EDUCATION

**University of Massachusetts Amherst**

Ph.D. in Political Science September 2021

*Fields: American Politics and Public Policy*

M.A. in Political Science September 2012

**Binghamton University**

B.S in Biology May 2000

**Dissertation**

“Latino Race Cards: Negative Racial Appeals in Contemporary Campaigns and the Bounds of Racial Priming Theory” DOI: [10.7275/24599237](https://doi.org/10.7275/24599237)

Committee: Scott Blinder (Chair), Tatishe Nteta (Member), Brian Schaffner (Member), Mari Castañeda (Communications)

*The Implicit Explicit (IE) model of racial priming (Mendelberg 2001) continues to be the dominant theoretical model for understanding the impact of negative racial campaign appeals on white voter mobilization despite significant demographic change in the United States. The theoretical underpinnings of the IE model rest upon a norm of racial equality which emerged in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement. Given the specific racial and historical context in which this racial norm developed it is unclear whether the IE model can account for the impact of non-Black racial appeals on white voter mobilization. I apply the concept of “foreigner positionality” to argue that this egalitarian racial norm does not extend to account for behaviors directed toward Latinos in contemporary politics. Additionally, the hyper-partisan and hyper-racialized context in which contemporary campaigns take place may have altered the perception of what constitutes a racial appeal. Using a nationally representative sample of non-Hispanic, white adults from the 2016 CCES, I employ a comparative survey experiment to test whether similar rhetorical-visual constructions of anti-Black and anti-Latino appeals have differential impacts on white voters’ candidate favorability ratings. The results demonstrate that the norm of racial equality does not extend beyond African Americans; that there appears to be partisan bifurcation around the adherence and maintenance of a norm of ‘African American’ equality; and raise significant questions about the assumption that the decision to express primed racial thinking occurs at an unconscious level.*

**COURSES TAUGHT**

**Political Science Courses**

Introduction to American Politics

Introduction to American government. Understanding political institutions in light of democratic theory and values. Examination of the electoral process; how government institutions respond to public opinion.

Political Parties and Elections

Analysis of the roles of political parties in elections and in government. Emphasis on elections and democratic theory: voting behavior, party organizations, PACs, and money in congressional and presidential elections.

Massachusetts Politics

Focus mainly on present day Massachusetts politics, covering the institutions of government, politics in a federalist context, state budgeting and the policy-making process.

State and Local Politics

Problems, politics, and issues of state government in the U.S. The key factors inhibiting and facilitating the reemergence of the states in the political system. Examines the significance of state government in the development and implementation of local and federal policies.

Race and American Politics

Explores the historical and contemporary role(s) of race, ethnicity, and immigration in the construction and operation of American political life. Examines how race influences media, campaigns, voting, representation, and political coalitions.

Political Psychology

This course provides an introduction to the field of political psychology. It focuses primary attention on psychological explanations of individual political attitudes and actions, among both elites and the masses.

Public Opinion in Politics

Exploration of public opinion on a variety of political topics to develop an understanding of survey instruments and question biases. Examines how peoples' opinions influence their behavior and whether or not political leaders follow the "will of the public" or manipulate public opinion to achieve their own aims.

First Year Seminar in Political Science

Informs first year students of opportunities for their advancement in the department and on campus. Provides a brief overview of the field of political science and focuses on learning about campus resources experientially.

**Public Policy Courses**

Introduction to Public Policy

Focus on how public policies are made in the U.S. Examines the processes by which policies are made in various political institutions, including the Presidency, Congress, bureaucracy, and courts, as well as the roles of citizens and interest groups.

Controversies in Public Policy

Introduction to contemporary public policy issues and debates. Students gain various perspectives on public policy, including equality, justice, and efficiency. Emphasis on in-class discussion and debates.

**Other Fields**

Community Practice Experience

Social Work students develop an experiential understanding of macro-level engagement, assessment, planning, intervention and evaluation. Emphasis on practicing cultural humility and learning from community.

