

Melissa A. Bell

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Department of Government and Politics
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Education

Ph.D. in Government & Politics (in progress)
University of Maryland, College Park
Expected, 2011

Dissertation Committee: Karen Kaufmann (chair), Paul Herrnson, Michael Hanmer,
Antoine Banks, and Geoffrey Layman (outside reader)

Dissertation: The Many Faces of Feminism: Gender Role Attitudes and the American
Electorate

M.A. in Government and Politics, University of Maryland, December 2008

B.A. in Political Science, Christopher Newport University, May 2005

Publications

Book Reviews:

Bell, Melissa. Book Review: *All Roads Lead to Congress: The \$300 Billion Fight Over Highway Funding*, by Costas Panagopoulos and Joshua Schank. *Journal of Political Science Education* 5 (1) (January 2009):85-86

Bell, Melissa. Book Review: *Limits and Loopholes: The Quest for Free Speech, Money and Fair Elections*, by Victoria Farrar-Myers and Diana Dwyre. *Journal of Political Science Education* 5(2) (April 2009):173-174

Manuscripts Under Review

“How Emotional Appeals Prime Whites’ Racial Attitudes” (with Antoine Banks)

Summary: Our paper examines how the emotional response to an implicit racial appeal affects Whites’ racial policy opinions and vote choice. The dominant view among academics, pundits, and journalists is that racial fear impedes racial progress. Nevertheless, this presumption in the racial priming literature has not been empirically

examined. In this paper, we argue that anger and fear influence Whites' views about race differently. Our contention is that racial priming is most effective when implicit racial cues evoke anger. We use two different data sources to test this proposition. Experimentally, we find that anger from an implicit racial campaign advertisement primes racial resentment and increase its effect on racial policy views. Fear has no such effect. The 1988 American National Election study reveals similar results; anger magnifies racism's effect on racial policies views and preference for Bush. Counter to popular sentiment about the role of fear, racial anger prohibits the success of racially sympathetic policies and candidates.

“Gender Beliefs and the American Electorate: The Case of Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin, and the 2008 Election”

Summary: The purpose of this study is to provide the literature with a revised measurement of gender attitudes that will better explain variance in public opinion. When trying to operationalize gender beliefs in the past, the literature has relied on either measures of abortion attitudes or one-dimensional index scores—essentially collapsing beliefs into a false dichotomy of feminist/anti-feminist. Using the 2008 National Election Study, I demonstrate that gender beliefs should be treated as a multidimensional concept comprising three distinct beliefs: belief about women's opportunities; beliefs about assertive women; and beliefs about the changing family structure and role of the mother. The 2008 election is an optimal case study given the un-precedent performance of two female candidates, Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin, representing each end of the ideological spectrum as well as the symbolic divide over feminism. The findings support the claim that each belief is conceptually distinct with differing predictive power.

“The Mommy Wars: an Experimental Test of the Effect of Gender Cues on Candidate Evaluations” (with Karen Kaufmann)

Summary: Our theoretical expectations predict that women candidates who violate gender norms with respect to motherhood (i.e., single, childless female candidates) are uniquely disadvantaged with regard to how the majority of the voting public evaluate them, and that the extent to which childless women are disadvantaged by their motherhood status is conditioned by individual beliefs about motherhood and the appropriate role of women in contemporary society. We rely on a Polimetrix survey experiment conducted in the fall of 2010 to estimate the direct and conditional effects of motherhood and mass beliefs regarding gender roles on the evaluations of a hypothetical female candidate. Our findings support our original expectations.

Conference Presentations

“The Many Faces of Feminism: A Multidimensional Approach to Feminism and Public Opinion”
Poster presentation, presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 2010, Washington D.C.

“How Emotional Appeals Prime Whites' Racial Attitudes” Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 2010, Washington D.C. (with Antoine Banks)

“Feminism, Public Opinion, and the American Electorate: The Case of Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin, and the 2008 Election” Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, April 2010. Chicago, IL.

“Reviving Horton: Racialized Campaign Emotional Appeals Prime Whites’ Racial Attitudes” Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, April 2010. Chicago, IL. (with Antoine Banks)

“The Hidden Gatekeepers: Early Money Donors and Congressional Campaigns” Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 2009. Toronto, Canada. (with James Curry and Kimberly Karnes)

“Hillary vs. Sarah: Evangelical Anti-feminism and the 2008 Election” Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, January 2009, New Orleans, LA.

Teaching Experience

University of Maryland- College Park

Instructor

Cultural Politics: Women, Religion, and the American Family, Summer 2010
(online)

Maryland Politics, Spring 2009, Spring 2010

State and Local Politics, Fall 2009, Fall 2010, Fall 2011

Public Policy Internship Program, Summer 2009 (online)

Capitol Hill Internship Program, Spring 2009

Introduction to American Politics, Winter 2009

Teaching Assistant

Introduction to American Politics, Fall 2007

Introduction to American Politics, Spring 2008

Introduction to American Politics, Fall 2008

Research Experience

Lab Assistant, Fall 2009

For Professor Antoine Banks, University of Maryland

Graduate Research Assistant, Summer 2007

The Campaign Finance Institute, Washington D.C.

Professional Experience & Membership

Reviewer, *American Politics Research*, 2009, *Politics and Gender*, 2011

Discussant, American Politics Workshop at the University of Maryland, 2009, 2010

American Politics Field Student Representative, Department of Government and Politics,
University of Maryland, 2007-2009

Graduate Studies Committee, Department of Government and Politics, University of Maryland, 2009-2010

Member Midwest Political Science Association (2009- Present)

Member American Political Science Association (2006- Present)

Awards

Jean Elizabeth Spencer Award in Government and Politics, Fall 2010

Prestage-Cook Travel Award, SPSA, 2010

Graduate Funding, 2006-2012

The Goldhaber Travel Grant, The Graduate School, University of Maryland, 2009

State Legislative Fellowship, Department of Government and Politics, University of Maryland, 2006-2007

Female Leader of the Year, Christopher Newport University, 2005

Other Experience

Governor's Fellow,
Office of Governor Mark R. Warner (VA), June 2005- August 2005

Special Assistant to the Secretary of Public Safety,
Office of Governor Mark R. Warner (VA), August 2005-January 2006

Governor's Office for Substance Abuse Prevention/Special Assistant to the Secretary of Public Safety, Office of Governor Timothy M. Kaine (VA), January 2006- July 2006

Intern,
The Mellman Group, June 2011-Present

References

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