



Social Science

Discovering the Best Method of Judicial Selection: How Should State Supreme Court Justices be Placed onto the Bench?

Aaron Shaw Gafari

The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For full text, please visit https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/undergraduate_honors_theses/ng451j91n

Abstract

As the American Judiciary becomes a more active vehicle for progressing policy and partisanship, this paper examines what method of judicial selection we ought to prefer. That is, how we should prefer

ME, NH, NJ, NY, RI, SC, VA, and VT...

In this paper I am going to argue that merit selection is the best method of judicial selection for state courts in the current American system. That is to say, I will present the case for why in today's political landscape we should prefer that state judges get to the bench by means of merit selection rather than appointments or elections. My inquiry will not concern what the best method of judicial selection would be given a set of hypothetical circumstances different from those that exist today. Instead, I am aiming to make a prescription that would be delivered if someone asked me at this moment: given the current state of politics and U.S. institutions, if you had to choose a single method of judicial selection to be used going forward across various states courts, which method would you choose?

To reach this argument, I will begin by surveying recent empirical data surrounding judicial selection and the different methods of selection. I will find what trends exist between the different selection methods with regards to five main criteria: productivity (how much work a judge accomplishes in a given amount of time), quality (how good is the work these judges are producing), independence (how much of a role do strategic considerations and irrelevant influences play on a judge deciding a given case), perceptions of legitimacy (what selection methods do the people find more or less legitimate), and diversity (does any selection method favor or disfavor minority judges more than another). The empirics will give us confident results in terms of independence, perceptions of legitimacy, and diversity, to show that merit selection produces the most independent judges, perceptions of legitimacy suffer when judicial selection becomes too political, and no method particularly advantages or disadvantages minorities. Some issues will arise with the indicators of productivity and quality that

prevent us from reaching confident conclusions about them and using them for extrapolation into a larger philosophical discussion.

Once these empirical trends are established, I will turn to a philosophical discussion that attaches normative judgements to these trends and argues that we ought to prefer an independent judiciary because it is the most likely to deliver us optimal outcomes and a healthy democracy. The former claim will rely on the idea that though there may be a truly right answer in a given case, there is a wide range of cases in which the right answer is either ambiguous or we are unable to track down the right answer. Thus, in such cases (which make up the bulk of the cases that supreme court justices deal with) we must rely on appealing to the decision-making processes that were used to form an opinion to indicate whether a judge is giving his most earnest efforts to uncover the right decision. This is to say that when rightness is tough to pin down (as it is for just about every case that hits a state supreme court justice's desk), all we can rely on is the most sound and rational line of reasoning. Such a decision-making process will be an independent one guided by rationality and free from strategic considerations. The latter claim about a healthy democracy will rely on the idea that to be truly democratic, a nation must account for the potential issues that can arise with pure majoritarianism and have an institution free from majoritarian influence where the minority can make his case on a level playing field. I will also mention that though elections can have some beneficial effect on democracy in terms of legitimacy, their politically charged nature tends to decrease aggregate legitimacy. From this I will conclude that the best method of judicial selection is merit selection because it is the most independent and least political one.

[...]

The Influence of Extraversion on Political Polarization and Active Forecasting

Connor Davis

The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For full text, please visit https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/undergraduate_honors_theses/d791sh52s

Abstract

In the United States, political division has continually worsened over the years, with the growing divide between the Left and Right leading to increased animosity between members of the two parties. This study explores this expanding division by analyzing the influence of political polarization on individuals' willingness to work for a humanitarian cause. Specifically, we examine if an individual's extraversion rating influences how long they spend on charitable tasks, or how long they predict they would spend on the task, and if the presence of cues associated with their in-group or out-group would influence their participation as well. This study does so by determining an association between extraversion and the assigned task type (predictor or engager) as well as between extraversion and the political party they identify with. It also looked at the correlation of extraversion and time spent on a charitable task supposedly sponsored by a control, co-partisan, or counter-partisan charity organization. Ultimately, we found no association between extraversion and the time spent on the charitable task, nor did we find a link in extraversion and party identification. This study ran into some limitations that may have impacted its overall results including time constraints and a singular focus placed on the personality trait of extraversion. This study demonstrated the importance of participation within prosocial activities and the implications of activities that influence this participation.

