

Cure for toxic elections? Reduce campaign finance corruption. A Deal with China

October 25, 2016



Great Hall of the People, Beijing
Photo Credit: [Jack Versloot](#), [Flickr Creative Commons](#)

Your Responses Are Requested

What measures can be taken and by whom to diffuse the toxic environment that resulted from the US election campaign?

Please send responses to icps@gwu.edu. Your comments may be published in the next

issue of the newsletter!

Editorials

[How China and America Can Make a Serious North Korea Deal](#)

While Trump's suggestion for how to deal with North Korea is not more likely to be adopted than a few of his other ideas, the challenge of North Korea is real enough. In effect, there is a strong case to be made that the greatest threat to U.S. security that the new president will have to confront is that of North Korea.

Published in *The National Interest*; click [here](#) to read the full article.

For Congressional testimony before the Asia and Pacific subcommittee of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on the same subject, click [here](#). See below for an excerpt.

To avoid the US becoming involved in a war with China, one notes that the two countries have many shared and complementary interests and very few truly divergent ones. Those could be settled, not by the US making unilateral concessions to China, but through a grand bargain.

For statements about US-Sino Policy for the next four years by several leading scholars, click [here](#).



Photo Credit: Rick Reinhard

[It Is Not Just Wall Street](#)

Democrats like to think about the government as a provider of Social Security and Medicare, the guardian of national parks, and the place you get your passport. However, many see daily examples of a government serving special interests at the cost of the public.

Published in *The Huffington Post*; click [here](#) to read the full article.

Academic Articles

[Donors: Give — Ok; Get — Not \(Draft\)](#)

The current state of campaign finance laws is undermining the democratic system, yet various limits on the amounts that can be donated were considered by the Supreme Court to violate the First Amendment. This article proposes that instead of focusing on limiting what people can give to politicians seeking office — limiting what they can get in return for their contributions. Cases of mutually-beneficial exchange should be treated as bribery, so long as the benefit applies to the contributor in a discriminatory manner. For this approach to be successful, the current interpretation of quid pro quo corruption needs to be modified.

Click [here](#) to read the draft on SSRN; comments are welcome and appreciated. Send them to icps@gwu.edu.

[The Standing of the Public Interest](#)

Liberal communitarians hold that a good society achieves a carefully crafted balance between individual rights and the common good. Critics argue that there is no such thing as the common good; only aggregation of personal goods. The article first defends the concept of the common good; and then shows that it is very similar to the concept of the public interest used in the law. The article then examines the ways American courts balance the public interest and the common good in three areas: free speech, public safety, and taking.

Republished in *Revista do Direito - Universidade de Santa Cruz do Sul*; click [here](#) for the full text.

Published previously in *Barry Law Review* (Spring 2015); click [here](#) to read it on SSRN.

Forthcoming Event:

Discussion of *Foreign Policy: Thinking Outside the Box* at the Elliott School

Join us at The George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs for a discussion of Amitai Etzioni's most recent book, *Foreign Policy: Thinking Outside the Box*. Hope Harrison, Associate Dean for Research at the Elliott School will provide the introduction, Amitai Etzioni will present, and Benjamin Hopkins, director of the Sigur Center for Asian Studies will comment.

Date:

Monday, November 7
12:30 - 2:00pm

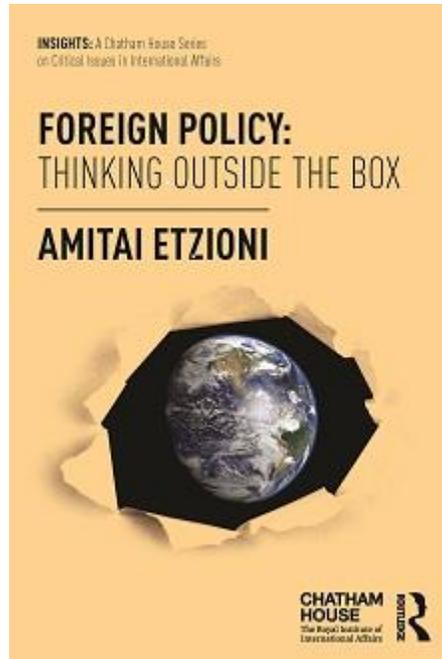
Location:

Elliott School of International Affairs
Lindner Commons, Room 602
1957 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20052

This event is part of the Elliott School's fall Book Launch Series.

It is free and open to the public.

[Click here to RSVP!](#)



Book Q&A with Deborah Kalb

Last month Deborah Kalb spoke with Amitai Etzioni about *Foreign Policy: Thinking Outside the Box*; click [here](#) to read the interview.

Communitarian News

From Victor Toom, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main

An interesting volume on policing practices has just been published by my colleague Professor Thomas Scheffer from Goethe University in Frankfurt.

