

Department of Political Science, Temple University

Placement Candidates

2018-2019

Amanda Milena Alvarez (PhD candidate)

<http://www.amandamalvarez.com>

Comparative Politics, Political Psychology and Behavior, International Relations

Risk Acceptance and Contentious Politics: The Role of Risk Weights in Understanding Protest Participation

My primary area of research interest is in Comparative Politics focusing on Latin America. My dissertation project *Risk Acceptance and Contentious Politics: The Role of Risk Weights in Understanding Protest Participation* seeks to explore the relationship between risk acceptance and contentious political action, focusing on protests in Latin America. This research is novel because I theorize about the characteristics that make individuals risk acceptant. I also introduce the application of risk to contentious politics, which has not been done before. I import claims from social psychology to note that the lack of completion of several life cycle markers—which I name risk weights, such as marriage, parental status and educational attainment amongst others, make individuals more risk acceptant. These risk weights provide information on the likelihood of participation in contention. My project is divided into the following components: a theoretical model for risk acceptance, two online experiments and field interviews in Chile.

Committee Members: Hillel David Soifer, Ryan Vander Wielen, Kevin (Vin) Arceneaux

Jeff P. Antsen (PhD candidate)

<https://sites.temple.edu/jeffantsen/>

American Politics (Political Psychology), Political Theory, Public Policy

Why Bother Choosing Anyway?: LGBT Community Framing and the Role of Etiological Narrative Exposure

In my dissertation, I study the emergence, evolution and interaction of different narratives relating to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans* (LGBT) community, used in mass media news coverage. Prominent among these are “etiological” narratives, which seek to explain the existence and meaning of the LGBT community and of LGBT identity. I use natural language processing (NLP) methods, like topic modeling and language network visualization, to identify these narratives and themes in news texts. These tools also produce quantitative data, which describe how LGBT issues—as discussed in news stories—are framed differentially by narrative-based understandings of the LGBT community. I model and interpret the meaning of changes in these framing dynamics, across time and between media outlets. These results shed insight into the relationship between narrative framing of news issues and public opinion toward the LGBT community.

Committee Members: Kevin (Vin) Arceneaux, Heath Fogg-Davis, Nora Jones (Associate Director of Urban Bioethics, Temple University)

Taylor Benjamin-Britton, PhD 2017

Visiting Assistant Professor of International Relations, Lehigh University

<https://ir.cas2.lehigh.edu/content/taylor-benjamin-britton-0>

<https://sites.temple.edu/taylorbb/>

International Relations and Comparative Politics

The Politics of Humanitarian Disarmament: Civil Society and the Cluster Bomb Ban

The international community is engaging in a new kind of arms control, which parts ways with past practice to privilege humanitarian concerns and civilian protections over perceived national security interests. Existing arguments, which emphasize international pressure or norm diffusion, cannot fully explain mixed reception to humanitarian disarmament agreements and neglect the process by which persuasive action at the domestic level impacts policy. This dissertation contributes a theory of this domestic pressure process, through an account of the cluster munition ban, advancing the argument that where civil society is able to run a well-resourced domestic campaign, raising issue salience and activating the public to participate in political leverage, disarmament policy change is likeliest to occur. States that join agreements as a result of this process do so for instrumental rather than normative reasons, but in self-imposing new weapons bans, reticent governments ultimately contribute to the humanizing of the laws of war.

Committee Members: Mark Pollack, Orfeo Fioretos, Sarah Bush, Robert L. Brown (Council on Foreign Relations), Jennifer M. Dixon (Villanova University)

Aja Binette, PhD August 2018

<https://sites.temple.edu/binette/>

International Relations

Positions of Authority And Influence In Environmental Nongovernmental Organizations' Networks: An Examination of Network Structure and Participation at UN Climate Change Summits

Which environmental NGOs are positioned to be the most influential in climate negotiations? In this tripartite project, I use an original dataset to construct a series of ENGO networks using social network analysis. I examine networks prior to three watershed meetings in the history of the UNFCCC, at Kyoto, Copenhagen and Paris. An ENGO's structural position can be viewed as a reflection of an ENGO's perceived power, authority and influence. I study ENGO participation at these three time points. In part one, I describe how the structure of the environmental movement has changed over time. In part two, I examine the role of alliance-based organizations in the larger environmental movement. In part three, I examine the relationships between ENGOs and human-centric organizations. These findings have far-reaching implications for the prospects of the UNFCCC developing, and states adopting, effective climate change policy that has the support of the environmental movement.

