

Tabitha Bonilla

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Employment

<i>Assistant Professor</i> Human Development and Social Policy, School of Education and Social Policy Institute for Policy Research (Faculty Fellow) & Center for the Study of Diversity and Democracy (Affiliate) Northwestern University	2019-Present
<i>Research Assistant Professor</i> Institute for Policy Research & Political Science Department (By Courtesy) & Center for the Study of Diversity and Democracy (Affiliate) Northwestern University	2016-2019
<i>Post-Doctoral Scholar and Teaching Fellow</i> Political Science Department University of Southern California	2014-2016

Education

Stanford University 2007-2015
Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science
Dissertation: "The Impact of Campaign Promises on Voter Behavior"
Committee: Mike Tomz, Justin Grimmer, Paul Sniderman

Master of Arts in Political Science
Fields: American Politics, Institutions, Comparative Politics

Massachusetts Institute of Technology 2003-2007
Bachelor of Science in Biology
Bachelor of Science in Political Science, Best Undergraduate Thesis

Thesis Title: "The Global Acquisition of Women's Suffrage and the Influence of Development in Social Policy"

Advisors: Chappell Lawson, Charles Stewart

Research

Book

The Polarizing Effect of Campaign Promises on Voter Behavior

(Under contract at Cambridge University Press)

Campaign promises are a hallmark of campaign theory in politics: candidates make promises to signal to voters their intentions in office. However, theory nor empirics effectively defines campaign promises nor considers the diversity of commitments candidates take when issuing position statements. Through a corpus of American presidential debates, I demonstrate that position statements range from those with no commitment to future action to promises, strong commitments of future action. Using original survey experiments, I demonstrate that this conceptual distinction in position-taking has an important effect on vote choice: it polarizes opinions of candidates by altering expectations of candidate commitment and assessments of character.

Published Articles

"Bridging the Partisan Divide on Immigration Policy Attitudes through a Bipartisan Issue Area: The Case of Human Trafficking." With Cecilia Mo. *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, 2018. 5(2), 107-120.

"The Evolution of Human Trafficking Messages and the Effects on Public Opinion." With Cecilia Mo. *Journal of Public Policy*, 2018. 1-34. doi: 10.1017/S0143814X18000107.

"Predicting Biased Behavior with Implicit Attitudes: Results from an Internet Experiment." With Cecilia Mo in Krosnick, J.A., Stark, T. H & Scott, A.L. (Eds.). (forthcoming). *The Cambridge Handbook of Implicit Bias and Racism*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

"Elevated Threat-Levels and Decreased Expectations: How Democracy Handles Terrorist Threats" with Justin Grimmer. *Poetics* (Special Issue on Topic Models in the Social Sciences), 2013. 41, 650669.

Articles Under Review

"Social Movements and Intersectionality: The Case of Black Lives Matter" With Al Tillery. Last presented at Southern Political Science Conference 2020. (Revise and Resubmit invited by the *American Political Science Review*.)

Campaign Promises as Strategic Signals of Candidate Commitment. Last presented at NYU CESS Experimental Political Science Conference 2017.

“The Context-Dependence of Social Norms in Evaluations of Racially-Derogatory Political Messages among Blacks and Whites” With Alexandra Filindra and Nazita Lajevardi. Last presented at the American Politics Workshop at UW Madison, 2019.

Working Papers

“The Use of Promise-making in Issue Ownership”, Last presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Association of Political Science 2017.

“Vying for Votes: How Group-based Appeals to Group-Based Affect Voter Opinions”. Last presented at the Political Psychology Preconference at the Chicago-Area Behavioral Conference at Northwestern University 2016.

Work in Progress

“Where to Place Sensitive Questions in an Experiment—Pretreatment or Posttreatment?” with S. R. Gubitz and Amanda Sahar D’Urso.

“How Candidate Occupations on the Ballot Signal Different Qualifications by Gender” Last presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-Western Association of Political Science 2017.

