

Business Meeting Standing Group (SG) ‘Theoretical Perspectives in Policy Analysis’  
ECPR conference 2017 Oslo, Saturday 9-9-17

**Present (13):** Katharina Paul, Tamara Metze, Heidrun Åm, Lieselot Vandenbussche, Christina, Roy Heidelberg, Simon West, Gus Riveros, Thomas Saretzki, Oscar Larsson, Alexander Graef, Hendrik Wagenaar, Koen Bartels (minutes)

## **Agenda**

1. Standing Group: history, purpose and position
2. Growing the Standing Group
3. Standing Group resources
4. Next year’s theme & ideas
5. AOB

### **1. Standing Group: history, purpose and position**

- Hendrik gave a bit of background to the SG. It emerged at the start of the century as part of efforts at establishing an interpretive policy analysis community. Yet the SG had to adopt a different name because of dominant mainstream methodology at ECPR.
- Our community is now flourishing but still beleaguered. In many politics, policy and public administration departments interpretive (or even qualitative) work is frowned upon and/or misunderstood as a lesser form of scholarship. We have the impression that it is more difficult to publish interpretive work in mainstream journals.
- It is also at an important moment in time: the original ‘founders’ are gradually stepping back and the time has come for a new generation of scholars to take over. The SG can be an important platform for growing our community.
- The SGs have become more important and central to the ECPR and offer lots of useful resources.

### **2. Growing the Standing Group**

- Hendrik stressed that becoming a member is easy (a simple click to join via MyECPR) and important. We can’t emphasize enough the importance of membership. **Membership** counts in terms of the status of the SG within ECPR (e.g. in terms of no. of panels that will be allocated). We now have 114 members and need to reach 200 at least. Given the attendance figures at IPA and ICPP conferences this shouldn’t be too difficult. We urge all SG members to invite their colleagues with an interest in interpretive work to become a member of the SG!
- Koen told that we finally have control over our **website** and it is currently being renewed. Everyone is encouraged to submit news about activities, publications, events, job openings, etc. but also to suggest ideas for how it can be further developed (e.g., creating a blog—Koen will check if this is possible).
  - Oscar offered to help out with developing and maintaining the website.
  - Katharina said that new **‘book notes’** from Critical Policy Studies will be linked to the SG website. She invited everyone to submit book notes, which are not full book reviews but short notes explaining what a new book is about, who should read it, and why.
- The SG has links with several **other interpretive platforms**: the *Interpretive Policy Analysis conference* (the main annual conference of our community), the *International*

*Public Policy Association* (which hosts a bi-annual global conference; it's a broad church but has a much wider audience; they might develop a SG structure too), the *Interpretive Political Science Specialist Group* at the Political Studies Association (which host dedicated panels at each annual UK-based conference), and the *Public Administration Theory Network* (PAT-Net; which hosts an annual US-based conference; it's the main platform for critical, theoretical and interpretive research in public administration; it also has its own journal: *Administrative Theory & Praxis*). These links will need to be strengthened over the next years.

- The SG is also linked to two **journals**: *Critical Policy Studies* and *Administrative Theory & Praxis*. These are great places to publish interpretive work and we should all do our best to grow them.
- **Panel allocation** at ECPR: last year we had nine panels and this year only four, even though we had enough papers for at least six panels. Hendrik and Koen have taken this up with the Academic Conveners to try and ensure we will have more panels next year.
- **Involvement**: Hendrik and Koen encouraged everyone to get more involved in the SG by suggesting panels and Sections (see point 4 below), contributing to the website, and suggesting new ideas and activities for developing it.

### 3. Standing Group resources

Hendrik and Koen explained that the SG has a number of valuable resources that everyone is encouraged to use (more):

- **Mailing list**: we can send emails with news about upcoming events, new publications, job openings etc. to our SG members via the ECPR website. We also have a bigger, informal mailing list of 800+ people.
- **Website**: as noted, we are now able to maintain our own website and intend for it to provide news about activities, publications, events, job openings; information about the SG; links to other interpretive platforms; and possibly a blog
- **Major Activity Grant**: the ECPR offer grants of up to €3,000 every three years to support the organization of a 'major activity', which is taken to mean a significant event in our community that brings together people from different institutions and countries (i.e. it has to be international and beyond your own university). Anyone interested in applying for a 'MAG' should contact the SG conveners.
  - In addition, ECPR offer grants of up to €4,000 p.a. for Standing Group Summer Schools and travel grants for selected participants in Standing Group Summer Schools.
- **Joint Sessions**: these are annual workshops designed to be a forum for substantive discussion on research in progress and collaboration among scholars. They include about 15-20 participants from different institutions and last about five days. ECPR offer facilities to several of these workshops at the same time; yet you'll be only in your workshop to work on e.g. a new book or research project. Anyone interested in applying for organizing a Joint Session should contact the SG conveners.
- **ECPR conference Section and panels**: the SG can formally endorse only one Section per conference but more Sections can be proposed with a link to the SG. Everyone is encouraged to propose Sections and panels.

### 4. Next year's theme & ideas

Hendrik explained that the idea is to organize a Section at next year's ECPR conference on 'deliberative policy analysis'. Next year it'll be 15 years since his book on this topic was published so it could be a good moment to look back and forward. He has had positive experiences with a panel on this theme at this year's ICPP in Singapore and a seminar at the University of Canberra during a visiting position. Attendance and enthusiasm were high. A Section on 'deliberative policy analysis' could include a (featured) roundtable or panel with key people in the field and could maybe even can lead to a new version of the book.

- Oscar asked whether the theme would not be too narrow. Hendrik explained that it's actually very broad as it is essentially about the three main pillars of our community: deliberation, practice and hermeneutics.
- Simon found the Section theme exciting. He was thinking of possibly organizing panels on methodology and relational approaches
- Katharina said that she and Tamara would be very happy to support this proposal on behalf of the IPA and, in extension, join the band of sisters and brothers that will carry our community forward.
- Hendrik stressed that these are exciting times even though we are still operating in an environment that is not that friendly.

#### **5. Any Other Business**

- Tamara mentioned that she is currently involved in organizing an interpretive summer school at Wageningen University next year that might be relevant here. She might be able to apply for a grant from the ECPR via the SG.