

International History and Politics

AN ORGANIZED SECTION OF THE AMERICAN
POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT - STACIE GODDARD

We're looking forward at seeing you all at APSA next week! This newsletter gives an overview of IHAP's presence at APSA this year. Here's a quick summary:

IHAP panels. First, I want to say "thank you" to this year's program chair, Kyle Lascurettes. Section program chairs are really the ones who make sure that our annual conference happens. Kyle has done a wonderful job putting together a full slate of panels. I encourage you to attend as many as possible. Next year, our program will be managed by Joshua Shiffrinson, so we continue to be in good hands!

Reception. We will have our reception, co-sponsored with Politics and History, on September 16 at 6:30 pm. Details here. Look for me holding free drink tickets (and know that I am looking in particular for graduate students and our more junior members to give those drink tickets).

Business meeting. Our business meeting will be on Friday, September 16 at noon (details at this link). This will be our first meeting in person since 2019.

WHAT'S IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

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INTERNATIONAL HISTORY AND POLITICS (IHAP) OFFICERS

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Catherine Lu

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Newsletter

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and Designer:

Alyssa Wiley

CALL FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Section members are invited to send their announcements about upcoming workshops, recent books, or anything else of general IHAP interest to the editor: John Emery -
john.emery@ou.edu

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We'll be looking to accomplish a few things:

- **Recognizing our award winners:** We will recognize the winner of our Jervis-Schroeder award, Jeff Colgan, as well as our two honorable mentions, Sinja Graf and Rachel Whitlark. We will also recognize our Outstanding Article winners, Jennifer Dixon and Michal Ben-Josef Hirsch.
- **Voting in our new officers.** I'm delighted to announce our nominations for new Council members:

Arjun Chowdhury (University of British Columbia)

Arjun Chowdhury is an Associate Professor and Graduate Director in the Department of Political Science at the University of British Columbia. He is the author of *The Myth of International Order* (Oxford: 2018), which explains why states persist as the central organizational unit of world politics, despite the fact that most states in the world have developed as 'weak states' unable to monopolize violence or provide public goods to the satisfaction of their people. The book won IHAP's Jervis-Schroeder best book award, and the Hedley Bull best book award from the ECPR. Chowdhury has previously served the section as a member of the Jervis-Schroeder book award committee (2020).

Personal website: <https://sites.google.com/site/chow0050/home>

Justin Conrad (University of Georgia)

Justin Conrad is the Gary K. Bertsch Director of the Center for International Trade and Security and Associate Professor of International Affairs at the University of Georgia. He studies international security issues, including nuclear proliferation, interstate conflict and terrorism. Conrad's work has been funded by the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Department of Defense, and the Stanton Foundation, and his research has been published in leading academic journals. He has published two books, *Gambling and War: Risk, Reward, and Chance in International Conflict* (Naval Institute Press, 2017) and *Militant Competition: How Terrorists and Insurgents Advertise with Violence and How They Can Be Stopped* (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

Personal website: <https://justinconrad.org/>

Inés Valdez (Ohio State University)

Inés Valdez is Associate Professor of Political Science at Ohio State University. Her research on critical race and feminist theory, capitalism, and empire approaches politics as always transnational and historically grounded. Her work has appeared in the *American Political Science Review* and *Theory & Event*, among other outlets. Her book, *Transnational Cosmopolitanism: Kant, Du Bois, and Justice as a Political Craft* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), received the Sussex International Theory Prize. Valdez has received fellowships from the European University Institute, the Princeton University Center for Human Values, the Humboldt Foundation, and the Ohio State's Global Arts

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and Humanities Society of Fellows. She is currently completing her second manuscript *Democracy and Empire: Labor, Migration, and the Reproduction of Racial Capitalism*.

Institutional website: <https://polisci.osu.edu/people/tappata.1>

- **Saying goodbye.** Jonathan Agensky, Diana Kim, and Jeff Taliaferro have completed their terms as officers on our Executive Council. We thank them all for their advice and insights during the rather complex pandemic years of their service.
- **Welcoming our new President, Vice President, and Treasurer.** We have three new executive officers responsible for moving our section forward over the next few years:

President (2022-24) Catherine Lu (McGill University)

Catherine Lu is a Professor of Political Science at McGill University, and Director of the Yan P. Lin Centre for the Study of Freedom and Global Orders in the Ancient and Modern Worlds. Her research interests intersect IR and political theory, focusing on critical, historical, and normative studies of humanitarianism and intervention in world politics; colonialism, structural injustice, and global justice; alienation and reconciliation; and cosmopolitanism and the world state. She is the author of *Just and Unjust Interventions in World Politics: Public and Private* (Palgrave Macmillan 2006), and *Justice and Reconciliation in World Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2017). Lu previously served the section as a member of the Jervis-Schroeder book award committee (2019), and as Vice-President (2020-22).