Communitarian Policing Practices: an ethnographic analysis of policing practices in urban settings, by Thomas Scheffer (2016) Campus Verlage, Frankfurt am Main.

Populations mix in urban settings, scenes and environments. As such, they also different practices and values systems meet. Such local and diverse circumstances often lead to confusing and challenging security situations for law enforcement personnel. This volume on Communitarian Policing Practices provides ethnographic insight into how police officers operate at the intersection of creating knowledge and establishing confidential relations on the one hand and crime prevention and prosecution of criminal offenses on the other

See: <https://www.amazon.de/Polizeilicher-Kommunitarismus-Praxisforschung-urbaner-Kriminalpr%C3%A4vention/dp/3593505738>

I Read

David Brooks, a stellar communitarian, wrote in The New York Times (Oct. 4) that "A

healthy nation isn't just an atomized mass of individual economic and legal units. A nation is a web of giving and getting. You give to your job, and your employer gives to you. You give to your neighborhood, and your neighborhood gives to you. You give to your government, and your government gives to you."

Earlier this month *The Economist* featured an interesting article on *Gesinnungsethik* and *Verantwortungsethik*, or "ethic of conviction" and "ethic of responsibility," both household terms Germany today that were introduced by Max Weber just after the first world war. Weber found them to be in opposition; unlike individuals whose actions are motivated by responsibility, "those following their convictions wish to preserve their own moral purity, no matter what consequences their policies may have in the real world." The article posits that Weber would have been enthralled by Chancellor Merkel's "attempt to return to an ethic of responsibility without betraying her convictions."

"Alexis de Tocqueville would have loathed this election" according to an article in *The Economist* from August. De Tocqueville thought American democracy could instill in citizens the importance of interdependence. However, it appears that we are now realizing the dangers of individualism.

In "Trumptown," an article published in *The New Yorker*, Melissa MacFarquhar explores why a county in West Virginia shifted from traditionally voting Democratic to supporting Trump, and sheds light on the strong communal ties in the region. According to someone she spoke with, "[Y]our family [...] isn't necessarily your blood kin, it's your neighborhood and your community. If someone's house burns down, people will raise money and help them out, even if they're struggling themselves. There really isn't a difference between helping your cousin or your uncle and the person who lives next door."

Russell Arben Fox's piece "It Still Takes a Village" in *Commonweal* provides extensive discussion of communitarianism. An excerpt follows:

"The heart of the communitarian argument was essentially a revival and embrace of the moral anthropology of classical republicanism. Communitarians argued that our full development as social creatures, fellow citizens, and simply human beings depends on cultivating civic virtues and an understanding of responsible freedom that individualism often undermines. Thus, forms of economy, government, and personal behavior that give primary (or at least equal) consideration to community identity, integrity, and participation ought to be pursued. In other words, communitarianism began with the *res publica*. (You could use other languages to articulate these concerns, of course: Catholic writers influenced by communitarian principles, like Mary Ann Glendon and David Hollenbach, often suggested that it really began with St. Paul's description of the Body of Christ.) Very simply—no doubt too simply—the popular argument of the 1990s went basically like this: If you saw the point of freedom as the achievement of opportunities for independent choice, you were some kind of philosophical and political liberal; but if you saw the point of freedom as the ability to contribute to, or deliberate about, the common good, then you must be some kind of communitarian."

Feedback: China

Richard Rosecrance, Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government

Shared values are all very well, but which values? Can China simply take over geographic islands nearby? Should the US concede to this? The idea of junking our relationships with Japan, India, Indonesia, a burgeoning Vietnam as well as a very strong South Korea is ridiculous! We won the Cold War because every major power tipped to our side. Are you seriously recommending that we jettison this strength on behalf of appeasing at not even aggressive China? They will have to adjust to us, not the other way around.

It is important to bear in mind how peace comes about. It did (at least briefly) in 1991 because Russia was induced to join a large coalition of Western states. We want to do the same with China. This means we certainly do not want to break up the coalition which already exists.

Kevin Frei (Response to Making a US-Sino War 'Thinkable'?)

I also read that report with considerable trepidation. "War with the PRC: Thinking About the Unthinkable" a recently released RAND report details some of the possible ways this conflict could unfold and possible consequences of that conflict, but it is woefully optimistic in its assumptions about the potential effects of such a conflict.

The PRC is indeed critically vulnerable to a US Naval and Air Force blockade, but global effects of that blockade would be immense and long-lasting. This study ignores the major economic impacts on rest of the world (1) AND grossly under-estimates those effects upon the USA (2).