“Extending Suffrage to Bolster Political Support: An Explanation for Women’s Suffrage.” Last presented at Stanford University 2012.

“How Racial Composition of Districts Affects Campaign Stops and Messages” With Allison Anoll.

Invited Talks

“The Political Outlook for 2020: Implications for Businesses and the U.S. Economy.” Panel at Kellogg School of Management, January 2020.

“Evolution of Human Trafficking Policy.” Presented at the State of Human Trafficking Meeting, Cook County Anti-Trafficking Task Force, November 2019.

“Voter Decision Making and Campaign Promises.” Presented at the Institute for Policy Research Colloquium, November 2019.

“Dealing the Race Card.” Presented at University of Wisconsin, Madison. November 2019.

“The Polarizing Effect of Campaign Promises.” Presented at Northwestern University Civic Capital and Democratic Institutions Working Group, February 2019.

“Predicting Biased Behavior with Implicit Attitudes: Results from an Internet Experiment.” Presented at Northwestern University, Department of Sociology, February 2018.

“The Polarizing Effect of Campaign Promises.” Presented at the United States Air Force Academy. December 2018.

“Human Trafficking: Inclusion, Exclusion, and Public Support.” Presented at SESP, Northwestern University, December 2018.

“Human Trafficking: Inclusion, Exclusion, and Public Support.” Presented at University of Illinois, Chicago, November 2018.

“The Polarizing Effect of Campaign Promises.” Presented at the University of Nevada, Reno, October 2018.

“Human Trafficking, Immigration, and Policy.” Presented at Northwestern Anti-trafficking Student Group, Northwestern University, November 2017.

“The Evolution of Human Trafficking Messaging and Effects on Public Opinion.” Presented at Northwestern University, Institute for Policy Research Colloquium, January 2017.

“The Strategic Use of Campaign Promises.” Presented at the University of Colorado—Boulder, March 2016.

“The Prospective Impact of Campaign Promises on Voter Evaluations of Candidates.” Presented at the University of Southern California, March 2015.

“Campaign Promises as Distinctive Signals of Issue Positions.” Presented at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, April 2014.

Media Appearances

KTLA Channel 5 News, 2016, Interview on campaign strategies and effects on public opinion.
Los Angeles Times, [2018](#), Discussed the strategic implications of positions on abortion.

Workshop and Conference Attendance

2010 **MPSA** (Presenter), **AAPOR** (Presenter), **APSA** (Presenter)
2014 **APSA** (Presenter)
2015 **MPSA** (Presenter), **APSA** (Presenter)
2016 **MPSA** (Presenter), **APSA** (Presenter)
2017 **NYU-CESS** (Presenter), **MPSA** (Chair, Discussant, Presenter), **APSA** (Presenter, Discussant)
2018 **MPSA** (Presenter), **APSA** (Diversity Hackathon, Presenter, Discussant), **MAPOR** (2 Presenter)
2019 **SPSA** (Chair, Discussant, Presenter), **MPSA** (Chair, Discussant, Presenter), **APSA** (Presenter)
2020 **SPSA** (Chair, Discussant, Presenter)

Teaching

Human Trafficking Policy, Instructor, Fall 2019
Northwestern University

Parties and Elections, Instructor, Spring 2019
Northwestern University

Intro to American Politics, Guest Lecturer, Fall 2018
Northwestern University,

Public Opinion and Voting Behavior, Guest Lecturer, Fall 2018
Northwestern University

Political Analysis, Instructor, Fall 2015
University of Southern California

Political Behavior, Instructor, Spring 2015 and Spring 2016
University of Southern California

Islam, Iran and the West, Teaching Assistant, Spring 2011, Spring 2012
Stanford University

