

Elizabeth Chase Connors

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Expected May 2019, Political Science, Stony Brook University. Concentrations: Political Psychology, American Politics

M.A., 2014, Political Science, Stony Brook University

B.A., 2010, Political Science, College of Charleston, *Magna Cum Laude*

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

Yanna Krupnikov (*chair*), Associate Professor of Political Science, Stony Brook University (Yanna.Krupnikov@stonybrook.edu)

Jennifer Jerit, Professor of Political Science, Stony Brook University (Jennifer.Jerit@stonybrook.edu)

Peter DeScioli, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Stony Brook University (Peter.DeScioli@stonybrook.edu)

DISSERTATION PAPERS

1. The Social Transmission of Political Values

Worries about elite influence are often pacified by the assumption that individuals' stable values filter political information—minimizing elite, media, and social influence. This belief, though, assumes that values are stable and independent of social context, an assumption that is questioned by recent findings. This piece theorizes that political values are socially transmitted—that is, that values are not internal predispositions, but the result of social influence. To test this, I attempt to understand the determinants of party-value congruence (PVC)—or, Democrats endorsing Democratic values and Republicans endorsing Republican values—with the theory that outside forces should increase party-value congruence. I consider this argument with three empirical tests: an observational analysis of the effect of political discussions on PVC, an observational network analysis of the effect of homogenous political networks on PVC, and an experimental test attempting to recreate the transmission of values in the socio-political world. Findings suggest the need to reevaluate our current conception of political values as well as the strength of social motivations in politics.

2. Party Principles: Political Values are Party-Owned

There is a normative democratic concern about the effectiveness of political elites in representing the public. The worry is—if the public has unstable attitudes that are easily manipulated by the media and political elites (Zaller 1992), how can government effectively represent the public's preferences? Zaller's (1992) answer is simple: individuals filter political information through their political values. Underlying this idea, though, is an important assumption that values “transcend specific situations” (Schwartz and Bilsky 1987). If they are to guide us, they must be established and not easily moved. Recent research complicates this assumption, suggesting that values are less stable and more malleable than we had assumed (Goren 2005; Goren et al. 2009). These findings stand in contrast to research claiming that values are a filter on outside information, allowing individuals to make reasonably independent political choices in the face of outside influence (Zaller 1992). This project attempts to understand these conflicting findings, proposing the idea that values are elite-driven. Preliminary findings suggest this is the case: specifically, that values are “owned” by political

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parties.¹ This research thus questions the ability of individuals to independently reason through politics and therefore the effectiveness of government as a representative entity.

3. Social Deliberation: Do Social Motives Help or Hurt Political Deliberation?

Normative democratic theory recommends that citizens enter the political arena with individual political preferences—uninfluenced by others around them. However, research on reputation management suggests that this requirement is not met, as people have a social motivation to impress others. Given that this is the case, we must ask if these social forces are beneficial or deleterious for democracy. We have research and evidence on both sides of this debate. Thus, in this piece, I ask if political deliberation is improved or hindered by the social context. This will be tested with a deliberation experiment, where subjects will be randomly assigned to discuss politics in a setting that varies reputation.

WORKING PAPERS

1. **Elizabeth C. Connors**, Yanna Krupnikov, and John Barry Ryan. “Does Transparency Bias Survey Research?” (*manuscript under review*)
2. Yanna Krupnikov, Kerri Milita, John Barry Ryan, and **Elizabeth C. Connors**. “How Gender Affects the Efficacy of Discussion as an Information Shortcut.” (*manuscript under review*)
3. **Elizabeth C. Connors** and Peter DeScioli. “Do Indirect Policies Successfully Persuade Public Opinion?” (*manuscript in preparation*)
4. Stanley Feldman, Leonie Huddy, and **Elizabeth C. Connors**. “The Conditional Nature of Empathy: Support for Children at the Border.” (*manuscript in preparation*)

ONGOING RESEARCH

1. **Elizabeth C. Connors**, Yanna Krupnikov, and Samara Klar. “Political Independents: Are They Sincere or Are They Saving Face?”
2. **Elizabeth C. Connors**. “‘Think Different’: When Times are Hard, Contrarians are Revered.”
3. Tracy Goodwin and **Elizabeth C. Connors**. “Moral Foundations Theory and Schwartz Values.”
4. **Elizabeth C. Connors**, Peter DeScioli, and Timothy J. Ryan. “Moral versus Practical Frameworks in Abortion Attitudes.”

