

**Stony Brook University
The Graduate School**

Doctoral Defense Announcement

Abstract

The Pathways of National Identity

By

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This project focuses on the assessment of competing conceptualizations of national attachments and examines their impact on political engagement. Elites frequently make use of the notion of patriotism for various political ends, the most common of which involves national security, foreign policy, and support for military action. However, inherent in the idea of national attachment is the promotion of national values and ideals, one of the most common of which, in the context of American identity, is that of political involvement and participation. I argue that empirical studies have largely overlooked the relationship between national identity and concern for civic-mindedness, the promotion of participatory democracy, and an active citizenry, something that has largely concerned political theorists interested in patriotism. This dissertation uses multiple methods of inquiry to: document the actual use of patriotic rhetoric among elites in the real world; develop valid measures of patriotism and national identity; examine the relationships between identity and the embracing of democratic norms and political efficacy, which in turn affect various types of political involvement. Significant attention is also given to the broader normative implications of use of patriotic rhetoric by political elites and its consequence for levels of national identity and civic engagement among the American mass public.

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