Personal website: <https://www.catherinelu.info/>

Vice-President (2022-24) Ayşe Zarakol (Cambridge University)

Ayşe Zarakol is a Professor of International Relations at the University of Cambridge. Her research is at the intersection of IR and historical sociology, focusing on East-West relations, the history and future of world order(s), conceptualisations of modernity and sovereignty, and international social hierarchies. She is the author of *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), and editor of *Hierarchies in World Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2017). Her most recent book is *Before the West: The Rise and Fall of Eastern World Orders* (Cambridge University Press, 2022).

Personal website: aysezarakol.com

Secretary-Treasurer (2022-24) Kyle M. Lascuresses (Lewis & Clark College)

Kyle M. Lascuresses is an Associate Professor of International Affairs at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, where he teaches courses in global order, international organizations, great power politics, and international relations theory. He is the author of *Orders of Exclusion: Great Powers and the Strategic*

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Sources of Foundational Rules in International Relations (Oxford University Press, 2020), the winner of the 2021 APSA-IHAP Jervis-Schroeder Prize for best book in international history and politics. Lascurettes previously served the section as the 2021 Annual Meeting Program Chair.

Personal website: <https://kylelascurettes.weebly.com/>

- Our business meeting will also mark the official departure of two of our officers. Andrew Yeo served beyond his official term as Treasurer. For that, I am grateful, as Andrew was absolutely essential for the section's operation.
- And it is also time for me to step down as President of IHAP. It was a bit of a strange tenure, having happened during the time of mostly virtual conferences. Holding the position necessarily became about keeping operations afloat when we were all disconnected. As we emerge from this pandemic, I hope that we and all of APSA's sections have some time to reflect on what our association means in a post-COVID world. What role can and should large-scale conferences play in our profession? How do we ensure access to members who, for all sorts of reasons, might not have the resources to join us? How can we make sure our sections are supporting members who are most in need? I hope we are able to take some time to reflect and act on these questions in the next few years.

Telling It Like It Is: Descriptive Research in Social Science

JUST TELLING IT LIKE IT IS: DESCRIPTIVE WORK AND SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

BY MARY ANNE S. MENDOZA, CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA; MEG K. GULIFORD, DREXEL UNIVERSITY; CAROLYN E. HOLMES, MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY; MICHELLE JURKOVICH, UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS, BOSTON

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

In Spring 2022, the four of us convened a workshop titled “Just Telling It Like It Is: Descriptive Work and Social Science Research.” We utilized a hybrid format and brought together scholars to discuss where descriptive research fits in Political Science, highlight examples of good descriptive work, and examine its role moving forward. The workshop was generously funded by the Centennial Center at APSA, with additional funding provided by the Cyber Governance and Policy Center at the University of Oklahoma.

While we knew there was interest among our colleagues in strengthening our descriptive work toolkits and thinking about its important role in our research, we were astounded by the sheer number of scholars interested in engaging with this project and the diversity of their research approaches. Scholars across the fields of International Relations, Comparative Politics, and American Politics; those using quantitative and qualitative methods; and those using interpretive and positivist approaches all shared a common

commitment to the importance of description to good scholarship.

The first session on our first day addressed Conceptualization. We featured papers highlighting the role of description in the process of defining and evaluating concepts, including the “gray areas,” which can challenge the process of conceptualization but also ground concepts in empirical realities. In the words of one of the organizing team members, “The point of description is to make things comparable, to make categories uncomfortable, not unusable.” The second session discussed Descriptive Data Generation and Evaluation, exploring themes of how to engage in and evaluate descriptive work. Sessions 3 and 4 provided examples of descriptive work on the theme of Social and Political Activism. In these sessions, scholars using case studies from across subfields came together to discuss the role of description in their work. The first day concluded with a panel called “Re-Imagining Existing Data,” where participants addressed the ways in which the data so often used by political scientists, like datasets on conflict or indices of democratization, became the subject of examination.

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On the second day of the workshop, our first session demonstrated examples of descriptive work on International Organizations and their comparability (or lack thereof) across cases and timeframes, as well as how and where description helps to understand supranational actors. The second panel was on Interpretivism, which is probably the approach in political science most inherently comfortable with description. Papers in this panel discussed how thick description interacts with the goals of establishing conclusions, e.g., through causal arguments. We concluded the workshop with a panel on Innovations in Existing Data, looking at how description can contribute to the use of existing data, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Below, we recount a few recurring themes from the workshop discussions.