CONFERENCE CONTRIBUTIONS

1. *American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, 2017*. Paper—“Are Values Stable? Social Influence on Values and Subsequent Policy Support.”
2. *American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, 2017*. Discussant—Advances in the Study of Ideology Panel.
3. *Visions in Methodology, 2017*. Invited Participant.
4. *Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, 2017*. Paper—“Are Values Stable? Social Influence on Values and Subsequent Policy Support.”

¹ This “value ownership” theory is congruent to the idea of “issue ownership,” coined by Petrocik (1996) and expanded upon by Egan (2013).

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5. *Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, 2017*. Paper—"The Conditional Nature of Empathy: Support for Children at the Border," with Leonie Huddy and Stanley Feldman.
6. *NYU-CESS Experimental Political Science Conference, 2017*. Paper—"Does Transparency Bias Survey Research?" with Yanna Krupnikov and John Barry Ryan.
7. *Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, 2016*. Paper—"Does Transparency Bias Survey Research?" with Yanna Krupnikov and John Barry Ryan.
8. *Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, 2016*. Poster—"Moral versus Practical Frameworks in Abortion Attitudes," with Peter DeScioli and Tim Ryan.

OTHER PUBLISHED WORK

1. Yanna Krupnikov and **Elizabeth C. Connors**. "Negative Campaigns: Are They Good for American Democracy?" in *New Directions in Media and Politics, 2nd Edition* (Ridout, ed), forthcoming
2. **Elizabeth C. Connors**, Samara Klar, and Yanna Krupnikov. 2016. "There May Have Been Shy Trump Supporters After All," in *The Monkey Cage, Washington Post*.

TEACHING POSITIONS

Stony Brook University

1. Research Design (POL504—Graduate Course), Fall 2017
2. The Politics of Trump (POL390—Special Topics Online Course), Summer 2017 and Winter 2018
3. American Government (POL102—Undergraduate Course), Fall 2016 and Spring 2017
4. Grading Position (POL102—Undergraduate Course), Fall 2016

RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS

Stony Brook University

1. Matthew Lebo, Spring 2016 and Summer 2016
2. Jeffrey Segal, Summer 2015 and Summer 2016
3. Peter DeScioli, Summer 2015 and Fall 2015
4. Stanley Feldman, Fall 2014 and Spring 2015
5. Leonie Huddy, Fall 2014 and Spring 2015

GRANTS AND AWARDS

1. National Science Foundation, Time-Sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences (with Yanna Krupnikov and John Barry Ryan), 2015
2. Teaching Assistantship, Stony Brook University, 2016 – Present
3. Graduate Assistantship, Stony Brook University, 2014 – 2016
4. Full Tuition Scholarship, Stony Brook University, 2014 – Present
5. Member of Pi Sigma Alpha
6. Magna Cum Laude, College of Charleston
7. Departmental Honors in Political Science, upon Graduation, College of Charleston
8. Outstanding Student Award in Political Science, upon Graduation, College of Charleston

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SERVICE

1. Organizer for *Graduate Colloquium & In-House Research Series*, Stony Brook University, 2016 – Present
2. *Women Also Know Stuff* Assistant, 2017
3. *Visions in Methodology* Program Assistant, 2017
4. Alternate Graduate Academic Judiciary Member, Stony Brook University, 2014 - 2015
5. Reviewer for: *British Journal of Political Science*; *Research and Politics*; *Political Science & Politics*; *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties*; *American Politics Research*