Voter Turnout and Income Inequality in Latin America

Gabriella Gyurkovics

The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For full text, please visit https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/undergraduate_honors_theses/m900nv68b

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to gain some insight into the age-old question: Why is there income inequality at all in our modern world? I narrow this question down into a sub-question that I can investigate: what is the effect of voter turnout on income inequality? I narrow my regional focus to Latin America and add a temporal focus to the years from 2000 to present. I theorize that higher voter turnout leads to decreased income inequality. This is because, as theorized by Lijphart (1996), low voter turnout is by and large a result of the people in low economic groups' failure to turn out to vote. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis of this thesis is that high voter turnout leads to more equal income distribution in Latin America from 2000 to present. I discover that I cannot reject my null hypothesis. There is not sufficient statistically significant evidence to believe that, based on a multivariate ordinary least squares regression analysis, increased voter turnout leads to increased income equality. This paper has implications for future researchers studying the effects of voter turnout in Latin America and for researchers interested in answering macroeconomic questions about this region.

Introduction

Favelas in Brazil are neighborhoods that are ravaged by severe poverty. There are some favelas that are directly bordered by some of the

most expensive high-rise apartments complete with swimming pools, gardens, and tennis courts (see Appendix C). Why is there such a large difference between the rich and the poor in Latin America? There are countless potential reasons for high income inequality, but this paper examines the effect voter turnout has on income inequality.

The political science community has a longstanding understanding that there is a relationship between income inequality and voter turnout. Theoretical arguments, such as Lijphart's Presidential Address to the American Political Science Association (1996), provide a theory that higher voter turnout decreases income inequality. Lijphart argues that when turnout is low, it is due to an absence of people in low-income groups at the polls. Therefore, when turnout is high, more poor people turn out to vote and vote for candidates that will improve their economic standing. Boulding and Holzner (2020), however, find that in Latin America, one of the poorest and most unequal regions of the world, "poor people are just as politically active as more affluent individuals" (p. 98). The contradiction between these scholars is particularly interesting. This project empirically tests our current understanding of Latin American inequality and provides a quantitative ordinary least squares regression multivariate test of the effect of voter turnout on income inequality in Latin America.

I would like to understand the causes of

income inequality in Latin America, so I measure the impact of voter turnout on income inequality. I investigate the effects of voter turnout specifically because of the theory behind Arend Lijphart's Presidential Address to the American Political Science Foundation in 1996. In his address, Lijphart (1996) argues that "unequal turnout...is systematically biased against less well-to-do citizens" (p. 1). This is because unequal voter turnout usually means that those of a lesser economic position account for the missing votes. Therefore, if more low-income people voted, there would be less inequality because, according to the rational actor theory, they would vote for candidates that would improve their economic standing. An improvement in economic standing could be done with various political measures such as social welfare programs and tax benefits for the lower classes. Lijphart (1996) studies the United States for his conclusions presented in the Presidential Address, but I use the same principles and apply them to Latin America. I study Latin America specifically because it is an outlier in the world for high inequality and for high voter turnout. However, there is no significant relationship between voter turnout and income inequality in this region.

Based on Lijphart's Presidential Address (1996), one might conclude that a region as unequal as Latin America could significantly improve its income distribution by encouraging low-income individuals to turnout to vote. Boulding and Holzner (2020), however, find a different conclusion in Latin America. They find that when low-income people participate in community organizations, they participate in politics at high levels (Boulding & Holzner, 2020). This participation takes the form of political protest, contacting the government, and, most importantly for this project, voting. They argue that "community organizations help mobilize poor individuals both through the resources they

provide for mobilization and because they serve as sites where political parties target individuals for mobilization" (Boulding & Holzner, 2020, p. 98). Though Boulding and Holzner (2020) focus heavily on the effect of community organizations on political participation, their research has strong implications for this study. I study both work by Lijphart (1996) and by Boulding and Holzner (2020). Using an ordinary least squares regression test I find that there is no relationship between turnout and income inequality. This result, however, could be due to several causes that will be explored in depth later in this paper.