Committee Members: Mark Pollack, Sarah Bush, Orfeo Fioretos, Maryam Deloffre (Arcadia University)

Travis Blemings, PhD 2017

Assistant Professor of Political Science, Non Tenure Track, Temple University

<https://sites.temple.edu/blemings/>

International Relations, Comparative Politics

The Politics of Development Aid: Understanding the Lending Practices of the World Bank Group

This dissertation seeks to better understand the lending behavior of the World Bank Group (WBG). My research focuses on the Bank's role as a source of investment capital and asks, why do some countries, especially those with similar economic characteristics, receive more aid than others? Utilizing regression analysis of panel-data covering the period between 1990 through 2011, I find evidence that a multi-donor model of political influence is a more accurate reflection of reality than traditional models which focus exclusively on the role of the United States. The evidence presented in this project demonstrates that the allocation of development aid from each agency of the WBG, is in part, driven by international politics. Countries with close economic, political and geostrategic ties to donors such as the United States, Japan and the United Kingdom tend to receive more funding per year than their less well-connected peers.

Committee Members: Orfeo Fioretos, Mark Pollack, Kevin (Vin) Arceneaux, Sarah Bush, Ayse Kaya (Swarthmore College)

Nicolaos D. Catsis, PhD 2014

Visiting Assistant Professor of Global Studies, Wilson University

nicolaos.catsis@wilson.edu

Comparative Politics, International Relations

Examining the Impact of Colonial Administrations on Post-Independence State Behavior in Southeast Asia

This project focused on the impact of colonial administrations on post-independence state behavior in Southeast Asia. Utilizing archival research and extensive historical analysis, it identifies three different variables (indigenous elite mobility, colonial income diversity and institutional-infrastructure levels) that worked in tandem to produce a variety of post-independence outcomes. It also constructs a four-category typology for the purposes of ordering the broad variation observed across post-colonial Southeast Asia.

Committee Members: Hillel David Soifer, Sandra Suarez, Roselyn Hsueh, Lu Zhang (Department of Sociology, Temple University)

Claire Gothreau (PhD candidate)

sites.temple.edu/cgothreau

American Politics

The Political Consequences of Gender-Based Marginalization

This dissertation project focuses on the political consequences of gender-based marginalization. In particular, I consider the way that sexism, sexual harassment and the objectification of women affect political engagement. Structural factors and standard predictors of political behavior, such as education, income and access to resources, can no longer explain the persistent gender gap in engagement. The goal of this dissertation is two-fold. First, I argue and empirically demonstrate that sexism, sexual harassment and the objectification of women have explicit political consequences. Second, I illuminate the moderating factors in this relationship between gender-based marginalization and political engagement. I explore how coping mechanisms, feminist identity development and ideology affect the connection between marginalizing experiences and political engagement and behavior. I employ both national representative surveys, survey experiments and lab experiments to achieve these goals.

Committee Members: Kevin (Vin) Arceneaux, Nyron Crawford, Heath Fogg-Davis

Rafael Jacob, PhD 2017

Post-doctoral Fellow, University of Quebec at Montreal

www.rafaeljacob.com

American Politics

Party, People, or Policy? The Impact of Advertisement on Voter Behavior in Ballot Initiative Campaigns

We have acquired over the last several decades a fairly rich understanding of the impact on voter behavior of political communication in general and of political advertising specifically. However, much of this knowledge pertains to “traditional,” candidate-centered elections. Comparatively very little is known with regards to ballot initiative races. In principle, these pit not people, but proposed policies, against each other. However, in practice, these campaigns not only feature ads discussing policy, but also frequently include ads highlighting a measure’s backers and foes, be they individuals, non-profit groups, media outlets, industries, or political parties. This, in turn, leads to a basic question: what type of advertising message carries the greatest weight with voters in initiative contests—and how does it differ (if at all) from the effects found in candidate-centered elections? Through an original experiment, this paper aims to break new ground in the political communication and voter behavior literatures by tackling this question.

