



Goodbye & Good Luck!

May 2012

A Newsletter for Department of Government Alumni and Friends



Honors Thesis Edition

**Albright on the Big River
and spillover violence**

Archer on democratic art

**Brinks on economic
development in Chile**

**Butler on civic education
and political participation**

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Contributors

Wilson Albright grew up in Austin, Texas, attending Austin High School. During his time at Texas he was actively involved in the Texas Cowboys and Fiji fraternity.

Jackson Archer coupled his government degree with minors in French and philosophy, which have supported his great interest in certain French philosophers, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Alexis de Tocqueville. Jackson will be spending time in the real world before pursuing a master's degree in political theory.

Derek Brinks majored in government, with a minor in Latin American Studies and an Indigenous Studies Certificate. He has engaged in various research initiatives focused on indigenous politics in Chile, with interests varying from human and indigenous rights law to local political organization and the politics of development. Derek is joining the Oklahoma Corps of Teach For America and plans to pursue a Ph.D. in political science following this two-year commitment.

Natalie Butler graduated from high school in Arizona and moved to Texas to attend UT. While pursuing her degrees, she was elected Student Body President and is a member of Orange Jackets and the Friar Society. She will be moving to Dallas after graduation to work for the Boston Consulting Group.

Jordan Humphreys completed his degree in government as well as a Bachelor of Journalism in Multimedia Journalism and Bachelor of Science in Political Communication. In the fall Humphreys will be in Washington, D.C. for his Bill Archer Fellowship under the UT System's Federal Relations Office, interning full time and studying advocacy and public policy. Visit him at jordanmhumphreys.com.

Chinyere Kimberly Ikegbunam was born in Houston, Texas and is originally from Anambra State, in Southeast Nigeria. She majored in government with a minor in African & African American Studies. While at UT, Chinyere competed for the Women's Track and Field team from 2008-2011. In the fall, she will attend The University of Oklahoma College of Law where she will focus on International and Comparative Law, and obtain a dual MBA in International Business. In the future, she hopes to continue in pursuit of knowledge and justice and become involved in politics in Nigeria, fulfilling her life's mission to see the nation and its people enjoy richer qualities of life.

Ben Lancaster majored in government with a minor in philosophy. He has been a member of Pi Sigma Alpha (the national political science honor society at UT) since 2010 and served as president of the organization during his senior year. He will now spend a year gaining professional experience before going to law school in the fall of 2013. During this time he plans to work full time for a non-profit organization in his hometown of Dallas before returning to Austin to work at the Capitol during the 2013 Legislative Session.

Matthew Levinton is originally from Katy, Texas. He participated in the Liberal Arts Honors Program and completed a double major in history and government at UT. He also pursued the courses required for the Thomas Jefferson Center for the Study of Core Texts and Ideas certificate program. The CTI program was the unifying focus of his education at UT, as it introduced him to the great books and the intellectual tradition that linked some of the most compelling minds of history. He is very thankful for the opportunities to learn that the university provided him with.

Caleb Rodriguez is from Harlingen, TX. He graduated with Liberal Arts Honors, and an honors degree in government and Russian, Eurasian, and East European Studies.

Kelsey Spector was a government and philosophy student. Born in Morristown, NJ, her favorite childhood memory is playing with liquid nitrogen in her dad's lab, though her passion for the humanities quickly overtook interest in the natural sciences. While on campus, she was involved in Orange Jackets, UNICEF, Best Buddies, French Club, Dialogues on Free Speech, and Liberal Arts Council. She is fascinated by France and the films of Woody Allen (not the man himself, she wants to be clear). Kelsey thinks one of the best tools you can have in life is a good sense of humor. Last, but certainly not least, she will be teaching kindergarten in Dallas next year with Teach for America.

