of theory, ethnographic and visual evidence and rich interpretive narrative uniquely define this “place-based” study of environmental justice and injustice. The result is a political study that amplifies the story of state withdrawal and is distinctly policy-focused; it enables Wiebe to build towards persuasive a conclusion about avenues for future “collaborative community research” and the “advancement of environmental reproductive justice”.

The story Wiebe tells is political, it is human, it is environmental and it is certainly interpretive in every sense:

- It asks fundamentally interpretive questions about environmental justice and community;
- It deploys a variety of interpretive theories, crossing disciplines such as political science, feminism, post-structuralism, and geography;
- It develops a complex and overtly “interpretivist and intersectional” methodology, which is very well developed and explicitly laid out (Chapter 2 could easily be used for methods teaching);
- It accesses indigenous citizens’ lived experiences through sustained ethnographic methods, deploying the understandings generated to make a persuasive political case for social and environmental justice;

- It creates a rich, multi-layered interpretive conversation about social and environmental justice, combining this ethnographic material with multi-media and multi-conversational sources and excellent documentary materials, including archival and policy documents.
- It demonstrates in its case study how the so-called 'objectivity' of science precludes environmental reproductive justice and how a more "multilogue" approach can not only be imagined but also desired;
- It is expressly reflexive, paying specific and extended attention, amongst other things, to positionality, to relations between researcher and 'researched', and to the co-production of research and knowledge and to their pitfalls.

Finally, Wiebe's book is amazingly well written and accessible. Whilst remaining rigorously scholarly, it seamlessly weaves together different disciplines, drawing not only on political science but also on chemistry, policy, journalism, law, geography and history. At the same time, the book's co-produced ethos is captured in the foregrounding of photos from a local visual project (Boreal Collective) and poetry composed by two members of the Aamjiwnaang First Nation.