1. The PRC imports a huge volume of natural resources for both its internal use and its export based economy. This study ignores the global effects of the disruption of the international trade system on both on the nations supplying those resources (the PRC in many cases being the largest customer for those nations) and those nations purchasing PRC finished products. The social and political effects caused by the collapse of the world's international trading system would be immense and long-lasting. Since the world's economies are so tightly linked together an end to the international trading system will leave millions, perhaps tens of millions of people without jobs. This will likely cause a worldwide depression the likes of which will be far more disruptive and perhaps even more long lasting than that of the Great Depression. Perhaps like The War to End All Wars became known as World War 1 in the face of conflict we know as World War 2; the 'Great Depression' will become known as the First Great Depression, while this far more disruptive event will be remembered as the Second Great Depression.

2. It also fails to adequately address the economic impacts on the US. Just consider such impacts on two companies: Walmart and Apple. Walmart has perhaps the largest non-government payroll in the world and imports a large percentage of the goods it sells from the PRC. Apple imports the vast majority of its products from the PRC for its worldwide

operations. In the event of a war between the US and the PRC the impact on these giant companies (and many other US companies: from the largest to the smallest in size) would be grave: stock prices could collapse and huge numbers of job losses could be expected and yet more of secondary job losses could be expected as the economic impacts rebounded throughout the economy. These economic impacts would whipsaw the economy, for example countless loans for companies and individuals would default, upon causing yet more economic disruptions that would rebound throughout the economy.

Doctor Etzioni, you do not look at the role of the PRC in creating this potential military conflict. The PRC has been promising, since the events of 1989 Tienanmen Square massacre, its people two things: an increasing standard of living and “regaining China’s rightful place in the world” in exchange for popular acquiescence (rather than legitimacy as Westerners understand it is the best it can hope for given its systemic limitations). These two goals are coming into increasing conflict as the PRC’s rising military power and more bellicose foreign policy begin to threaten its economic advancement, even as the breakneck expansion of the PRC’s economy slows (what happens when it stalls and begins to contract?). It remains to the PRC’s unelected, unaccountable, self-selecting oligarchy to reign in its own foreign policy so as not to threaten its country’s economic interests, something that it either cannot or will not do.

It does take two countries (or more) to create a war. Hopefully, both nations will work harder to avoid a military conflict.

From Our Communitarian Reporter

A study by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau last year put the number of “credit invisibles” – Americans who have no credit score – at 26 million. So many lenders, landlords, and even some employers rely on a person’s credit score to assess a person’s trustworthiness, that credit invisibles can find themselves trapped. And the lack of a credit score is a catch-22; to establish a credit score, one needs to have borrowed and repaid a loan, but without a credit score, it’s hard to get a loan.

José Quiñonez started Mission Asset Fund in San Francisco to help low-income immigrants who work and live in the informal economy, and who are among the credit invisibles. Rather than relying on a score generated by an algorithm to determine someone’s creditworthiness, Mission Asset Fund creates “lending circles” which tap into the ability of communities to build trust among members. Lending circles comprise a group of six to ten people who contribute a certain amount of money to the group pool every month, which then goes to a different group member each month. Group members rotate through receiving the money until everyone has had a turn, thereby receiving zero-interest loans without relying on outside sources. Lending circles reflect traditional practices that exist in societies around the world, but Mission Asset Fund helps to formalize the practice by managing and monitoring the lending circles, and then reporting the transactions and repayments to credit agencies, allowing the members of lending circles to finally build a credit history.

While Mission Asset Fund is helping to bring a centuries-old practice into the 21st century, there is one traditional aspect of the practice that Quiñonez has maintained: the lending circles must be formed in person. Quiñonez says “It’s a strategy based on people coming together because they trust each other.” Communitarians will not be surprised that lending circles work precisely because they draw on the bonds and obligations which real, live communities engender in their members – powerful forces and incentives which are invisible to the algorithms of credit rating agencies.

-David Kroeker-Maus

Video

[US-China Policy for the Next Administration: James Steinberg](#)



The video from the event last month with James Steinberg is now available on YouTube. Click [here](#) to watch.

Click [here](#) to watch our video "You don't need to buy this," which has reached over 40,000 views!

Recent Tweets

Philippine Pres. Duterte has taken on drug lords, big tobacco, and the US. You don't want to pay for his life insurance.

Media reports that Trump will be unable to exceed ceiling of 46% of the vote. This is good news?

Trump calling Sidney Blumenthal a bad person without evidence on national TV is not as despicable as other calls but bad enough

Mylan to pay \$465M Over Medicaid EpiPen Rebates: <http://ow.ly/suS43051JfZ> If they can

cough up that much \$, how much did they make?

NASA plans to form a human colony on Mars which will produce everything the settlers need. Don't hold your breath. <http://ow.ly/IQNU304Xm6d>

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