Grace Zhang majored in government and Arabic Language & Literature in the Liberal Arts Honors program. Grace studied Arabic for 10 weeks in Morocco. She was also involved with several student organizations, including staffing the annual Model UN high school conference and competing on a collegiate level, planning a 19-student lobbying trip to D.C. to support the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, and serving as Treasurer of UT Pi Sigma Alpha. This June, she departs to participate in a year-long study abroad program in Alexandria, Egypt to achieve superior proficiency in Arabic. After that, Grace plans to attend law school and eventually work in the U.S. Foreign Service.



Gary P. Freeman, Chair

Letter from the Chair

Dear Alumni and Friends,

It is my great pleasure to present the Spring 2012 issue of *Goodbye and Good Luck*.

This is our first honors thesis edition of *Goodbye and Good Luck* and we hope you enjoy reading about some products of this year's class as much as we enjoy showcasing them.

The Honors Thesis Program is a year-long course that provides undergraduates with the opportunity to conduct research in an area of political science of their choice. The fall seminar provides a forum for students to develop their theses in a structured and collegial setting. Students also work closely with a faculty supervisor

beginning in the fall semester. A supervisor is a professor in the government department (or affiliated faculty member) who has specialized knowledge in the student's area of interest and has agreed to oversee the student's honors thesis. The spring semester tutorial consists exclusively of one-on-one work with the supervisor.

The fall seminar is organized into two different classes. One class is oriented toward students who plan to write theses that primarily utilize empirical social science methodology and are focused on explaining some outcome/event/process in American politics, comparative politics, or international relations. The other class is oriented toward students who plan to write theses in public law or political theory that deal primarily with problems in political philosophy (e.g., questions about justice, rights, democracy, morality, virtue) as well as with normative analyses of public policy questions. As is apparent, this year's selection covers a wide variety of political science topics and methodological approaches.

I would like to thank the current program faculty advisors, Jeffrey Abramson and John McIver, as well as all the faculty members who served as supervisors. I would also like to recognize the honors students who are not featured in this newsletter. They include, Victoria Cruz (supervised by Bryan Jones); Sean Danielson (supervised by Raúl Madrid); Joshua Fjelstul (supervised by Pat McDonald); Elizabeth Fletcher (supervised by Peter Trubowitz); Richard Griffin (supervised by Dan Brinks); Stefina Loeza (supervised by Bryan Jones); Brittany Long (supervised by Scott Wolford); Ali Rawaf (supervised by Terri Givens); and Alyson Rotunda (supervised by Terri Givens).

Congratulations to all of our honors students!

Sincerely,

Gary P. Freeman,
Chair

Benefitting From Fear: The United States Political and Media Portrayal of Spillover Crime on the U.S.-Mexico Border

by Wilson Albright

Supervisor: David Prindle

The United States public perception of the spillover crime along the United States-Mexico border resulting from the Mexican drug cartel is skewed and misinformed. The United States side of the U.S.-Mexico border has been portrayed as an area plagued with crime and violence by many different sources, specifically the media and American politicians seeking political gain. While the Mexican side of the border is clearly a hostile area victim to corrupt law enforcement empowered by the ruthless drug cartels, their American sister cities are, contrary to common belief, some of the safest cities in the entire United States. In this thesis, I combine the statistical realities with theoretical insights to answer the following question: How and why has the American political community and media exaggerated spillover crime and violence from Mexico on the United States border and what does this mean for the United States?

I assert that both the media and political community exaggerate spillover violence on the U.S.-Mexico border to benefit from the fearful public perception it creates. I give a brief description of the issues in Mexico concerning the drug cartel crisis and how the United States and border communities in particular contribute to the situation. Following this situational background, I present the readers with the actual spillover violence and crime statistics, which are significantly lower than national averages. I then compare the national opinion and perception of the situation to that of the border city populations. I then describe my research over media portrayal of spillover violence, followed by an analysis explaining why the media exaggerates the realities. I do the same for the American political community along with an analysis as to why they exaggerate the situation as well. To conclude, I tie all of these



different factors together and explain their significance to assert my thesis: that the United States media and political community portray and exaggerate the Mexican drug cartel spillover violence on the United States border to benefit from a fearful public.