Committee Members: Kevin (Vin) Arceneaux, Michael Hagen, Heather LaMarre (Temple University School of Communication), Stephen Nicholson (UC-Merced)

Lauren Rowlands (PhD candidate)

<https://sites.temple.edu/laurenmrowlands/>

American Politics

Congress and Immigration Policy: A Study of the Member-level Motivations and Agenda Setting Strategies Surrounding Immigration Reform

This project explores the decision-making processes of House members on immigration reform, both individually (micro-level) and collectively (macro-level). I disentangle the forces that shape individual members' decisions on bills proposing the expansion/contraction of immigration rights, giving attention to those industries that rely heavily upon immigrant labor. I find that these forces make political parties unstable coalitions in immigration policy. I further examine the consequences of these individual-level forces on agenda setting. Since majority party leaders have a vested interest in passing bills with broad majority party support, significant constraints are placed on the types of bills eligible for floor consideration.

Committee: Ryan Vander Wielen, David Nickerson, Gary Mucciaroni

Danielle K. Scherer (PhD candidate)

<https://sites.temple.edu/daniellescherer/>

International Relations and Political Theory

Return to the First Image: a Place for Peoples In International Relations

This dissertation is aimed at understanding the ways in which recognition at the international level can shape not only the way people choose to behave, but also the way they conceive of their own identities. It introduces theorizing on the concepts of identity, habitus and hysteresis to the field of international relations (IR) in an attempt to better understand often overlooked conflicts created by the international state system. In doing so, it includes an exploration of the role that recognition plays in creating idealized identities and the resulting conflicts that arise when individuals possess group identities that do not align with the state-based identities that the international system is premised upon. Through a return to studying the first image, I argue that misrecognition of the identities threatens the psychological and existential existence of non-state groups, serving as a virtual trigger for action, resulting in shifts in their political behavior.

Committee members: Mark Pollack, Orfeo Fioretos, Sarah Bush

Ashish A. Vaidya, PhD 2015

Adjunct Assistant Professor, Colorado State University, Pueblo

ashish.vaidya@csupueblo.edu

Political Theory, Comparative Politics

Beyond Neopatrimonialism: A Normative and Empirical Inquiry into Legitimacy and Structural Violence in Post-Colonial India

The purpose of this project is to demonstrate that the rational-legal bureaucratic institutions inherited by post-colonial states from their former colonial patrons have clashed with indigenous cultural norms, leading to legitimation failure. This lack of legitimacy, in turn, leads to political and bureaucratic corruption among the individuals tasked with embodying and enforcing the norms of these bureaucratic institutions. Instances of corruption such as bribery and solicitation of bribes,

misappropriation of public funds, nepotistic hiring practices and the general placement of personal gain over the rule of law on the part of officials weaken the state's ability and willingness to enforce its laws, promote stability and economic growth and insure the welfare of its citizens. This corruption and its multidimensional detrimental effects on the lives of citizens are forms of what has been called structural violence. In this project, I examine four case studies of Indian subnational states that have experienced varying degrees and types of colonial bureaucratic imposition, resulting in divergent structurally violent outcomes. Deeming these systems "violent" has normative implications regarding responsibility for the problems of the post-colonial world. Corruption is often cited as a reason not to give loans or aid to certain developing countries; but viewing the matter in terms of structural violence highlights the need for not only economic assistance but also institutional overhaul.

Committee members: Joseph Schwartz, Jane Gordon (University of Connecticut), Hillel David Soifer, Sean Yom, Bhargupati Singh (Department of Anthropology, Brown University)