It is especially important to understand the determinants of income inequality in regions like Latin America because so many people live in poverty. In fact, 209 million people in Latin America live in poverty today (ECLAC, 2021). The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (2021) explains that this is a result of the economic distress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, but this is an alarmingly high number of impoverished people. This project is important to political scientists and law makers so that they understand the reality of the Latin American experience and can explore effective solutions to widespread poverty in the region.

Other scholars such as Lijphart (1996), Boulding and Holzner (2020), Carreras and Castañeda-Angarita (2014), and Carey and Horiuchi (2017) explain voter turnout and inequality on different levels and for different countries, but this gap in the established literature validates the theoretical impact of this project and the importance of the results.

[...]

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The Impact of Household Registration Restrictions and the Integration Reform on Urban-Rural Disposable Income Disparity in China

Zihan Zhang

The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For full text, please visit https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/undergraduate_honors_theses/d217qq90r

Abstract

This thesis studies the effects of the restrictions on the agriculture and non-agriculture household registration system often called urban and rural hukou, and its abolition on the disposable income disparity between urban and rural areas in China. This thesis uses the difference between the non-agriculture hukou and urbanization rates to measure the hukou limitation and its impact on income disparity in urban and rural areas. As for the integration reform, the study uses a dummy variable about before and after the integration reform and a dummy variable with additional regression specification of year to estimate the impact of such dichotomy on the income gap among Eastern, Western, and Central China. The results suggest that the stronger the hukou limitation, the more significant the income inequality between urban and rural areas, but the results are not valid in Eastern developed regions. The dual-track system has a more substantial impact on increasing the income gap in economically underdeveloped Western China. However, the thesis suggests that the integration reform cannot significantly diminish the

to diminish migration from rural to urban areas, the Chinese government issued Regulations on Household Registration of the People's Republic of China to restrict rural-urban mobility. The Chinese government classified all people as agricultural or non-agricultural hukou based on the regulations. The government tied rural people to their land, and if they wanted to convert their rural hukou to urban hukou, it was severely limited and challenging. As a decree to support industrialization, it aimed to limit the unwelcome rural to urban mobility (Chan, 2010). Urban citizens could enjoy better welfare than rural citizens, including better education, medical care, pension, and employment. During the planned economy period, rural people needed to get urban hukou if they wanted to settle in cities because of the enormous welfare differences. After the reform and opening-up policy, the welfare gap based on household registration gradually decreased, but it still existed (Zhou et al., 2022). Because of the relaxed restrictions, after the 1980s, millions of people could work in cities even if they had rural hukou (Fields and Song, 2013).

In Table 5, the government used five-stage reform policies to relax the hukou limitations after the opening-up and reform. The social mobility from rural to urban areas was not strictly restricted. From 1978 to 2001, eligible farmers could get non-agricultural hukou, and the government gradually reduced the requirement for obtaining a non-agricultural hukou. After 2002, some provinces no longer recorded residents' hukou nature, but most provinces still showed their hukou locations, and the integration reform could not wholly diminish the welfare gap between urban and rural residents. In order to further reduce the hukou restrictions, The State Council issued opinions on further promoting the reform of the household registration system in 2014. By January 1, 2017, all provinces had abolished the division of agriculture and non-agriculture

hukou and unified registration as resident hukou. The reform also includes establishing education, health, employment, social security, housing, and population statistics systems compatible with the resident household registration system.

This thesis uses panel data from 31 province-level administrative regions in China from 2007 to 2019. This thesis employs the urban and rural disposable income ratios to compare income differentials. It also used dummy variables with additional year regression specifications to examine the long-term and short-term effects of the household registration integration reform on the urban-rural income ratio. At the same time, the methodology adds control indicators such as some primary macro data, such as the education gap between urban and rural areas, age structure, etc. It controls the province fixed effects and year fixed effects in the methodology.