Politicians and the media are focusing on the wrong problems and have the American public blind to the reality along the border. The real crime happening in Mexico, which has seen significant increases since 2006, has allowed the media and politicians alike to manufacture a fantasy along the U.S. side of the border. This thesis explores the incentives that reward politicians and the media for exaggerating the severity of spillover crime along the U.S.-border, and in doing so, explores various theories as to why they exploit a fearful public in general. Although I consistently refer specifically to the situation involving the

public perception of the border, I maintain a high level of generality when exploring the different schools of thought concerning political and media utilization of fear. The border region is a special place that has been completely misconstrued and incorrectly portrayed as a terrible and lawless area plagued with crime and violence. Problems do exist on the border, and those that exist in Mexico must be dealt with. But because of the incentives in fear mongering, Americans are focusing on the wrong problems and in doing so the wrong solutions. In this thesis I look to examine why and how the media and politicians create fear, what this means for the border, and what this means for democracy. I strive to present a different and largely ignored perspective as to what America can do to improve the prosperity of the border on both sides, while not destroying the unique and important culture that took root in this region. GGL

The Mind and Sociability of the Democratic Man

by Jackson Archer

Supervisor: Devin Stauffer

How does equality affect the mind and man's artistic endeavors? What changes do an equal social condition bring to man's relationship with others and with himself? The political and governmental consequences of equality are plentiful, but the effects of equality on the internal and external character of human beings are often overlooked. Alexis de Tocqueville outlines the effects of equality in *Democracy in America*, and describes at length the political as well as social changes that occur when an equal social condition is introduced. The pervasiveness of equality reaches much further than the realms of politics and government; equality affects many social and individual aspects of a political community. The study of the social influences derived from a political change unearths a wealth of surprising observations, and Tocqueville's American analysis contains a plethora of remarks on the influence that equality has over a body politic.

Tocqueville analyzes equality's role in the minds and hearts of those in an equal social condition and explains that the roots of many common social aspects of America lie in the country's extensive system of equality. Tocqueville was an early commentator on the effects of democracy on an isolated country, as America was only roughly fifty years old at the time of his writing; this analysis provides an early view of democracy, yet one can still relate with it today. Many commonalities found in the society of America today can be explained if one traces their origin back to the foundation of the United States. To learn that the modern family rapport is heavily influenced by the prohibition of the laws of primogeniture, which occurred due to the desire for laws that favor equality, would surprise many. One can see the effects of equality in modern America even today, and this thesis is valuable in uncovering their origins from a primary source.

I decided to research Tocqueville after considering the origins of democracy and its place in the world. I found



his work to be perfect for my interests; it covers democracy at an early age and in a unique country, it is from an outsider's perspective, and it is written quite beautifully. Furthermore, I've always had an affinity for the history of art and science, as well as a strong interest in social relationships. *Democracy in America* allowed me to see how much equality effects society in non-political ways. Having never considered democracy in such a way, I wanted to learn more about these effects. The extent to which Tocqueville discusses

equality is incredibly overwhelming; only by wading through the information was I able to arrive at my topic. I found his chapters on the development of arts and sciences under democracy to be especially interesting. I had never thought about the differences between aristocratic and democratic art, and I certainly had not imagined that some of the differences could be attributed to the political system itself. I learned that Tocqueville was not just a brilliant philosopher and historian, but a profound early sociologist too. His discourse on relationships really drew my attention, and I sought to discover his feelings on love and its merits under democracy. The conclusions I reached were surprising. GGL