DISCUSSION THEMES

Several of our panels addressed the costs of devaluing descriptive work. Many journals, for example, focus heavily on causal inference to the detriment of adequate description. Sometimes this happens indirectly, through reduced word counts. Other times, this happens through outright rejection of predominantly descriptive submissions. Devaluing new descriptive work suggests there is little need for new information, either because the field knows all that it needs to know or can progress without it.

During planning, workshop organizers stressed the importance of distinguishing between data-rich and data-poor environments. Data-rich environments are concepts, cases, or topics that are thoroughly studied in a discipline, whereas

data-poor environments lack that level of coverage. But concepts are not evenly distributed across cases. For example, describing how the concept of participation works in a democracy may be obvious to most scholars but less familiar in an authoritarian context. Therefore, more description is needed for the latter.

The discipline often incentivizes the pursuit of new approaches to causal inference by utilizing pre-existing data. This runs the risk of maintaining outdated or limited perspectives that reflect the blinders and biases of scholars in a different time period. If we do not prioritize new descriptive work, whether in generating new databases or in new qualitative scholarship, and do so in ways that take our own positionality seriously, we are continuing to research the world through the blinders of the past[WAC1]. As a result, women and underrepresented minority communities can continually be left out of findings or analyses.

Refreshing our descriptive knowledge base and extending it into previously under-examined terrains can also allow us to ask new questions. Rigorous description can give rise to new datasets, in addition to improving existing ones. One example discussed was inconsistencies in the application of the definition of a “battle death” and whether deaths alone are sufficient for determining a typology of conflict.

We should also expect, however, that descriptive work can make scholars uncomfortable, as it opens up new avenues of research and asks scholars to decide what to do with new information.

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Description, both as a method and in its conclusions, often unsettles the neat categories and arguments of social scientists by exposing the gray areas or complexity of the social world. Description, almost by definition, works against parsimony. We contend, however, that if the goals of political scientists lay in understanding the world as it is, rather than as our models would have it be, then description is a necessary undertaking for both political scientists and policy practitioners.

Learning to describe well is difficult, a point conceded by many participants, even though nearly all scholars utilize description in some capacity. Quantitative and qualitative scholars alike need to have an explanation of their concepts and case or population. Yet, training scholars explicitly for description is less common than training them to make causal inferences or decipher statistical findings. This is perhaps a result of publication avenues de-incentivizing descriptive work, which results in programs limiting the opportunities to train students in conducting good descriptive work.

MOVING FORWARD

Given what we learned in the first workshop and the potential contributions of descriptive research across substantive areas and methodological approaches, we face a number of exciting challenges going forward. The first workshop brought together an enthusiastic community of scholars interested in the role and importance of description. What we learned, however, is that even among a very enthusiastic group, description—its contributions, importance, and the

standards of “good description”—was (paradoxically!) under-specified in our discussions. In the workshop, we collectively agreed that answering questions about the contributions of description to social science, the standards of good descriptive research, and how description can be used in academic work as well as public-facing and policy-relevant work were vital to advancing the profile of descriptive social scientific work. To argue against the label “mere description,” to use Gerring’s phrase, we need to lay out a framework for why and how descriptive work can be evaluated and the contributions it can make.

To that end, we are hosting another hybrid workshop in October 2022, building on the lessons of the April workshop, with the intention of answering some of the questions that remained after our first gathering. The Call for Papers is available [here](#). Applicants will find four organized themes around which we are soliciting proposals. We plan to facilitate focused discussion around these themes at the workshop, with the objective of developing papers for submission to journal special issues and an edited volume. If there are any questions about the workshop, please feel free to reach out to descriptiveresearchconference@gmail.com.

DATASET BUILDING BY QUALITATIVE SCHOLARS

BY ROSELLA CAPPELLA ZIELINSKI, BOSTON UNIVERSITY, DEPARTMENT
OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
RYAN GRAUER, UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH, GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

“Qualitative scholars need to build more datasets” was not a stance we anticipated advocating. As two qualitative scholars whose academic happy places are archives, we both prefer to engage in scholarship that relies on and reflects deep process tracing. Yet, here we are.

