The Charles Taylor Book Award 2019

The Interpretive Methodologies and Methods Conference Group @ APSA is delighted to award the 2019 Charles Taylor Award for "the best book in political science that employs or develops interpretive methodologies and methods" to

Matthew Longo (Leiden University), for
The Politics of Borders: Sovereignty, Security, and the Citizen after 9/11
(Cambridge University Press, 2018)

The committee was unanimous in its view that *The Politics of Borders* is an outstanding example of how interpretive research methodologies can be combined effectively with critical political theorising. Through his detailed empirical "sociological portrait" of bordering practices on the US borders with Mexico and Canada, Longo successfully challenges notions of borders as "thin and vertical" lines between sovereign territories. Longo makes a compelling case for understanding borders as "thick, multi-faceted and binational institutions" with significantly extended spatial reach and increasingly overlapping jurisdictions between states. Building on fieldwork conducted at two distinct border locations, the book presents an innovative interrogation of how states are preferencing security over sovereignty and the normative implications of the development of co-bordering practices for citizenship. With its insistence that clarity about what is happening must precede discussion of solutions, this ambitious and innovative study offers rich insights into how practices constitute borders and raises important and timely questions about their function that will resonate far beyond the US.

The Committee also wishes to recognize two books with Honourable Mentions:

Lee Ann Fujii (late of University of Toronto), for
Interviewing in Social Science Research: A Relational Approach
(Routledge, 2018)

In *Interviewing in Social Science Research*, Lee Ann Fujii successfully takes the well-established genre of methodological manual and makes it provocative and counter-intuitive. Rather than presenting an idealized version of interviewing and then accounting for the limitations imposed by practical constraints, this book turns things around. Fujii debunks common myths about interviews and makes us see constraints, limitations, mistakes and the resistance of subjects as "gifts" that can enhance one's research, instead of liabilities that one must accommodate or patch over. It is a masterful and accessible guide that is rich with examples and vignettes and which, in addition to being an indispensable resource for teaching and research, is an excellent reflection on the work of interpretation as essential for understanding the empirical world. That it draws substantively on Lee Ann's own experiences of interviewing, which are shared with great honesty and humility, is testament to her outstanding ability to show us that interviewing is a fundamentally human encounter, as well a poignant reminder of her untimely passing that continues to be mourned.

Timothy Pachirat (University of Massachusetts at Amherst), for
Among Wolves: Ethnography and the Immersive Study of Power
(Routledge, 2018)

In this dramatic reimagining of discussion of ethnographic methods as a conversation among a cast of ethnographers brought together for an ethnographic trial, *Among Wolves* transcends the limitations of writing a methods book in both content and form. The device of a play enables Timothy Pachirat to present lively, rich and multifaceted discussion of issues of positionality, reflexivity, ethics and many other challenges facing researchers using ethnographic methods. The format is exceptionally engaging, with the fact that the questions raised are rightly left unresolved, encouraging readers to reflect critically on their own approaches and roles in research. Pachirat has succeeded in showing not only how ethnography can be practised, but also in making a compelling case for why it cannot be separated from considerations of power. *Among Wolves* is an extremely welcome and refreshing addition to discussions of interpretive methods that adroitly illustrates Charles Taylor's argument that "interpretation is essential to explanation" and which offers much to both students and practitioners of ethnographic methods alike.

Committee Members, 2019
Andrew Dilts, Loyola Marymount University
Bernardo Zacka, MIT
Cai Wilkinson, Deakin University, Chair