

The Effects of National Security on Supreme Court Case Decisions Involving Civil Liberties

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Honors Research Project

Submitted to

The Williams Honors College

The University of Akron

Honors Research Project Proposal

I. Goals and Objectives:

This research project will analyze the effects that national security laws and tensions have on civil liberties and Supreme Court case decisions. National security has been a primary objective for the United States of America for as long as wars have been fought and enemies have been made. National security continues to be a concern for the U.S. government, especially with the prominence of technology that has made the U.S. more vulnerable to breaches in security, such as cybernetic attacks. The motivations behind this project stem from a concern of how national security can influence Supreme Court decisions, police arrests, and other government actions that may infringe on the civil liberties of Americans. In this project, the Supreme Court and their decisions on cases involving national security and civil liberties throughout history will be the main focus of the research. Through this research, patterns may be discovered in accordance to how threats to national security are handled that will enhance the understanding of the relationship between national security and civil liberties.

The goal of this project is to formulate research that conveys an appropriate conclusion to the issue that has been raised, while attempting to support the chosen hypothesis. The research will not only be thorough, but considerate of any variables that potentially may affect the results of the research in different ways. If this work proves successful, it will be crucial to understanding how civil liberties are affected by national security, and how they are related today. Motivations behind this research stem from the fact that it is not only relevant to the past, but to the present and the future as well. This study will be applicable to all times in history where national tensions are present. In order to reach this goal, a specific research question must be addressed and answered.

This project will aim to answer the following research question:

If the United States of America is in a time of heightened national security, is it more likely that an individual's civil liberties will be infringed upon due to the government and the Supreme Court placing priority on national security over civil liberties in times of strife?

Potential hypotheses:

1. If the United States of America is in a time of heightened national security, then it is more likely that an individual's rights will be infringed upon, because of the importance national security has over civil liberties to the government and the Supreme Court in times of strife.
2. If the United States is in a time of heightened national security, then the Supreme Court is more likely to decide on a case in favor of the government over the defendant, because the Court shares the concern of national security over civil liberties in times of strife.
3. If the Supreme Court were to rule in favor of the defendant whose civil liberties were compromised due to a national security threat, then it is likely that the government

officials violated a clearly established constitutional rule, because it is unlikely that the Supreme Court would rule in favor of the defendant during times of a national threat.

4. If an individual is arrested for speaking out, protesting, etc. against the government during a strenuous period in the nation, it is more likely that the individual's conviction will not be overturned by the Supreme Court, because the Court strives to support the government's efforts to combat security threats in such times of national stress.
5. If an individual's case against the government is being heard in a time of strife, then the Supreme Court is less likely to rule in their favor, because they will cater to the fears of both the public and the government in order to protect national security.

The objectives that will contribute to answering the research question are fundamental to conducting successful research in accordance with the hypothesis. The first objective is to acknowledge how national security has evolved throughout history, which will strengthen the understanding of how national security has impacted cases in the past, as well as today. The second objective is to discern what security/defense situations contribute to a harsher enforcement of national security, which lead to the cases that go up to the Supreme Court's docket. The final objective is to have an extensive knowledge of how the Supreme Court rules on cases involving national security and civil liberties during different time periods as well as conflicts.

II. Methodology:

The goals and objectives in the sections above will be met by studying various scholarly and peer-reviewed articles as well as Supreme Court case decisions involving national security and civil liberties. There will be a research focus on the history and development of national security that will be critical to the understanding of how national security laws are enforced by the Supreme Court and why these laws are enforced more strictly in different periods of time. Articles that involve the methodology of the Supreme Court will be included to provide context to national security case decisions that had a significant effect on the civil liberties of a defendant, where these liberties were infringed. Specific cases will be mentioned throughout the project, to be analyzed while providing support to conclusions that are found during research. These articles and Supreme Court cases will reflect the phases of history as well as how national security impacts Supreme Court decisions.

