

# Political Science Research Apprenticeship Program Winter and Spring 2018 Project Descriptions

## **Title: Identifying Police-Affiliated Accounts on Sina Weibo**

**Brian Tsay, [brtsay@ucsd.edu](mailto:brtsay@ucsd.edu)**

Many accounts on the Sina Weibo social media platform are affiliated with local police bureaus, though they do not formally declare their affiliation in their user information. The goal of this project is to identify these "hidden" police accounts. The research assistant[s] will aid me in identifying these accounts and determining criteria that can help distinguish police-affiliated and non-police-affiliated accounts (ability to read [simplified] Chinese required).

## **Title: Tying the Invisible Hand of Peace: Why Trading States Still Choose to Fight**

**Jack Zhang, [jjz007@ucsd.edu](mailto:jjz007@ucsd.edu)**

The resolution of the World War II and the subsequent Cold War created very different patterns of trade and conflict in different parts of the world. This project examines how the settlement of territorial boundaries might explain regional variation in economic integration and military disputes. Students will have the opportunity to join an existing team of research assistants and receive training in quantitative and qualitative research methods. Students involved with this project will assist with writing historical case studies and data collection. More information about me and my projects are available on my website: [jackzhang.org](http://jackzhang.org)

## **Title: Heard it Through the Grapevine: Exploring the Consequences of Socially Communicated Political Information**

**Taylor Carlson, [tfeenstr@ad.ucsd.edu](mailto:tfeenstr@ad.ucsd.edu)**

Many Americans rely on other people for information about politics instead of turning to credible news outlets. In this project, we explore how individuals (un)intentionally distort political information as they discuss politics and how these distortions affect political learning, opinions, and engagement. Students working on this project will evaluate, code, and fact-check information transmitted by other people from experimental data and data collected from Facebook and Twitter.

## **Title: Legislative Attention and Democratic Development in Sub-Saharan Africa**

**Inbok Rhee, [idrhee@ucsd.edu](mailto:idrhee@ucsd.edu)**

Scholars and observers alike often assume that legislators are irrelevant in Sub-Saharan Africa where politics is dominated by presidents and votes are often bought. This project challenges this

view by presenting various data on variations in legislative strength and further seeks to explain the sources of such variations. Research Apprentices will assist with the collection, processing, and analysis of data to include online newspaper articles, twitter, parliamentary proceedings, and bills.

**Title: Plural Governance: Race and Ethnicity in the United States**

**Liesel Spangler, lspangle@ucsd.edu**

I examine how House members alter their representation in response to changes in the racial and ethnic demographics of their districts. This project looks at the changes in the way legislators communicate with their constituents via Twitter, how they staff their district offices, and how they acquire funding for their district. I am in search of Research Assistants who want to work on qualitative case studies and/or quantitative tasks and can teach you how to do either/both depending on your goals and skills.

**Title: The Controlled Revolution: Politics and the Spread of Mobile Networks in Africa**

**Alex Verink, ajverink@gmail.com**

Recently an increasing number of countries have been shutting down their mobile phone networks in response to political events like mass protests or elections which can damage the regime's reputation and catalyze opposition. This project examines the strategies that regimes use to mitigate the threat posed by new information technology, with a focus on mobile phone networks in Africa. Research assistants will help collect data on the regulation and performance of telecommunications providers across the continent. The ability to read French would be helpful, but is not required.

**Title: Media Bias in Presidential Press Questions**

**Brandon Merrell brandonmerrell@gmail.com**

When reporters interview prominent politicians, do they treat some interview subjects more sympathetically than others? We explore this question using a dataset of more than 250,000 questions posed to American presidents, White House press secretaries, and other administration officials. We find evidence that members of the media systematically vary the tone and content of their questions based on the party affiliation and personal characteristics of the respondent.

**Title: Moral Values, Community, and Political Attitudes**

**Todd Levinson** [tslevins@ucsd.edu](mailto:tslevins@ucsd.edu)

What do the people of a community owe to their members morally? This project will investigate how and why individuals vary in their answers to this question - whether the community being focused on is the town, state, nation, or world. The project will research how social divisions, such as race, ethnicity and class, affect this sense of morality as well as how these moral beliefs and their related moral emotions impact political attitudes.

**Title: Youth Under-Representation in Government**

**Charles McClean**, [cmcclean@ucsd.edu](mailto:cmcclean@ucsd.edu)

Nearly half of the world's voters are under the age of 40, yet just 15% of elected representatives are under 40, and less than 2% are under 30. Why are so few young citizens serving in political office, and how does this affect governance, policy outcomes, and youth engagement in politics? In this project, students will collect data on the age and demographics of legislatures around the world to help analyze the political consequences of youth under-representation in government.

**Title: Party Dynamics of Taiwanese Electoral Politics**

**Garrett Bredell** [gbredell@ucsd.edu](mailto:gbredell@ucsd.edu)

This research project focuses on the assembly of a database of standing and previous Taiwanese legislative members. Research apprentices will be tasked with participating in the collection of electoral data, including legislator names, electoral results and other biographical information. Research apprentices are then encouraged to use the dataset to make important inferences about Taiwanese politics and electoral policies. Reading comprehension in Mandarin is required.

**Title: Lobbyists as Political Entrepreneurs**

**Huchen Liu**, [hul045@ucsd.edu](mailto:hul045@ucsd.edu)

Many American interest groups and companies hire lobbyists to manage their political affairs. But instead of being passively chosen by clients, do lobbyists ever pick their clients in order to get in on the latest and juiciest policy battles? In this effort, we take a close look at lobbyists' career profiles and the structure of their work, in order to inform new understandings of this billion-dollar industry in America.

**Title: False Ignorance and Hubris: What drives the gender gap in opinion reporting**

Kristy Pathakis, [kpathakis@ucsd.edu](mailto:kpathakis@ucsd.edu)

My dissertation seeks to uncover the psychological reasons women and other traditionally underrepresented groups are hesitant to participate in the political process. I start by examining the gender gap in opinion reporting and by fielding survey experiments to isolate what I believe is a psychological mechanism that goes beyond education and other traditional explanations. The future directions of the project will expand to other marginalized groups, as well as to other political actions, such as running for office. The work includes analyzing large datasets like the ANES as well as designing and fielding surveys.