

# The Charles Taylor Book Award 2018

## Citations

The Interpretive Methodologies and Methods Conference Group @ APSA is delighted to award the 2018 Charles Taylor Award for “the best book in political science that employs or develops interpretive methodologies and methods” to

**Bernardo Zacka** (MIT), for

*When the State Meets the Street: Public Service and Moral Agency*  
(Harvard University Press, 2017)

To merit this award, the committee strongly felt that a book must strike the right balance between theoretical innovation and a rigorous contribution to interpretive research methodologies. *When the State Meets the Street* is well written and provides a rich, detailed and nuanced ethnography of the state by focusing on street-level bureaucracy at the frontlines of public service. The book builds from findings and an ethnographic sensibility to inform political theorizing about bureaucratic polities. It focuses on state pathologies including: the indifferent, the enforcer and the caregiver. The work is imaginative and documents ideas about disposition and implementation through administrative practices of government bureaucracy. From an interpretive lens, *When State Meets the Street* contributes to democratic theory through rooting in everyday experiences and practices of administrative power.

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

Shiri Pasternak (Trent University)

for *Grounded Authority: The Algonquins of Barriere Lake Against the State*  
(University of Minnesota Press, 2017)

*Grounded Authority* is well poised to engage in broader debates about Indigenous resistance across settler colonies. Pasternak foregrounds jurisdiction and disentangles it from sovereignty while visualizing jurisdiction as a density of lines against orthodox notions of hierarchy and scale. This book

discusses practices of state power through an ethnographic approach and contributes to interpretive scholarship by documenting experiential meaning between Indigenous and non-Indigenous bearers of those meanings, and between intersubjective conceptions of custodianship and ownership. By weaving thick description, paying attention to subjective meaning, offering sharp theoretical insights and comparative analysis it contributes to the study of power and interpretivism. This book also discusses important ethical considerations about accountability and relationship-building in field work. It will resonate widely to a readership beyond Canada and North America.

AND

Stefanie Fishel (University of Alabama)  
*The Microbial State: Global Thriving and the Global State*  
(University of Minnesota Press, 2017)

This concise, sophisticated book presents an imaginative reinterpretation of the body politic in international relations theory. It engages with new materialism literature and interpretive methodology by displacing realist international relations metaphors that are rooted in Eurocentric conceptions of power. It moves beyond conceptualizing the state as being analogous to a notion of the autonomous individual body. This outdated state-as-person metaphor is used daily to justify all manner of violence, which *The Microbial State* challenges in its reconceptualization. Concentrating on what metaphors do in and to international relations theory, Fishel proposes new microbial metaphors with which to rethink the state idea and practice.

**Committee Members, 2018**

Nick Cheesman, Australia National University

Kristen Monroe, University of California, Irvine

Sarah Marie Wiebe, University of Hawai'i, Mānoa, Chair