Interpretive Methodologies and Methods (IMM) Related Group
Virtual Business Meeting 2020
Minutes

The business meeting was held virtually (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) on Friday, September 11, 8:30-9:30 pm ET. It was chaired by Fred Schaffer. Thirty-two people were in attendance.

1. Reports

From the 2020 program chair (Nick Rush Smith)

IMM received three full panel proposals for consideration, all of which listed IMM as their second choice. IMM also received numerous individual paper submissions, about five or six of which listed IMM as their second choice. The other individual submissions did not list us but another program chair thought IMM would be a good fit. Unfortunately, IMM was only allowed by APSA to accept one panel proposal and co-sponsor a second panel. To maximize our allotments while focusing our panels as closely as possible on questions of method, we accepted the panel “Fieldwork in Political Science 1: Ethnography's Home in the Field.” We co-sponsored “Fieldwork in Political Science 3: Tracing Trends and Forging the Future,” which was primarily sponsored by the Qualitative Methods section. The two panels were part of a four-part series on fieldwork coordinated with the Qualitative Methods section. All the panels were robustly attended—between twenty and forty people at various points throughout the proceedings. For next year, the chair recommends approaching APSA for additional allotments, especially if the Annual Meeting is a virtual meeting again, as there is far more demand for work utilizing interpretive methods than IMM is allotted. Despite the relative lack of space for IMM panels, the heavy demand for space devoted to papers reliant upon or engaging interpretive methods could be taken as a positive sign; it indicates a robust interest in the methods among political scientists.

On the “Methods Studio: Interpretivism and Epistemic Politics” short course (Rina Williams)

We had an excellent short course. The “crit” part featured three grad students and three respondents. Approximately 15 people were in attendance, including about ten who stayed the whole day (in addition to the presenters and respondents). Overall, the discussions were excellent, and the audience was engaged. IMM’s past community building efforts are clearly having an effect.

From the 2020 Methods Café organizers (Biko Koenig and Sarah Wiebe)

The café was held virtually this year. Thankfully, we encountered no technical problems. Attendance was lower than in past years. About 15 participants visited the various breakout rooms.

2. Award presentations

- Hayward Alker 2020 Best Graduate Student Paper Award (presented by Carolyn Holmes, for the committee)
  ➢ Presented to Devon Cantwell (PhD candidate, University of Utah) for “Decision 2030: An Empirical Analysis of City Climate Action Planning and Decision-Making.” The paper was presented at the 2019 meeting of the Western Political Science Association in San Diego.
  ➢ Award Committee: Stacey Philbrick Yadav, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, chair; Carolyn Holmes, Mississippi State University; Christian Sorace, Colorado College.
• Charles Taylor 2020 Book Award (presented by Erica Simmons, for the committee)
  ➢ Honorable mention went to Nicholas Rush Smith for *Contradictions of Democracy: Vigilantism and Rights in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Oxford University Press, 2019)
  ➢ Award Committee: Erica Simmons, University of Wisconsin-Madison, chair; Matthew Longo, Leiden University; Robyn Marasco, CUNY-Hunter College.

• Grain of Sand 2020 Award for lifetime contributions to interpretive thought and methods
  ➢ The award went to Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, University of California at Berkeley
  ➢ Prof. Pitkin was unable to attend the meeting. Fred Schaffer noted that he spoke to her and she was delighted to receive the award.

3. Updates

• APSA rule change: (Fred Schaffer): According to new rules adopted by APSA, conference-related groups must enlist a minimum membership of 35 APSA members to maintain their status. IMM currently has 54 members. For APSA members, joining IMM entails no extra cost.

• Program chair for 2021 (Fred Schaffer): Natasha Behl (Arizona State University) kindly agreed to serve as IMM’s 2021 program chair. The Call for Papers is already out.

• Lee Ann Fujii Award: The nomination deadline for the 2021 Lee Ann Fujii Award for Innovation in the Interpretive Study of Political Violence is February 1, 2021. The Call for Nominations is posted at [https://connect.apsanet.org/interpretationandmethod/lee-ann-fujii-award-for-innovation-in-the-interpretive-study-of-political-violence/](https://connect.apsanet.org/interpretationandmethod/lee-ann-fujii-award-for-innovation-in-the-interpretive-study-of-political-violence/)

• New Books Podcast (Nick Cheesman): The podcast is affiliated with the New Books Network. Since launching the series a year ago, I recorded four interviews with authors of interpretive books, including two books published as part of the Routledge series (by Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, and by Fred Schaffer), and books by Sarah Wiebe and James Scott. The number of downloads has been considerable. The website will be upgraded soon, hopefully increasing the exposure of the series. I would like to recruit a co-host—please contact me if you are interested. See [https://connect.apsanet.org/interpretationandmethod/new-books-podcast/](https://connect.apsanet.org/interpretationandmethod/new-books-podcast/)

• IMM Spotlight Scholars (Timothy Pachirat): Webmaster Aarie Glas created a new page on our website dedicated to profiling early career scholars. Please use the nomination form available on the page to recommend candidates or to nominate yourself. The idea is to showcase the vitality of interpretive research. The current Spotlight Scholar is Kevin Funk; see [https://connect.apsanet.org/interpretationandmethod/spotlight-scholar/](https://connect.apsanet.org/interpretationandmethod/spotlight-scholar/)

• Lee Ann Fujii Fund (Nick Rush Smith): Thanks to the generosity of colleagues and friends, the APSA endowed fund commemorating Lee Ann Fujii reached a balance of more than $75,000, far exceeding our initial fundraising goal. At this level, the fund generates about $4,000 a year to support professional travel by minority scholars.

• Political ethnography working group (Tani Sebro): This year, the working group met at APSA for the third time. The group sponsors a Google group for exchanging views and for sharing papers employing ethnographic methods.
Additional resources

- IMM Website ([https://connect.apsanet.org/interpretationandmethod/](https://connect.apsanet.org/interpretationandmethod/)) for syllabi, award info, IMM, APSA events, and more