Indigenous Tourism and Economic Development: Building Community to Promote Development in the Valley of Liquiñe, Chile

by Derek Brinks

Supervisor: Raúl Madrid



This study was conducted to understand tourism's potential for development in an indigenous community. Can indigenous tourism projects bring development without sacrificing the local community's culture, their belief system, and the environment that sustains their identity? What implications does this have for their political agency in the future? Fieldwork was conducted in the Valley of Liquiñe, Chile, with a Mapuche tourism initiative emphasizing ecotourism with a distinctive local culture. In order to achieve development that strengthens the local culture, develops sustainably with the environment, and provides for economic benefit throughout the community, this study identifies two necessary variables. First, local control of tourism is vital. Local leadership must be in control of the development of the tourism project, and the tourism enterprises must be locally owned. All involved must have the autonomy to make decisions for the future development of the community. Second, social capital must be present to strengthen local institutions and keep the tourism project on track. If the community has fostered this trust, cooperation and reciprocity, local institutions will develop to keep tourism development positive and manage relations with the government and external forces. Furthermore, when these factors are present, it seems that an indigenous tourism project is capable of empowering the community politically. Over the course of this research, it became clear that indigenous tourism, when implemented with local control and social capital, has the potential to provide development with identity and bring greater equality in politics. By developing economic power and organizing the community around a collective identity, tourism is empowering the Mapuche of Liquiñe to assert greater agency in Chilean politics. GGL

The Effects of the High School Experience on the Civic and Political Participation of College Students

by Natalie Butler

Supervisor: Sharon Jarvis

Between the 1970s and now, voter turnout among 18 to 24 year olds dropped steadily, and at a greater rate than older Americans. Turnout for the presidential elections in 2000, and to a greater extent in 2004 and especially 2008, increased, but young people still did not vote at levels comparable to older Americans. Most recently, during the midterm elections of 2010, young people represented 11% of all voters, compared to 12% of voters in 2006 and 11% in 2002. Although the rates of youth participation have recently increased, young people are still not voting at rates as high as their older counterparts, no matter which election one examines. At the same time, many states are cutting back on civic education requirements and changing curriculum in ways that put civic education at a disadvantage. With classes being taught to satisfy stringent requirements and often with standardized tests in mind, how can civics and government classes in high schools be best used to teach young people about our government and civic participation?

Why do young people vote or not? The goal of my thesis is to better understand how the high school experience affects the civic and political engagement of college students. I looked at different methods of teaching high school government, civics, and history classes to see if there are any commonalities among the high school experiences of voting students and non-voting students. I wanted to know if the high school classroom experience plays a role in how engaged a student will be once they are at a university. First, a discussion of other research evaluates the state of current civic education and participation among young people. Then, my research is

discussed, which was conducted in one-on-one interviews.

The methods of instruction, the levels of participation and experiential learning, the role of current events and news, and the overall quality of the instructor and the course are evaluated. This project concludes with an analysis of findings, and recommendations for teaching civic education.



At the end of the project, I concluded the following: government and civics classes in America's high schools can have an impact on youth voting habits and attitudes toward civic engagement. Using experiential learning techniques in the classroom, engaging parents, making issues relevant and relatable to young people, and practicing mock elections were some of the most promising practices that helped young people feel a sense of efficacy.

There are many other factors, such as family voting history and demographic indicators that play a large role in determining how someone engages with their community, but the classroom can be a tool to help create a class of involved citizens.

*****Natalie Butler wrote her thesis through the Plan II Honors Program GGL**

When Lies Matter: The Effect of Media Coverage of Misinformation in the Health Care Reform Debate on Public Opinion

by Jordan Humphries

Supervisor: Daron Shaw

Much has been made of misinformation in the media as of late—from PolitiFact’s Pulitzer-winning fact-checking to recent condemnation of the organization as biased in its corrections. The role of untruths in the health care reform debate has been examined by researchers fascinated by the spread of Sarah Palin’s 2009 “death panels” claim—one that garnered belief by 30% of Americans after the ex-governor’s mere mention of it, as well as the title, Lie of the Year by PolitiFact.

My study builds on contemporary research on misinformation with an experiment to determine the extent to which journalistic practices help propagate misperceptions about health care reform and political information more generally. The study exposed 744 participants to one of four stories: a control, a story quoting a Republican presidential candidate with a piece of health care reform misinformation, one with that quote corrected by PolitiFact, and a story with the quote and same correction instead attributed to The White House.

