

Undergraduate Research Symposium May 17, 2019 Mary Gates Hall

Online Proceedings

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PUBLIC POLICY, INEQUALITY & POLITICAL EXCLUSION: CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES & REMEDIES

Session Moderator: Rebecca Thorpe, Political Science

JHN 026

3:30 PM to 5:15 PM

* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

In the Jailhouse, Not the Statehouse: Racialized Felon Disenfranchisement and Black Descriptive Representation

Jeani Rene Atlas, Senior, Law, Societies, & Justice, Political Science

Mentor: Rebecca Thorpe, Political Science

Mentor: Emma Rodman, Political Science, Center for American Politics and Public Policy

The purpose of this study is to analyze how felon disenfranchisement laws affect Black descriptive representation in state legislatures. In recent decades, scholars have shown that laws restricting or eliminating the voting rights of convicted felons disproportionately prevent Black people from voting. Scholars have also found that Black voters are more likely to vote for Black political candidates than voters of other races. However, researchers have yet to link felon disenfranchisement with political representation or access to political power. To address this issue, I theorize that states with more severe felon disenfranchisement laws will have lower levels of Black descriptive representation than other states. I employ multiple regression analysis to systematically examine whether the harshness of felon disenfranchisement laws reduces the percentage of Black state legislators in each state as a function of the overall Black population. The project raises serious questions about the racialized political consequences of felon disenfranchisement policies and whether these laws distort statewide democratic outcomes.

Welfare, Punishment, and Political Participation: Assessing Welfare Punitiveness and Voting Behavior

Allyson Rose Mc Kinney, Senior, Political Science, Law, Societies, & Justice

Mentor: Rebecca Thorpe, Political Science

Mentor: Emma Rodman, Political Science, Center for American Politics and Public Policy

This study evaluates whether more punitive state welfare poli-

cies depress rates of voter turnout in communities with high concentrations of welfare recipients. While scholars have studied the influence of demographic group belonging and the effects of state institutional contact (prison, welfare, etc.) on political participation and voting, researchers have not studied how voting behavior shifts in response to policy-level variations in welfare states. To address this gap in the literature, I use data from the Urban Institute's Welfare Rule's database to generate a novel index of state welfare punitiveness that will be broadly useful for scholars interested in state welfare policies and political socialization. I use multivariate regression analysis to test whether high concentrations of welfare recipients in more punitive states systematically affects voting behavior. Results of this study will be relevant for scholars concerned with voting behavior, political learning, institutional contact, and democratic participation.

Pursuing Social Justice: How Would a Universal Basic Income or Federal Jobs Guarantee Undermine Women's Oppression?

Kathryn Mason Karcher, Senior, Political Science

Mentor: Scott Lemieux, Political Science

Mentor: Chelsea Moore, Political Science

Welfare policies in the United States perpetuate women's oppression. This is largely because these policies reinforce sexism, racism, and classism that plague American society. When discussing policy options, scholars and political players should not just consider their economic consequences. They should emphasize the social consequences of these policies, such as how effectively they may combat women's oppression. In this study I aim to demonstrate what an emphasis on vulnerable groups' needs may look like and to further the political debate surrounding a federal jobs guarantee (FJG) and a universal basic income (UBI). I use the framework established in Justice and the Politics of Difference by Iris Marion Young and her explanation of the five faces of

oppression to evaluate how FJG and UBI may help or harm women. I also analyze recent public opinion polling to determine the likelihood of the U.S. implementing these policies. This paper answers the following questions: Which policy, FJG or UBI, would more effectively undermine women's oppression? Which is more likely to be implemented? Should those concerned with women's oppression favor UBI, FJG, or a combination of the two? My theoretical analysis shows that UBI would more effectively combat women's oppression. However, public opinion polling suggests that FJG is more likely to be implemented. This presents a dilemma for progressive advocates who wish to prioritize vulnerable groups' needs while focusing on realistic goals. The social justice framework that I adopt in this paper resolves this dilemma — due to its inability to further the cause of gender equity, FJG should not be implemented unless it accompanies a form of UBI. These conclusions both contribute to ongoing debates over these policies and demonstrate how researchers and advocates going forward can analyze policies within a social justice framework that prioritizes the needs of our most vulnerable populations.