Our journey started with a seemingly simple question: do battlefield coalitions perform better than armed forces fighting alone? That is, do amalgams of officers, troops, and materiel brought together by multiple distinct political communities for the purpose of jointly waging combat in the same operational battlespace fight more efficiently and effectively than those fielded by a single political community? We were, of course, ready to develop our theoretical expectations, select cases that would help us assess the validity of our argument, and hit the archives. The first step was easy enough (at least, as easy as the development of theoretical expectations can ever be). Then we got stuck when we started thinking about potential cases that might offer extreme values on certain variables, hold constant potentially confounding factors, and generally provide the analytical leverage we needed. We realized we had no idea what the universe of cases of battlefield coalitions looked like; what population of that universe might be required to identify generalizable tendencies; what potential scope conditions relating to, for example, the creation of such groups might affect their performance in combat; and whether and how to account for temporal variation and critical junctures within and across battlefield coalitions. No matter how much we wanted to do so, we could not move on to the third step.

While searching for guidance in the existing literature on battlefield coalitions, we came up short. The work that has been done to date is quite good but too narrow for our purposes. Scholars of battlefield coalitions have conducted excellent case studies, yet they have not examined battlefield coalitions as a class. In addition, existing case studies overwhelmingly focus on battlefield coalitions that were either, a) formed by members of formal alliances like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), b) led by the United States, c) fighting during the World Wars, or d) some combination of the three. We knew from our previous work that these cases were unlikely to be representative of the experiences of battlefield coalitions formed by ad hoc groupings, lacking superpower participation, and fighting in conflicts somewhat less existential than the World Wars. Our need for a broader perspective led us to consult existing datasets cataloguing participants in and information about battles, but none provided the coverage we required.[1] To acquire the information we needed to help us move from theorizing to testing, we (reluctantly) decided that we would have to collect our own data—about many cases.

[1] The shortcomings of the most prominent battle-level dataset in our field, CDB-90, need not be reiterated here, but that collection’s issues around the comprehensiveness of its coverage, opaque coding criteria, unclear aggregation rules when accounting for battlefield coalition members’ contributions to collective efforts, and missing data are indicative of the kinds of problems common throughout existing data compilations. Trevor N. Dupuy, *Understanding War* (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1987).

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Four years later, we are pleased that we made the choice to create a dataset. We recently unveiled our *Belligerents in Battle* dataset as part of a special issue we put together on battlefield coalitions in the *Journal of Strategic Studies*.^[2] Through the long process of establishing conceptual definitions, creating coding rules, and making decisions about the surprisingly large number of edge cases (to say nothing of confronting the particular challenge that is counting battle casualties), we had many “Ah Ha!” moments. Perhaps the most profound, however, was the realization that qualitative scholars are uniquely poised to build good datasets.

Qualitative scholars are so positioned for at least three reasons. First, qualitative scholars often ask questions (like ours) that are not presently amenable to quantitative analysis but, in principle, can be assessed through the use of such methods. They can thus identify holes in the current body of repositories that require further collection efforts. Second, with their area and substantive expertise, qualitative scholars are well-equipped to make the judgments necessary in creating coding rules and assessing the quality of sources used to populate datasets. Especially because such “hidden” judgments often become reified as datasets are accepted and used by scholars around the world, minimizing inadvertent biases that can influence subsequent analyses is essential. Finally, qualitative scholars are increasingly engaged in proto-dataset creation, including, for example, gathering information required for Large-N Qualitative Analysis (LNQA). LNQA and other forms of medium-n analysis are employed when it is necessary to examine trends and dynamics in populations too

large for systematic in-depth case studies but too few for reliable statistical analysis. Applying those same data-gathering efforts to larger populations of cases requires additional, but not different, research.

Despite the value that qualitative scholars can bring to the dataset-creation process, we harbor no illusions that doing so will be easy or even attractive for many. Dataset construction is costly in terms of both time and resources. We would note, however, that it is precisely because dataset construction is so costly that flawed collections continue to be used even after their biases and omissions are well-known. Accordingly, qualitative scholars who have the time, resources, and desire to engage in dataset construction need to choose their moments wisely. We suggest that they are likely to find the most utility in and have the greatest impact on the process when proposing a new research agenda or revitalizing an old one. In both cases, defining a new universe or population of cases can shed new light on existing questions and open new avenues of inquiry. In terms of career stage, graduate students and tenured faculty are best placed to engage in such work.

To qualitative scholars who remain skeptical of our proposal because they prefer time in archives or in the field to long periods of coding variables in myriad cases, we say that we understand. We, too, value our time in such settings. However,

[2] Rosella Cappella Zielinski and Ryan Grauer, “A Century of Coalitions in Battle: Incidence, Composition, and Performance, 1900-2003,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 45, no. 2 (February 23, 2022): 186–210.

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we note that, in many ways, dataset construction mirrors journeys in archives and in the field. The joy of working in those settings rests not only in finding answers that have not yet been articulated but also in the discovery of new questions. Dataset construction is a journey. The dataset builder does not know in advance what they will find and is often surprised by uncovering unexpected information. Like research carried out in archives, the process of dataset construction meanders with many starts and stops but always holds the promise of new questions, information, and insight.