**Teaching Interests**

**Courses developed for on-line learning**

Women and Politics

This course considers the debate over whether women's political progress has stagnated and impact of gender disparities on American electoral politics. The course begins by exploring women's suffrage campaigns and voting behavior in the period immediately following their achievement of the right to vote and beyond. It then turns to the relationship between women and party politics including a discussion of the challenges women face as candidates in American politics. The course concludes by examining the extent to which women's participation in campaigns and elections makes a substantive difference in policy making.

The Politics of Food  
This course examines the power relations that structure the production, distribution, and consumption of food within an industrialized and globalized food system. Topics covered include: the relationship of food to individual and collective identity; the environmental consequences of the industrial food system; the cultural politics of food; the impact of relative wealth and poverty on food security and public health; the scope and function of government regulation; social movements contesting the industrial food system.

**Courses to be developed**

Special topic in Public Administration: Urban Revitalization

Explores whether downtown economic revitalization is a meaningful community investment or if it simply a euphemism gentrification. Comparative assessment of the development policies pursued in Massachusetts Gateway Cities.

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**Smith College**

**Adjunct Professor**

SSW 191: Agency and Community Practice 2017-2019

Community Practice Experience (CPE) Advisor for SSW graduate students

**University of Hartford**

**Adjunct Professor**

POLSCI 110: Power and Politics in American Government Spring 2017

**University of Massachusetts, Amherst**

**Instructor**

POLSCI 191: First Year Seminar in Political Science Fall 2015-16, 2018-19

Spring 2016

POLSCI 181: Controversies in Public Policy RAP Spring 2014

Residential Academic Program

**On-line Classes (Instructor)**

POLSCI 181: Controversies in Public Policy Spring 2017

POLSCI 208 Political Parties and Elections Summer 2016

POLSCI 280 Introduction to Public Policy Summer 2014

POLSCI 219 State and Local Politics Spring 2013

POLSCI 317 Massachusetts Politics Summer 2011

**Teaching Assistant**

POLSCI 308: Public Opinion in Politics Fall 2015

POLSCI 329: Political Psychology Spring 2013

POLSCI 181: Controversies in Public Policy Fall 2011, 2012

POLSCI 280: Introduction to Public Policy Spring 2010, 2011, 2015, 2016

POLSCI 297N: Race and American PoliticsFall 2009

POLSCI 101: Introduction to American Politics Fall 2008, 2010; Spring 2009, 2012

**Senior Teaching Assistant**

*Coordinated communication and grading among other teaching assistants*

POLSCI 181: Controversies in Public Policy Fall 2013, 2014, 2017

**Peer Reviewed Articles**

Nteta, Tatishe, Rebecca Lisi, and Melinda Tarsi. 2015. “Playing the Race Card from the Bottom of the Deck: Elite Cues, Partisanship, and Racial Priming.” *Politics, Groups, and Identities*: 1-29. DOI: 10.1080/21565503.2015.1050407.

**External grant funding**

National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research January 2016

Improvement Grant (DDRIG): *$13,198*

American Association of University Women American Dissertation April 2016

Fellowship Program: *recognized as an alternate*

**INTERNAL AWARDS, GRANTS, and FELLOWSHIPS**

Department of Political Science Summer Writing Grant: *$2,500* Summer 2016

*For preparation of dissertation chapter with MTurk pilot study*

UMass Graduate School Dissertation Grant: *$1,000* December 2015

Department of Political Science Summer Writing Grant: *$2,500* Summer 2015

*For preparation of NSF DDRIG proposal*

UMass Graduate School Dissertation Writing Retreat: *$150* June 2015

*Structured time for writing, feedback, and developing effective writing strategies*

Graduate Research Initiative Program (GRIP): *$3,500*

Research Assistantship Summer 2013

*For editing and submitting for publication paper with Tatishe Nteta*

Travel Grant: *$367* Spring 2013

Department of Political Science Travel Grants: *$300* Spring 2018, 2015, 2010; Fall 2010

**Working Papers**

Lisi, Rebecca. “Racial Priming Beyond Black and White: Examining the Utility of the Implicit Explicit Model of Racial Priming for Latinos.”

Lisi, Rebecca. “Discursive Limitations of Anti-Hate Rhetoric: A Case Study on the Inability to Pass a Resolution to Declare Holyoke, MA a ‘Safe and Accepting City.’”