Previous studies have studied the effect of hukou restrictions on the rural-urban development disparity, which is the result of principal component analysis of different indicators rather than just the income gap (Li & Hu, 2015). Compared with previous studies, this thesis analyzes the impact of hukou restrictions on the urban-rural income gap at the macro level and the change in the annual income gap before and after the hukou integration reform to study whether this policy would have a significant impact on the income gap. Compared with Song (2015), which suggests that there is gender discrimination on income, this paper indicates that the impact of gender ratio on wage differences between urban residents and rural residents is not significant. This thesis also studies the impact of age structure, family size, agricultural modernization, educational level, economic growth, divorce rate, urbanization rate, healthcare, and infrastructure on urban-rural income inequality in China.

This thesis has found that hukou

limitations can increase the urban-rural income ratio in economically underdeveloped Western and Central regions. However, there is insufficient evidence to show that the integration reform can reduce the income disparity after using a dummy variable to compare the income gap change before and after the reform, especially by adding additional specifications of year. Urbanization, infrastructure, and agricultural mechanization developments

can positively reduce the urban-rural income inequalities. Reducing the education level and healthcare differences between urban and rural areas can also reduce income inequalities. However, the impacts of economic growth, age structure, family size, gender ratio, and divorce rate on the urban-rural income gap are not significant. [...]

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Imagining 'Home': Undergraduate Housing Insecurity in the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Zac Clement

The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For full text, please visit https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/undergraduate_honors_theses/bg257g39h

Introduction

2020); however, the current research does not adequately address the unique needs of college students experiencing housing insecurity. There have been some preliminary studies at various universities in the United States that attempt to collect data about the rate of housing insecurity at these institutions to inform university housing policy (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2017; Tsui et al., 2011). These studies have shown high rates of housing insecurity among college students, mainly exhibited by students not being able to afford rent, prompting a need for more discussion around the topic, especially on how to best support housing insecure students. Additionally, many of these studies use a purely quantitative approach to data collection, leaving a large gap in our understanding of how housing insecure populations imagine their home, and how this conception of home influences their housing struggles.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the concept of home was used in a variety of ways. Across the United States, 'stay-at-home' policies were enacted to slow the spread of the virus through physical distancing. These policies often assumed that people had a home to remain in, as well as

qualitative data as to how students handle the transition to college in terms of home-making, as well as specific experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. To supplement this qualitative data, I used a survey to better understand the scope of housing insecurity during the pandemic at CU Boulder and examine how different demographic variables might affect these experiences. I hypothesized that the COVID-19 pandemic worsened already existing housing insecurity by hurting the economic situation of many students.

Furthermore, the policies created in response to the pandemic employed an idea of 'home' that does not align with the actual experiences of students, further exacerbating housing insecurity. My work adds to the growing geographic scholarship on the idea of home beyond a physical structure by demonstrating how students imagine a place to be their home through relationships and community, especially in times of crisis.

[...]

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What's In a Name?

Forrest Becker

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Research Statement

Prior to my travel to East Africa I eagerly told my friends in the United States about my journey to-come. A sentiment echoed throughout a number of these friends was “why?” They wanted to know why I wasn’t traveling to somewhere of great luxury like Europe or somewhere with world-renowned food like Southeast Asia. The outside, Western definition of Tanzania is two-fold: wildlife and poverty. While this image holds truth in some regards, it is wholly unrepresentative of the diverse ontologies at play within the country. These misconceptions can stem from a lot of places, but one of the most pertinent and deep-scarring of which is that of toponyms or names in general.

