

## Online Proceedings

1A

### POLITICAL TRANSITIONS AND MOBILIZATIONS: CHALLENGES IN DEMOCRATIC RULE

*Session Moderator: Steve Herbert, Geography*

**MGH 171**

*12:30 PM to 2:15 PM*

\* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

#### **Democratization in Myanmar/Burma: The Ongoing Transition Post-Independence**

*Brittany Shaun (Brittany) Holm, Senior, Law, Societies, & Justice*

*Mentor: Tracy Lai, Humanities/Social Sciences, Seattle Central College*

The Burmese political system has entered a period of gradual democratization since the rise of the pro-Western National League for Democracy (NLD) in 1988 against the longstanding military regime. Myanmar/Burma is progressing insofar as democratic ideals are theoretically implemented; however, these provisions realistically function primarily to position the state more favorably in the international arena. This project describes the evolution of foreign diplomacy and the relationship between economic liberalization and the most recent period of democratization. To approach this subject, I focus on the legacy of British colonialism as establishing weak public institutions that promoted political disorder and exacerbated domestic conflict with the politicization of race. I look into the shift of public discourse from this hopeful unification to a regime that adopted an institutional reinforcement of colonialist racial hierarchies through militarization. My research seeks to answer why Myanmar/Burma has oscillated between democracy and authoritarianism historically based on the effects of economic growth and the potential for economic crises related to the globally interconnected economy. I emphasize the contrasting ideas between foreign and domestic actors to explicitly contextualize the ways in which political order is developing with the emergence of democratic ideals. The focus is on building state capacity since independence by using the analytic tools of modern political economy as informed by the growing importance of foreign influence on the integration into a global economy. I use the internationalization of Burma's politics to analyze the impact of foreign political support on acting as a stabilizer of domestic conflict. I conclude that the implications of foreign values taking root in Myanmar/Burma undermine domestic growth

by adopting the faulty assumption that democracy is both necessary and sufficient for producing positive social and economic policies.

#### **The Potential of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum to Resolve Conflict in the South China Sea**

*Richard Timothy (Richard) La Voie, Senior, Law, Societies, & Justice*

*Mentor: Donald Hellmann, Political Science*

In the South China Sea, has the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum been effective in crisis management since its inception in 1993? If so, to what extent? It is the only current multilateral framework for potential conflict management in the South China Sea disputes particularly with regard to island settlements between China and other claimant nations including the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan. This research will shed light on how effective this multilateral framework has progressed since its creation in achieving its mission of resolving regional conflicts and the implications this has for US foreign policy. The research relies on current scholarship and on expert interviews. The ASEAN Regional Forum is a work-in-progress in resolving regional conflict, especially island disputes in the South China Sea. Its operating emphasis on consensus-building and the 'ASEAN Way' assures that both weak and powerful nations alike are involved. Yet, differences between rival nations threaten to dismantle the positive influence it has potential to wield in the region. This has strong implications for the US 'Asia Pivot' and the continued influence of the US in the East Asia region as the forum is valuable in articulating US interests including adherence to international law under The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

**Building a New World Order: Operation Just Cause and the Making of a Post-Cold War American Foreign Policy**

*Jack Percival, Senior, History, Whitman College*

*Mentor: David Schmitz*

This presentation is the culmination of my research for my senior honors thesis. I examined the U.S. invasion of Panama in 1989, the global context in which it occurred, the implications for future military interventions, and the overall impact of the invasion on the foreign policy of the administration of President George H.W. Bush. I examined secondary literature, speeches by Bush, and documents collected in my research at the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library in College Station, Texas. Rather than another in a long line of American military interventions in Latin America, the 1989 invasion was unique in that it was the first post-Cold War U.S. military intervention and the largest use of force since the Vietnam War. In the presentation, I will argue that the invasion of Panama had a significant impact on American foreign policy in the post-Cold War era and on the Bush administration's overall foreign policy.

**The Model to Marginality**

*Byung Hee (Daniel) Keum, Senior, Political Science, Law, Societies, & Justice*

*UW Honors Program*

*Mentor: Michael McCann, Political Science; Law, Societies & Justice*

*Mentor: Kirstine Taylor, Political Science*

In 1996, a scandal involving members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus triggered the United States Senate to launch an investigation. In the scandal, Asian American campaign contributors were accused of funneling foreign Chinese funds in an attempt to hijack U.S. politics. The Senate investigation concluded that several Asian Americans were committing espionage by colluding with the Chinese government as political spies. This research asks how the U.S. Senate concluded that these Asian American contributors were spies. My findings suggest that the Senate's conclusion rested not on sound inculpatory evidence but a historic racial logic of Asian Americans as politically suspect. I argue that the "model minority" stereotype centrally informed the Senate's racial logic of Asian Americans in their investigation. In particular, the model minority stereotype celebrates the industrious work ethic of Asians while condemning political participation as a dangerous behavior. My research thus explores the informative role of the model minority stereotype in the U.S. Senate's investigation of the 1996 CAPAC's scandal. My findings imply that the model minority stereotype ideologically disenfranchises Asian Americans within the American polity. In effect, Asian Americans are disproportionately scrutinized in the political arena through a racial logic that casts them as foreign, suspicious, and disloyal to the polity.