The study determined that PolitiFact, as a non-partisan fact-checking organization, is an effective tool for debunking misinformation, while coverage of policy facts as partisan differences of opinion (a frequent practice according to researchers) can dangerously direct citizens to form misinformation-influenced opinions about policies, like repealing the health care reform law and determining the law to be unconstitutional in this study. This study found that, despite decreased misperceptions in politically knowledgeable and attentive citi-



zens, partisanship (support for political party and support for a candidate) as well as interest in topics related to the misinforming claim led to higher rates of misperceptions. This is to say that misperceptions can be corrected by explicitly labeling them false and backing up that ruling with a reliable source.

This study argues that journalists use resources like FactCheck.org and PolitiFact to buttress their reporting because, in this world of heightened partisan polarization, objectivity is rare and valued by citizens as a result. These organizations make smart tools for journalists because they prepare reports and make judgments about the truth of political claims within hours of their utterance.

In this hyper-mediated world, it can be just as easy to propagate misinformation as it can be to correct it, and if more journalists aided fact-checkers by making indictments on the basis of truth as opposed to getting both sides’ opinions, we may be able to shift the impetus to report the truth from journalists back to politicians to keep them honest under fear of humiliation by being the next Liar of the Year. GGL

Towards Free and Fairness?: Regional Variances in Democratic Elections in Nigeria

by Chinyere Kimberly Ikegbunam

Supervisor: Catherine Boone

The research seeks to answer the question of whether or not Nigerian elections are becoming more free and fair over time, and to determine which regions experienced the greatest amount of progress or digress during the period analyzed. Levels of electoral fraud and electoral violence in Nigeria were collected by region for the 2003, 2007, and 2011 elections in Nigeria. I hypothesize that where a past history and/or new occurrence of 1) ethnic/religious tensions; 2) lower income/increased poverty rates; and 3) long history of electoral violence exists, the amount of violence and fraud reported will increase.

The research found that over time, elections in Nigeria have become more violent and fraudulent. All four regions in Nigeria were consistent with this trend except for Southwest Nigeria, which experienced reduction in violence levels from 2007 to 2011. Other interesting findings include highlighting Southeast Nigeria as the most violent and fraudulent region in both the 2003 and 2007 elections, and finding that the Northwest experienced unprecedented levels of fraud in the 2011 election, which is most likely a result of the rise of Boko Haram attacks. The thesis concludes with suggestions towards improvement for the 2015 election. GGL



Perception vs. Reality: The Truth About Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Post-9/11 America

by Ben Lancaster

Supervisor: Ami Pedahzur



The primary focus of this thesis is to explore the impact of the United States' post-9/11 counterterrorism policy on domestic terrorism. To do so, I employ a quantitative analysis of two datasets and a theoretical analysis of post-9/11 U.S. counterterrorism policy. The first dataset contains information on every terrorist attack that occurred on U.S. soil between 1994 and 2010. This analysis yields a downward trend in both the overall number of attacks and the percentage of attacks resulting in casualties. My hypothesis is that this trend is due — in part — to actions taken by the U.S. government in response to the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The second set of data focuses on attacks arising out of right-wing extremist ideologies. This dataset begins with the Oklahoma City bombing on April 19, 1995 and ends with an unsuccessful bombing

attempt in Georgia on Nov. 1, 2011. The information contained within this dataset leads me to hypothesize that the ability of U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agents to thwart attacks before they happen and effectively respond to terrorist violence has improved. Combining the two hypotheses into one, the United States has improved its counterterrorism policy since 9/11.