Lisi, Rebecca. “Activating Low-propensity Latino Voters: A Field Experiment on the Effectiveness of Spanish-only and English-only GOTV mailers.”

Lisi, Rebecca. “Excluding the Cultural ‘Other’: How a ‘Backyard Chicken Ordinance’ was used to Reify the Prevailing Hierarchical Social Order in Holyoke, MA.”

Lisi, Rebecca. “Bounded by Constituencies: Institutional Constraints of Ward and At-Large Districts on Substantive Representation.”

**Presentations**

Lisi, Rebecca. “Old Dogs with New Tricks? Demographic Shifts, Perceptions of Latino Group Threat, and New Negative Political Campaign Ad Targets.”

Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, April 2015.

Nteta, Tatishe, Rebecca Lisi and Melinda Tarsi. “Playing the Race Card from the Bottom of the Deck: Elite Cues, Partisanship, and Racial Priming.”

Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, April 2013.

Nteta, Tatishe and Rebecca Lisi. “The New Race Card? Priming, Hispanics, and Public Opinion on Immigration Reform.”

Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, April 2012.

Presented at the New England Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Portsmouth, April 2012.

Lisi, Rebecca. “Institutional Constraints on Substantive Urban Policy: Effects of Electoral Structure on Universalistic Benefits.”

Presented at the Urban Affairs Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, March 2011.

Presented at the New England Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Hartford, April 2011.

Lisi, Rebecca. “Bounded by Constituencies: Institutional Constraints of Ward and At-Large Districts on Substantive Representation.”

Presented at the New England Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Hartford, April 2010.

**Engagement as Scholar-Practitioner**

Holyoke Municipal Government

City Councilor at-Large 2008-2021

Mayoral candidate 2021

**Organized Symposiums and Workshops**

*The Scholar-Practitioner on Who Governs in 2012*, roundtable discussion for the Annual Meeting of the New England Political Science Association: Portsmouth, NH May 2012

Panelists Rebecca Lisi (UMass Amherst), Ben Tafoya (New England College), Louise Simmons (University of Connecticut), and June Sager Speakman (Roger Williams College)

*Politics, Policy & Citizen Participation in City Governance*, workshop panel for the Tufts Conference on Civic Studies, Civic Practices: Boston, July 2010.

Panelists Rebecca Lisi (UMass Amherst), Rebecca Moryl (UMass Boston), and Felicia Sullivan (UMass Boston)

*Revitalizing: Building Holyoke’s Future,* Holyoke Economic Development Summit with the Roosevelt Institute Campus Network at Mount Holyoke College: Holyoke, May 2010

A day-long conference on emerging economic development strategies for blighted cities. Panelists included Kathy Anderson (City of Holyoke Economic Development Director), Preston Smith (Mount Holyoke College), Bob Forrant (UMass Lowell), Ramón Borges-Méndez (Clark University, The Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy), Benjamin Forman (Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth), Stephen Sheppard (Williams College, Center for Creative Community Development)

**Guest Lecturer**

Controversies in Public Policy 2013, 2014

Immigration Policy Unit

Introduction to Public Policy 2017

Urban politics/policy unit

WHMP 96.9 & 107.5 FM Community Forum: “A Woman’s Place is in the House … and the Senate.” Northampton, MA, February 2017.

Organized Holyoke officials speaker panel and bus tour for international group of academics visiting the United States through the UMass Civic Initiative’s “American Politics and Political Thought” program, July 2011, 2012, 2013.

Speaker for Five Colleges Community-Based Learning program “Holyoke Bound,” February 2010.

Organized Holyoke panel on civic participation for Center for Community Engagement at Amherst College, September 2009.

**Skills**

**Research**

Statistical analysis in STATA

Experimental survey design in Mechanical Turk and Qualtrics

Lead researcher for Undergraduate Research Engagement Program (UREP)

Coordinated undergraduate research fellows on coding projects for my dissertation

**Teaching**

Course management through Moodle and Blackboard

Experience supervising and mentoring undergraduate TA’s

**Advising**

Experience with advising-based curriculum development

UMass Amherst New Student Orientation Academic Advisor (Summer 2018)