Where Can The 48 Take You? Connecting Social Capital to People through Transportation

Yunue Moore, Senior, International Studies: Latin America

Mary Gates Scholar

Mentor: Jason Groves, Germanics

As the only bus that runs from the University District to Mount Baker across Seattle's Eastside, the 48 provides a unique perspective on accessibility. Through a research paper, and map of the 48's route I analysed the access to various forms of economic and social capital, such as grocery stores, schools, medical centers, and community centers. Access to forms of economic and social capital were analyzed through their relative proximity to the 48 bus route, or the walking distance from homes in the Central District. The purpose of my project was to start a conversation about the access provided by the 48 bus, and to create a map and record of what is in the quickly changing Central District, as well as Mount Baker and Capitol Hill neighborhoods relative to the 48. All to ask where can the 48 take you? With the Mount Baker Transit Center and University of Washington as end caps, all of the destinations in between mark different issues Seattle faces such as development of single family homes, food deserts, and access to community centers. Focused through the perspective provided by public transportation a new perspective is provided on these issues through the lens of public transportation.

Public Transit and Private Car Ownership: How to Best Help Low-Income, Urban Workers

Cj (CJ) Robinson, Senior, Political Science

Mentor: Rebecca Thorpe, Political Science

Mentor: Emma Rodman, Political Science, Center for American Politics and Public Policy

This study seeks to understand how to best support low-income, urban employment mobility through transportation. While scholars have studied the effects of urban planning, access to a private vehicle and public transportation for low-income residents, there is no consensus in the academic community for which method of transportation is most effective. Utilizing responses from the 2004 General Social Survey, the study measures perceived access to public transit, car ownership and employment mobility—the ability to switch to an equally desirable job— among low-income residents. Additionally, I employ census data measuring willing job-to-job transfers, car ownership and low-income public transit commuting time as a proxy for transportation access. I expect to find a positive relationship between car ownership and employment mobility, while I predict no relationship between public transportation and mobility. I utilize a multivariate regression analysis for the census data. This study has important implications for transit policy, as it can help inform how to better fund public transit to help low-income individuals and may lead to experimental policy like low-income car subsidies.

The Effect of State-Level Immigration Policy on Populations of Undocumented Immigrants and Immigration Flows

Wren Cavanaugh, Senior, Political Science, History

UW Honors Program

Mentor: Rebecca Thorpe, Political Science

Mentor: Emma Rodman, Political Science, Center for American Politics and Public Policy

Since the 1990s, legislation in many US states has increasingly criminalized and restricted undocumented immigration. However, despite these restrictive policies, the population of undocumented immigrants has increased and overall immigration flows from Mexico to the US only began to decline following the 2009 recession. This research responds to decades of increasingly punitive policy and intends to test the efficacy of these policies. Many studies have focused on the efficacy and implications of federal policies, but far less attention has been given to state-level policies in the US. This paper analyzes the efficacy of punitive, state-level immigration laws from 2010 to 2016 in the United States. I hypothesize that there is no significant relationship between the passage of punitive state-level immigration policies and the year-to-year change in state populations of undocumented immigrants. However, I also hypothesize that the introduction of punitive state-level immigration policies affects yearly im-

migration flows—or the number of people immigrating from Mexico to a specific US State. To conduct this study, I created an index that aggregates a broad spectrum of laws, including policing, licensing, education, public benefits and labor. I then selected a few high-profile state laws intended to deter or curb undocumented immigration. I used multivariate regression analyses to test whether the introduction of punitive policy immigration policy systematically influences migration flows and changes in migrant populations while controlling for relevant economic and demographic factors.