A theoretical analysis of post-9/11 U.S. counterterrorism policy demonstrates objective improvement in U.S. policy and also shows three areas where the policy is lacking. The three areas regarded the policy's failure to: (1) abide by U.S. principles; (2) improve security and reduce the risk of attack at low economic and social costs; and (3) implement long-term defensive strategies focused on creating trust and negotiation. Despite these problems, I conclude the United States has indeed improved its counterterrorism policy since Sept. 11, 2001. This improvement can be said to have occurred without any sort of data collection because of the lack of coherent counterterrorism policies in place prior to 2001. These facts alone—(a) as of 2002, law enforcement now has the same powers to combat terrorism that it historically possessed in combating other organized crime and (b) as of 2004, there is now a government entity responsible for accounting terrorism—show the post-9/11 counterterrorism policy of the United States is a drastic improvement to its previous policy.

Based on the data, I conclude domestic terrorism resulting out of extreme right-wing ideologies poses a much more real threat to the United States than the threat posed by international Islamic militant groups like al Qaeda. Therefore, the United States should allocate its resources and focus its efforts on diminishing the greater threat of right-wing terrorists here at home as opposed to the lesser threat of terrorists abroad. This is not to say al Qaeda poses no threat, or the United States should not continue its efforts to decrease the threat of other Islamic militant groups, but rather there should be more emphasis on eliminating the more real and present threat.

When comparing the decade leading up to Sept. 11, 2001 with the decade after, the data also show there have been fewer overall terrorist attacks, fewer attacks resulting in casualties, a lower percentage of attacks resulting in casualties, and a greater percentage of attacks thwarted by law enforcement in the years since 9/11. This empirical data, along with the objective improvement in U.S. counterterrorism policy, demonstrates a correlation between government action and a decrease in terrorism. However, this correlation is not enough to establish causation. So while this thesis provides a likely argument for how and why U.S. counterterrorism policy has improved, it is impossible to empirically prove whether or not this improvement led to the decrease in domestic terrorism that occurred after Sept. 11, 2001. GGL

Free Thought and Political Society in the American Republic

by Matthew Levinton

Supervisor: Lorraine Pangle

My research considers how intellectual liberty and the modern democratic polity interact, and how the latter necessarily shapes the character of the former. To do this, my thesis first looks closely at Alexis de Tocqueville's concept of "Tyranny of the Majority" as he presents it in his famous work *Democracy in America*.

I turned to Tocqueville for this project because his aristocratic upbringing and knowledge of the principles of political modernity allowed him to appreciate the incredibly transformative power of democracy as it swept through civilization and remade the world in ways unlike any political development had in the past. Looking to Tocqueville thus allows us to access a perspective difficult for us to appreciate today, as it opens our eyes to an outside point of view that permits us to look at our polity in ways otherwise challenging to experience. My treatment of Tocqueville ultimately reveals the potential for intellectual tyranny to occur within a democracy, so as to reveal the existence of this possible problem—a problem that is often all the more dangerous because it is rarely considered.

Following my analysis of Tocqueville, I turn to a consideration of some of the most successful educatory projects of the American founders, projects actually designed to shape majority opinion and thus to influence the character of intellectual liberty. I consider what role such founding efforts played in shaping the America that Tocqueville experienced in 1831, and whether such efforts can and should be taken up again today.

I first turn to James Madison, arguing that in his contributions to the Federalist, he sought not only to argue for the merits of the constitution, but also to encourage his audience to accept a specific understanding of politics that would both make them favor the constitution as well as hold those ideas required for the constitutional order to succeed. Thus, in his Federalist essays, Madison is not only discussing the institutional creations of the constitution, but he is also arguing for those institutions on the basis of a specific understanding of political justice and human nature, in turn encouraging his audience to accept those understandings as well, so as to encourage the citizenry to hold a uniform set of core political opinions.

After my analysis of Madison, my thesis turns to a discussion of Thomas Jefferson's efforts to establish a tradition of American education. This part of my paper looks closely at Jefferson's proposed curriculum for his school of government and law at the University of Virginia. I argue that for this school Jefferson sought to produce a unique combination of civic and liberal education that would allow the university to educate future leaders who would be grounded in and appreciative of the foundational ideas of the American Republic.