We are happy to conclude that we are finally in the archives, gathering data for the case studies we will report in our book. Notably, however, our book will focus on a different question than that with which we started. As we built *Belligerents in Battle*, we realized that there would, in fact, be important scope conditions on any theory of battlefield coalition performance that stem from drivers of wartime partners' decisions to put their troops together in the same battlespace in the first place. So, it is that prior question—why battlefield coalitions are formed—that we are examining now. It just took building a dataset to help us ask the right question.

IHAP at APSA 2022

Thursday September 15, 2022

- Producing International Order(s) - Thu, September 15, 8:00 to 9:30am
- Historicizing Sovereignty and Intervention - Thu, September 15, 12:00 to 1:30pm
- Narratives, Ideas, and Ideologies in International History - Thu, September 15, 4:00 to 5:30pm

Friday September 16, 2022

- Global Complexity in Time - Fri, September 16, 8:00 to 9:30am
- International History and Politics (IHAP) Business Meeting - Fri, September 16, 12:00 to 1:30pm
- Forming States and the Sovereign States System - Fri, September 16, 4:00 to 5:30pm

- Politics and History and International History and Politics (IHAP) Joint Reception - Fri, September 16, 6:30 to 8:00pm

Saturday September 17, 2022

- Poster Session: International History and Politics - Sat, September 17, 1:00 to 1:30pm
- Imperial Relations and Colonial Legacies in IR - Sat, September 17, 2:00 to 3:30pm

Sunday September 18, 2022

- Advances in International Political History - Sun, September 18, 10:00 to 11:30am

Highlighting Recent Publications in International History and Politics

The following recent publications have been written by IHAP members or are of interest to those who study international history and politics. If you would like your publication featured in the fall newsletter, please email the newsletter editor John Emery: john.emery@ou.edu

- Christopher Darnton, "The Provenance Problem: Research Methods and Ethics in the Age of WikiLeaks," *American Political Science Review* 116 no. 3 (August 2022), pp. 1110-1125.
- David S. Siroky, Milos Popovic and Nikola Mirilovic. 2021. "Unilateral Secession, Great Power Contestation and International Recognition," *Journal of Peace Research*, 58(5): 1049-1067
- Emil Aslan Souleimanov, David S. Siroky and Peter Krause, Kin Killing: Why Governments Target Family Members in Insurgency and Why it Works, *Security Studies*, 31(2), 2022, 187-217.
- Etel Solingen, ed. Geopolitics, Supply Chains, and International Relations in East Asia (Cambridge University Press, 2021). Some UCI graduate students featured there.
- Etel Solingen, Bo Meng, and Xu Ankai, Rising Risks to Global ValueChains, in GVC Development Report 2021 (World Trade Organization, Asian Development Bank, Research Institute for Global Value Chains at China's University of International Business and Economics, Japan's Institute of Developing Economies, and China Development Research Foundation).
- Finn, V. (2021). Democracy in Croatia: From Stagnant 1990s to Rapid Change 2000–2011. *International Political Science Review*. 42(2): 197–212. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512119863140>
- Jo, E. (2022). Memory, Institutions, and the Domestic Politics of South Korean–Japanese Relations. International Organization, 1-32. doi:10.1017/S0020818322000194.
- John M. Schuessler, Joshua Shiffrin, and David Blagden, "Revisiting Insularity and Expansion: A Theory Note," *Perspectives on Politics*, Published Online 12 November 2021.
- J. Luis Rodriguez and Elizabeth Mendenhall, "Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones and the Issue of Maritime Transit in Latin America," *International Affairs*, vol. 98, no. 3, 2022, pp. 819-836. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iia055>

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- J. Luis Rodriguez and Christy Thornton, "The Liberal International Order and the Global South, A View from Latin America," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2022.2107326>
- Katherine M. Beall. 2022. "The Global South and Global Human Rights: International responsibility for the right to development." *Third World Quarterly*, 43(10): 2337-2356.
- Patrick, Justin. "Student Leadership and Student Government." *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership* 7, no. 1 (March 31, 2022): 1–37. <https://doi.org/10.30828/real.951165>.
- Timothy W. Crawford, The Power to Divide: Wedge Strategies in Great Power Competition (Cornell University Press, 2021).
- Timothy W. Crawford and Khang X. Vu, "Arms Control as Wedge Strategy: How Arms Limitation Deals Divide Alliances," *International Security*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Fall 2021), pp. 91–129, doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00420.