A toponym can be any sort of term applied to a location; anything from London to Taumatawhakatangihangakoauauotamateaturipukakapikimaungahoronukupokaiwhenuakitanatahu. Two different groups can have two distinct toponyms for a location, like Barrow and Utqiagvik, the latter of which was the original, indigenous name which has since been reclaimed. Some toponyms stem from indigenous terms, while some have been replaced by colonial or imperial powers, and some have been adjusted to be more useful, respectful, or accurate. Local, indigenous terms have a value, not only in their practical application, but also in their implications on cultural and national identities. But too often,

these toponyms are misspelled, misinterpreted, or pasted over with more Westernized alternatives. Preservation of indigenous toponyms must be done carefully, as readily abolishing existing, incorrect place-names can lead to more systematic changes down the road. Certainly there is no one-size-fits-all approach to naming locations. Instead a system of community-based, localized corrections should be followed.

Toponyms are just one of the cartographic conventions that are used to develop countries. But the development strategies that work for the countries of the Global West when applied in the same way to countries of the Global South can detrimentally stunt the progress possible within a country. The concept of a split world, the West versus the rest, or the developed compared to the underdeveloped is a damaging one. The notion that development is a series of processes to be refined in the West and then spread to the rest of the world ignores any niche development strategies already in place. Toponyms too can take on this role, being

have been used only to enrich the countries of the Global West and to debilitate all others. Because of this history of misdevelopment, to my friends in America, Tanzania's definition was one of subservience, destitution, and otherness.

As a foreigner, it is important to understand the context of these misdevelopments. As I write this paper, each word choice needs to be especially conscientious. Misspellings can mean that a whole village becomes invisible to the outside world. An out-of-use term or toponym can be derogatory or can generate an unrealistic depiction of the world. It is entirely possible that this writing fails some of these goals, but that is very much within the nature of engaging with such unique and sensitive subjects. We, as a global society, need to be exposed to these dialogues and terminologies if we hope to achieve global development in any capacity.

Cultural / Historical Context

The most widely-acknowledged standard for development is the United Nations' Human Development Index (HDI) which calculates the development of a state or administrative district based on its life expectancy, education, and Gross National Income. This index "does not reflect on inequalities, poverty, human security, empowerment, etc." (United Nations 2022) and fails to indicate any value in the countries seen as "least developed." Nevertheless, the HDI is the public perception, at least in the West, for which countries have and do not have development. These preconceptions can be harmful to countries on the "less developed" side of the spectrum generally known as the Global South, and can negatively influence aspects of their economies, international relations, and public images.

Through the colonization of Africa, a sovereign territory did not exist in Tanzania's place until 1961, and only took on the name Tanzania after Tanganyika and Zanzibar merged their names

and jurisdictions. Prior to that point, there was a confluence of terms from German, British, and Indigenous terminology. Tanzania also accepts much of its language from Arabic, Indian, and English influences. The Kiswahili language was adopted under the country's first president, Julius Nyerere. The basis for this was to choose a language which would serve as a uniting force for the four different language groups present in the country as well as for the non-indigenous population. The language received criticism from the outside world, with many perceiving it as a non-serious language, one without sophistication or refinement. Nyerere took it upon himself to translate whole Shakespeare works into Kiswahili to prove that all the nuance of a major world language like English was possible with a local, East African language.

Beyond language, the Father of the Country, or Baba Wa Taifa, aspired to develop Tanzania along a plan that would be agreeable to his population. Nyerere wrote The Arusha Declaration and TANU's Policy on Socialism and Self Reliance, in which he argues that "the development of a country is brought about by people, not by money. Money, and the wealth it represents, is the result and not the basis of development" (1967) and

unique development not seen anywhere else in the world. Tanzania struggles with poverty as well as the balance between wildlife conservation and

the nearby Esilalei village as “Easalei.” For many Tanzanians, cartographic errors like this obscure the intended cultural functions of toponyms. But just because a name is misspelled or misinterpreted does not mean that the correct course of action is to rename or correct these errors.