**The Invisible Inequality of the 21st Century: Disenfranchisement of U.S. Citizens Living in U.S. Territories**

*Peter Paul Habal (Paul) Camacho, Junior, Political Science*

*Mentor: Rebecca Thorpe, Political Science*

*Mentor: Hannah Walker*

This research project explores disenfranchisement in America. Today, citizens living in unincorporated US territories (Guam, Northern Marianas Islands, US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and American Samoa) are considered "second-class Americans," having all other fundamental rights as mainland Americans do except federal voting rights. To help understand this phenomenon, this project examines the circumstances under which the political elite had extended suffrage or had established additional protection for minority voters since the early 1900s. Since then, women, African-Americans, 18-year olds, and citizens living in US territories have used different movement techniques and strategies to achieve suffrage, such as establishing conventions, organizing violent and nonviolent protests, and committing to quid pro quo services like serving the country in times of war. This closes in on a theory where political will—defined as the mobilization of mass movements to gain the right to vote—helps explain why Congress votes to extend suffrage to previous disenfranchised groups. This variable is operationalized by counting the number of organized events and the number of people in the group lobbying for suffrage during the year prior to a congressional vote on the floor. I hypothesized that the greater amount of political will present in a year, the more bills will be introduced in Congress. The time frame of data used in this project is from 1910-2015. This presentation can serve as a guide to explain when suffrage extension happens, and what disenfranchised groups did to get what they wanted from big government.

**Taking the Initiative: The Effect of Political Polarization on Direct Democracy**

*Tyler Alexander (Tyler) Lincoln, Junior, International Studies, Political Science*

*Mentor: Rebecca Thorpe, Political Science*

Since 1904, when the first voter-sponsored bill appeared on the ballot in Oregon, the frequency of initiatives and referenda has greatly increased, most especially over the last 40 years. While there were only 98 bills voted on nation-wide between 1960 and 1969, over 370 initiatives made it onto state ballots between 2000 and 2009. My research examines several underlying causes of this rising frequency in order to help understand trends in the increasing use of direct democracy. Previous work has focused on the increased participation by moneyed interest groups who use paid petitioners to circulate legislation; however, I am proposing a new, original theory which connects political alienation and dissatisfaction of representative democracy to increased participation in di-

rect democracy. I have built an original dataset which will combine measures of polarization within government, public trust in Congress, and the number of initiatives and referenda throughout the multiple states in which they appear. With this dataset, I ran multivariate regressions to analyze statistical significance in the relationships between these variables. I expect to find that as political polarization in Congress increases, people will lose faith in traditional modes of representative democracy. I further hypothesize that as trust in government decreases, people are more likely to turn to modes of direct democracy to instill change in government, therefore increasing participation in the initiative and referendum process. If my hypothesis is correct, my research would serve as a tool for political scientists to use to predict the rise or fall in the political activity of voters, the implications of which could influence timing of legislation, outreach efforts, and a number of other participation-related issues.

### **Dirt Makes the Grass Grow: How Youth Are Adapting to Corporate Politics**

*Devin Cade (Devin) Edwards, Junior, Political Science*

*UW Honors Program*

*Mentor: Mark Smith, Political Science*

Traditional political participation is at an unprecedented low among American youth. But while youth voter turnout is suffering, alternative forms of political participation are on the rise—namely, political consumerism, the intentional buying or abstention from buying specific products for political, social, or ethical purposes. This research seeks to understand the motivating factors behind the youth shift toward political consumerism as a means of representation. Three possible explanations were tested: First, youth choose political consumerism because they receive immediate material benefits from the products and services they buy, a feature absent from traditional participation. Second, youth choose political consumerism because of convenience; they have too many other pressing priorities to engage in more time-consuming forms of participation like voting or writing to officials. Third, youth choose political consumerism because they prefer corporate actors over political actors to enact change because the latter has failed them. In order to test these explanations, I conducted a public opinion survey, interviews with leaders in consumer advocacy, and research on the evolution of youth political participation and consumerism. The analysis finds that the second hypothesis has the most explanatory power. Youth recognize that corporate actors have significant influence on political outcomes, but usually opt for convenience when it comes to making politically-informed consumer decisions. If sufficient information about the political context of products and services is given to youth, it affects their decision-making process. A surge in political consumerism among youth can be consequently be explained by a surge in available information due to the Internet and social media

platforms. The results of this research demonstrate the importance of information framing in the digital age, efforts by companies to appeal to young consumers on a political level, and the relationship between political knowledge and participation.