

What is Political Science?

-Specialists in comparative politics analyze power dynamics in communities,

Strategic Planning

By Ellen Carnaghan

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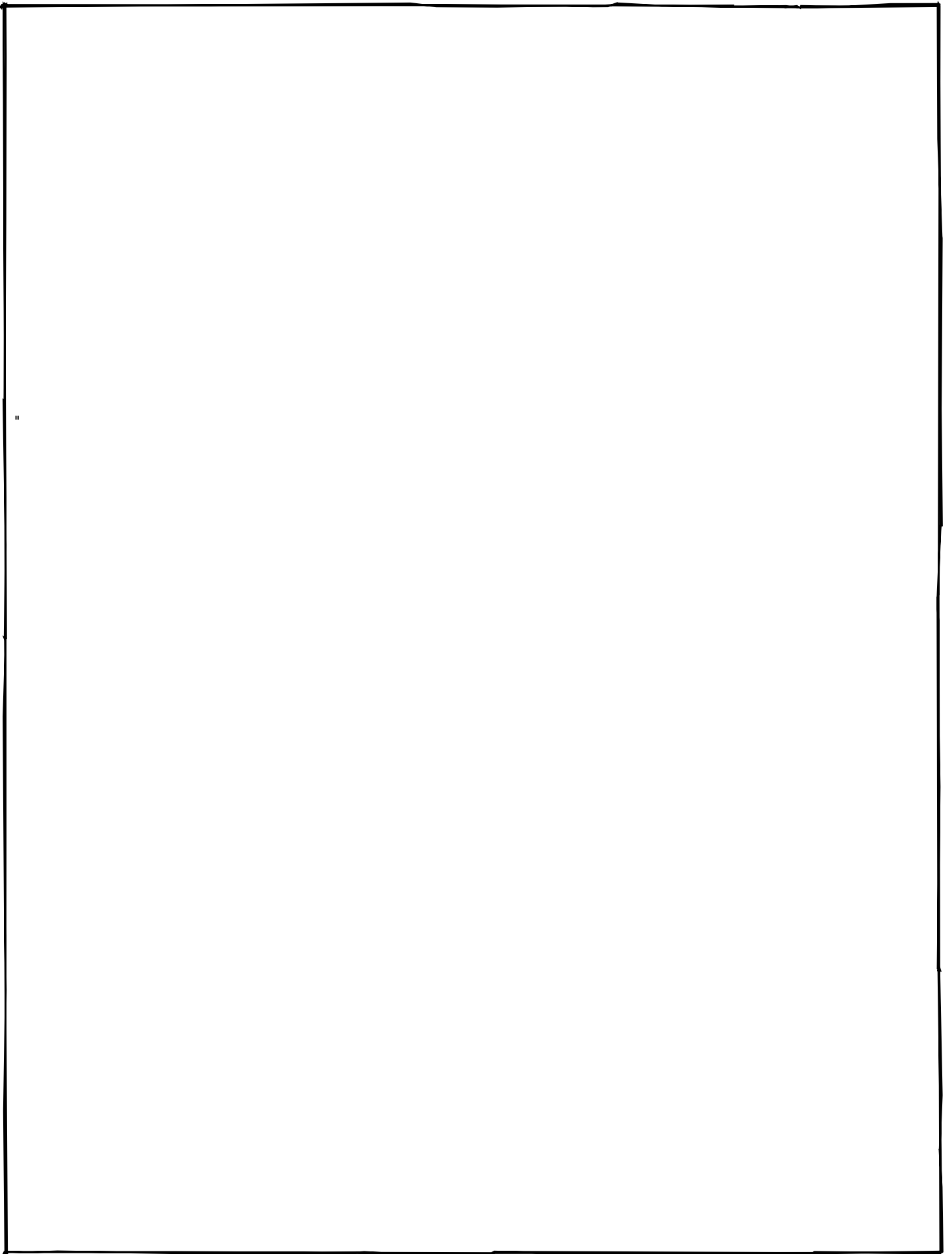
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By Christopher Witko

A sense of frustration about the future and perceived lack of opportunity for the younger generation was probably a factor in the recent uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa. What does this have to do with America? A recent Gallup Poll of Americans indicated that fewer people think the next generation will have a better life than at any time since the question was first asked in 1983 (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/147350/optimism-future-youth-reaches-time-low.aspx>). While the United States is a far cry from Tunisia and Egypt in terms of economic opportunity and political liberty, economic inequality is actually greater in the US than in Egypt, and social mobility is lower in the United States than in France.

Americans are generally quite tolerant of inequality, and certainly most people would rather have the opportunities that the U.S. economy provides than those available in Egypt or Tunisia. And there is nothing necessarily wrong with economic inequality as long as people think the system is fair and that they have a chance through their hard work to obtain "the good life," which for many Americans means material comfort. The fact that people are so pessimistic about the future suggests that many people no longer feel this way about America.

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The Senior Legacy Symposium is a celebration of outstanding student work across the University. In 2011, the Political Science department nominated three students: Courtney Anvender, Dino Hadzic, and Emily Reid.

Courtney Anvender (below, right) presented a poster based on her honors thesis on the role of the Catholic Church during the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

Dino Hadzic (below, middle) presented a poster based on his honors thesis on the effect of the