The tentative timeline for this project is as follows:

- October 1, 2020 - Proposal is submitted online for approval
- Beginning/mid October - Approval for project is gained, and work on the final project can begin
- End of October/mid-November - Establish which scholarly articles and Supreme Court Cases will be included to formulate research; consult with readers and sponsor
- End of November - Have a definite plan for the project's completion
- December and possibly part of January - Formulate outline for project through research completed on articles and court cases

- January/February/March - Work on final draft, continue to consult with readers and sponsor
- March/April - Finalize project, receive approval for final copy; obtain signatures; choose and create an informal display of research for Showcase (computer presentation, poster, etc.)
- April 23, 2021 - Submit final project online by this date; day of Research Showcase

III. Outcomes

The final output of this project will be a Honors Essay Project. The results of the study will be conveyed through a 30 to 40 page essay that will introduce a problem, and conclude with findings that will either support or refute the hypothesis. The format of the essay will divide the information into many categories, each that have questions that must be answered through the research. This format allows the project to be organized in such a way that explains the steps taken to gather information, study the information, and make conclusions that will contribute to meeting the goals and objectives. The essay is to be clear, concise and follow the guidelines given to establish a thorough project that can be understood by anyone who may read it, including individuals who are not involved in this area of study.

This project will be presented at the Research Showcase, hosted at the Williams Honors College, on April 23, 2021. The audience will be faculty, students, and other guests who are interested in research and the Honors College. It would be ideal if this project could serve as an example to other students, particularly those in the Political Science field, who will be undertaking projects of their own. This project will be aimed to educate those who may not be familiarized in this area of study, as well as create conversations and form connections with those who are educated in this field. The Showcase will also serve as an opportunity to educate all guests on what the Honors Research Project means to students, as well as inform guests on the incredible privilege it is to be a part of the Honors College. The Showcase is certainly something to look forward to, and will be a great experience to share research, discuss various topics, as well as meet new people.

IV. Academic Impact

Having to complete an Honors Research Project as not only an honor, but a wonderful way to gain experience and sharpen my researching skills. The Honors Project will add to my undergraduate experience and knowledge because I will be conducting research relevant to what I have been studying for these past four years. This will provide me with a chance to show what I have learned, and prove that I can apply this knowledge to important projects, such as this Honors Project. I expect that all of my class experience will be applied to this project in order to complete it to the best of my ability. I still have notes and other information that I kept from many of my past classes. In particular, I plan to refer to notes from my first Political Science class, Introduction to Political Research.

The Honors Project serves as an enveloping experience for the undergraduate major because of the unique opportunity presented to the student. It compels students to be fully engaged in a project that is fundamental to their undergraduate career as an Honors Student. This project provides students with the experience of completing research, and allows them to appreciate the time and effort it takes to convey successful research with reasonable, and well-supported conclusions. I will be completing this project right before I graduate, and I am hoping that it will benefit me in regards to career choices and offer guidance. I am unsure of what lies ahead for me after I leave the University of Akron, but I am hoping this project will give me clarity. The Honors Project gives students the opportunity to fully embrace what they have learned, express it through the project, and to apply their knowledge and skills to future careers, projects, and other endeavors.

Researching this topic is important because of the issues it addresses. As mentioned before, national security and its effects on civil liberties as well as the Supreme Court is a concern that transcends time. This concern has evolved into much more than an individual who was unable to invoke their right to use freedom of speech, to an issue of privacy, as increasingly sophisticated technology has emerged that allows the government easier access to civilian information and surveillance. By studying how the Supreme Court rules on cases involving the arrests of individuals involving the potential infringement of civil liberties, we can better understand how they will rule on cases in the future. National security is always going to be a primary concern of the government, and understanding how far the government will go to uphold national security, even if it compromises the rights of citizens, is crucial to understanding how and why the Supreme Court rules in these cases. Acknowledging which factors pertain to different rulings by the Supreme Court provides a form of predictability that can be used to better understand the Supreme Court's ideology, and how the Court comes to their decisions.

I am certainly most excited for the outcomes of this project, in particular, the Research Showcase. It will be a wonderful time to embody the effort that I will put into my final project, forge important connections, and promote the Honors College, which has given me this opportunity. From the outcomes of this project, I expect to learn more about the topic I have chosen, for I am intrigued by law, government, and the courts. By working to answer the research questions and support the hypothesis, I hope to expand my knowledge while proving that I can draw proper conclusions from well-conducted research. I am very interested to see where my research abilities will take this research and be able to demonstrate how applicable this topic is throughout history.