Islam and the West, Teaching Assistant, Spring 2010

Humanities, Teaching Assistant, Summer 2004, 2007
MIT MITES

Biochemistry, Teaching Assistant, Summer 2005
MIT MITES

Advising

Northwestern University, *Undergraduate Honors Thesis, Co-Advisor, 2020*
Student: Christina Parker

Northwestern University, *Undergraduate Honors Thesis Advisor, 2018*
Student: Sky Patterson "Stop and Frisk and Civic Participation in Chicago"

Northwestern University, *Summer Undergraduate Research Advisor, Summer 2018* Student:
Sky Patterson "Stop and Frisk and Civic Participation in Chicago"

Northwestern University, *Summer Undergraduate Research Advisor, Summer 2017*
Student: Dylan Kennedy "Party Positions and Shifts"
Student: Joseph Kim "Promises, Issues, and Fulfillment"

Service

Editorial Board, January 2020 – Present
Journal of Research on Race, Ethnicity, and Politics

Reviewer,
Journal of Politics, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, Time Experiments in the Social Sciences,
American Politics Research, Law & Policy, Violence Against Women, Public Opinion Quarterly,
Journal of Research on Race, Ethnicity, and Politics

Chair and Discussant,
Annual Meeting of Mid-western Political Science Association, Annual Meeting of American Political
Science Association, Annual Meeting of Southern Political Science Association

Stanford Graduate Diversity Steering Committee, November 2011 – June 2012
Contribute to discussions on how advance graduate student diversity at Stanford

Stanford EDGE-SBE Mentor, August 2011 – June 2012
Mentor two younger students in the social sciences

Stanford Political Science Graduate Student Association Secretary, January 2011 – January 2012
Organize professionalization events for other graduate students

Excel Program September 2008 – June 2009
Tutored high-schoolers and facilitated the direction of an intervention program for high-schoolers
who were failing. The goal of the program was to help minorities students who were also
economically disadvantaged graduate become college bound.

MIT Graduate Student Office, 2005 – 2007

Aided the Assistant Dean of Graduate Students in administrating the MIT Summer Research Program, other recruitment efforts and programming for minority graduate students on campus, and facilitated needs between other student helpers, the web design team, and the Dean.

MIT Office of Engineering Special Programs, 2004 – 2006

Helped the administrative assistant with programmatic needs; served on the selection committee for Minority Introduction to Engineering and Science (MITES)

MIT Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM), 2004 – 2006

Mentored three middle school students; the program involved monthly seminars on current technological innovations

Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, 2004–2006

Served as President, Vice President, Activities Liaison

MIT Diversity Initiative 2005

Cofounded a group that created university-wide forums to provoke thoughtful discussion to discuss ways to bridge the gap in diversity communication

Skills

Statistical Software: STATA, R, Atlas.ti, Nvivo

Survey platforms: Mechanical Turk, Qualtrics, Turk Prime

Other programming: LaTeX, Python, Javascript

Languages: Portuguese (conversational)

Awards & Grants

Hispanic Scholar Award (APSA), 2019

APSA Travel Grant, 2019

NEH Workshop: Suffrage in the America's, Participant 2018

APSA Small Grant, 2018

APSA Travel Grant, 2018

Northwestern Undergraduate Research Assistance Grant, 2016-2017, 2017-2018

Women of Color in the Academy Workshop (Stanford University), Participant, 2017

The Coaching Fellowship, Fellow, 2016

Travel Grant, University of Southern California, 2014

Stanford Laboratory for American Democratic Values, Member 2013-2014

Enhancing Diversity in Graduate Student Education (EDGE-SBE) Grant, 2010 and 2014

Graduate Research Opportunity Grant, Stanford School of Humanities and Sciences, 2011

Diversifying Academia, Recruiting Excellence (DARE) Doctoral Fellow Alternate, 2011

EDGE-SBE Fellow, 2007-2014
MIT Political Science Best Thesis Award, 2007
Albert G. Hill Prize, MIT, 2006
Burchard Scholar, MIT, 2006