From here my work turns to a final discussion of civic education, education in the political principles of a polity, and to liberal education, education concerned foremost with liberating the mind. In this section I consider how the two can be reconciled as well as discuss how each in fact needs the other to be realized to its fullest.

My thesis concludes by pointing to the concern for human freedom that unites the projects of Madison, Jefferson, and Tocqueville, as I suggest that such a concern, one which considers how intellectual freedom and political society interact, speaks to the very core of a genuine devotion to liberty itself. I am very thankful to Professor Lorraine Pangle for serving as my faculty adviser during this project. GGL



Working Class Need, Corporate Greed: How Wealth Has Become Political Capital in America

by Caleb Rodriguez

Supervisor: David Prindle

The purpose of his thesis is to elucidate, as clearly and concisely as possible, the primary causes of the growing inequality between America's top wealthiest earners and those who barely scrape by on dollars a day. The issue at hand is important because America seems to be reaching an economic tipping point; citizens are becoming more aware of the inequalities in wealth and are asking important questions. In June of 2011, James Carville posited that "if [the growing inequality] continues, we're going to start to see civil unrest in this country... I think it's imminently possible." In fact, Carville's prediction was correct—a mere five months later and the Occupy Wall Street movement, a movement with the purpose of protesting corporate involvement in American politics (among other things), has gone global. Thus, these questions are possibly the most important questions regarding the modern U.S. political and economic condition.



The thesis is comprised of three chapters. The first is a historical account of wages and labor. The second details tax loopholes that big business has used to reduce their tax burdens. The final chapter is a comprehensive examination of the most corrupt politicians in America and what they are doing to ensure the lower classes are not receiving their fair share.

The data are startling, but there is hope to return to political equality—and that hope lies within each of us working as a democracy by the people, for the people. Franklin Delano Roosevelt once said that political equality is "meaningless in the face of economic inequality." This rings true today more than ever before. The threat to democracy that manifests from concentrated economic and political power must be eliminated if there is any hope to return to an idea of meaningful democratic rule. GGL

Campaign Finance, *Citizens United*, and the Case for Procedural Equality

by Kelsey Spector

Supervisors: Jeffrey Abramson and H.W. Perry

While most of us are already familiar with *Citizens United*, my thesis aimed to cast a new light on some of the basic arguments which have driven the Court's decisions in cases governing the use of money in politics. Advancing the thesis that a concern for procedural equality is integral to the institutional health of our republic and the proper treatment of citizens, I make the case that the Court was misguided in its categorical rejection of a government interest in equality.

I begin by presenting an empirical record, which focuses on the rise of super PACs and their coordination with campaigns, to challenge the notion that independent expenditures are really independent and don't give rise to the reality or appearance of corruption. Given the inadequacy of these arguments, I then move to reexamine the Court's logic in the cases which determined the constitutional status of campaign finance regulations. Highlighting key features of precedent, I make the case that the Court has been increasingly trending towards an absolute interpretation of the First Amendment, one in which the right to free speech is not properly subject to regulation. Though the majority justified these decisions in terms of self-government and the importance of the diverse and vibrant public discourse therein, I argue that this conception of the First Amendment right to free speech is not capable of realizing the democratic goals for which it was intended.

Rather, given contemporary inequalities, I argue that this conception of the political arena systematically excludes many, if not most, citizens from meaningful access. While it is a common refrain of those opposed to regulations that their position represents neutrality, I argue that it in fact endorses a "laissez-faire marketplace of ideas," one which is incompatible with the democratic ideals embedded in our constitutional tradition. In stark contrast to the alternative model for self-government,

which often goes under the title "deliberative democracy," I argue that the marketplace of ideas is incapable of creating fair political procedures which maintain the ability of our representatives to be responsive to the needs of their constituents.