Because of Tanzania’s complex colonial history, many locations now exist and operate with misspelled toponyms. Olduvai Gorge is often referred to as “The Cradle of Civilization” for its invaluable archeological contributions to modern understanding of human development. Olduvai is a British-colonial misspelling of the word Oldupai, a local plant. I asked our guide at the location, Susan, why they continue to use the incorrect terminology if the correction is so well-known. She told me that changing the name might bring more trouble than it would value. So many documents and databases have Olduvai labeled as such that changing its name now would create many more systematic problems for the site than just accepting the name as is. It is important to understand that just because a location has been misnamed does not mean it should always

Life Satisfaction Among Undergraduate Students:

Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Examining Preschool Teachers' Workplace Experiences and their Influences on Exclusionary Discipline

Avery Brogle

The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For full text, please visit https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/undergraduate_honors_theses/q811kk96s

Abstract

Preschool expulsions are increasingly studied in terms of their potential negative outcomes on students. This study examined the relationship between preschool teachers' workplace experiences and their use of disciplinary actions, including expulsions. It sought to understand the sociological mechanisms and supports of the teacher workplace, and the psychological influences on teacher decision making and perceptions that contribute to disciplinary actions. Whereas prior research has illustrated the harmful consequences of expulsions and how teacher experiences may be related to expulsions, this study aimed to increase knowledge about the influence of workplace factors on discipline, primarily in private preschools, which are relatively under-studied. Preschool teachers from the Denver area participated in semi-structured interviews to gain understanding about their stress, perceptions of challenging behaviors, perceived institutional support, and institutional norms regarding discipline. Using open-coding methods, the qualitative data was analyzed and several key themes were established. The findings indicate that preschool teachers generally lack adequate support, especially in regard to challenging behavior management, and that this creates a great deal of stress. Additionally, although preschool expulsions may be declining, they are being replaced by other exclusionary disciplines, including "so " expulsions to mitigate teacher stress in the absence of knowledge on how to actively improve challenging behaviors. These findings have important implications as they show there needs to be easily accessible training opportunities concentrated on how to handle challenging behaviors and more opportunities for workplace collaboration to be er support teachers in dealing with these behaviors, and thus mitigating the negative consequences of exclusionary discipline.

Can Regulating Large Satellite Constellations as Monopolies Improve Sustainability Standards While Providing Effective and Equitable Internet Access?

Samuel Rodgers

The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For full text, please visit https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/undergraduate_honors_theses/5138jg42t

Abstract

Large satellite constellations (LSC) in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) provide the means to deliver internet to previously underserved populations. The LSC's economic potential combined with a growing demand for internet access has led to multiple companies pledging their own internet LSCs in hopes of capitalizing on this need. This, in addition to growing interest in LEO, risks destabilizing the LEO environment if not regulated properly. The current U.S. Orbital Debris Standard Mitigation Practices (USODSMP) are woefully outdated and only sporadically followed by operators. Furthermore, there are no licensing regulations for other key sustainability requirements, such as propulsion and tracking. Accelerated growth of internet-LSCs without proper regulation will lead to an unsafe and unsustainable LEO environment. There needs to be a change in how governments regulate private and public LSCs, in particular those providing internet telecommunications. Internet LSCs are the fastest growing population in LEO, often directly competing for orbits and broadband frequencies.

In this thesis, I investigate whether the U.S. could apply aspects of terrestrial utility infrastructure to better regulate satellite internet. In particular, I question whether the U.S. government could regulate internet LSCs as monopolies. Such regulatory control would allow the U.S. to better enforce and revise sustainability regulations and ensure fair access to internet services. Viewing internet as a utility—as a necessity of modern life to which all citizens deserve access—this thesis proposes the U.S. license a single internet LSC from within its borders. I explored two potential regulatory approaches: one based on the U.S.'s public utility system and one based on European internet infrastructure. I then presented these approaches to five experts in the field of space sustainability and solicited their feedback. From these results, I determined that both of my regulatory approaches are not feasible in their current forms within the U.S.; however, both approaches produce potential partial applications and variations of their initial design that may find traction. This thesis concludes that adopting an interoperability framework in LEO would allow for precise and targeted sustainability, technology, and capacity standards for each orbital constellation.

Betrayed by the Divine and Overlooked by Scholarship: An Inquiry into Spiritual Abuse and Religious Trauma

Lillian Bisantz

The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For full text, please visit [h](#)

context looks like, who is a