Beyond measures of institutional health, I further argue that the Court's conception of the First Amendment right is in tension with the growing understanding that meaningful commitments to liberty, and the political liberties in particular, require attention to the opportunities with which citizens are presented to exercise them. Framing this interest in terms of "procedural equality," or as Rawls coined, "the fair value of the political liberties," I make the case that a government interest in equality absolutely merits attention when considering political participation in democratic processes. If the Court does not begin to take these arguments seriously, our commitment to liberty and our identity as a democratic nation are themselves implicated.

In light of my skepticism as to whether the Court will actually grant the proper attention to arguments deriving from commitments to fair political procedures and procedural equality, I conclude with a brief overview of policy solutions to the systemic corruption of our democratic institutions and our waning commitment to the public discourse. Reviewing new models for public finance, I highlight one in particular which can help provide access to the political arena and free representatives from the pressures of fundraising while still avoiding problems deriving from the bureaucratic control of money in elections.

*****Winner of the 2012 William Jennings Bryan Prize for Best Honors Thesis in the Department of Government**



After 9/11: American Soft Power and the Arab Spring

by Grace Zhang

Supervisor: Edwin Dorn

On Dec. 19th, 2010, a jobless, hopeless Tunisian college graduate named Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire in protest of the government's autocratic rule and lack of economic opportunity. This event ignited outrage from millions of Arabs and sparked copycat acts of self-immolation throughout the Arab world. In Egypt, Bouazizi's suicide was a wake-up call of sorts. As ordinary Egyptian citizens read more and more about such events and began blogging or using other social media to express their discontent with the government, they broadened their networks, communicated their ideas, and planned mass protests. On Jan. 14, 2011 the Tunisian president of 23 years, Ben Ali, stepped down amid the protests. The Tunisian example set the stage for other Arab countries, now emboldened, to take similar steps to topple their own ruthless dictators.

On Jan. 25, 2011, the first planned protests were held across Egypt, with protestors calling for an end to President Hosni Mubarak's 30-year reign. After 18 days of continuous mass protest, the protestors achieved their short-term goal of ousting Mubarak, and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), a body of 20 senior officers in the Egyptian military, assumed the role of maintaining law and order until a new president is elected. Since the first popular protests began in Tunisia and Egypt, many other Arab countries have also witnessed mass demonstrations to overthrow their dictators, protest police brutality, demand basic human rights, and support free and fair elections. As a result, this movement has been termed the "Arab Spring." The protests feature common techniques of civil resistance in the form of strikes, demonstrations, and rallies. Furthermore, activists and organizers have used social media like Facebook and Twitter to organize and raise awareness of the movement; thus, many have noted the importance of the Internet and social networking sites



in spreading the revolution.

Ron Nixon of *The New York Times* espoused an atypical view when he asserted that the U.S. government's democracy promotion efforts played a key role in training and equipping activists, thereby contributing to the Arab Spring uprisings. He singled out the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute, and Freedom House as organizations that were in part responsible for the Arab revolutions. I believe that the Middle East presents one of the greatest challenges to successful U.S. foreign policy. It is an area of continual unrest and one in which we must guard our strategic interests — oil and Israel. Though America has long paid lip service to democratic values abroad, its track record in the Arab world belies such rhetoric. Undoubtedly, the Arab Spring has changed the nature of U.S.-Arab relations and challenged the existing partnerships and "stability" of this region. In the years ahead, it will be necessary for the U.S. government to assess whether it truly values and prioritizes democracy over mere stability, and if so, whether it will continue to fund democracy promotion in the Arab world.

Many remember President George W. Bush's legacy as a hard power-oriented one, as the military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan came to dominate discussions of foreign policy. I explore whether the hard power responses to 9/11 were complemented by a renewed focus on soft power programs in the Middle East as part of a broader strategy to secure America's strategic interests. By focusing on USAID appropriations to Egypt, the largest Arab recipient of U.S. foreign aid, I determine whether the U.S. increased its democracy promotion efforts in Egypt. Finally, I ascertain the extent to which the U.S.'s support for liberal, democratic institutions in Egypt served as a catalyst to the Arab Spring. GGL