

Presenters and Attendees

1. "Fundraising and its Facades: Cause Crusaders and Capitalist Commitments in Telefundraising" CJ Churchill
2. "Me, myself and you! Pronoun confusion in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder" Elizabeth Finnegan
3. "The Influence of National Symbols on Anti-Black Attitudes" Ben Wagner
4. "Group-Like Properties of Swarms" Meghan Dewitt
5. "Honest Failure and 19th Century Political Economy" Heath Bowen
6. "A Look at the Potential Impact of U.S. Monetary Policy Normalization upon Latin American Emerging Markets" Meghan Mihal
7. "Digital Technology Use, Mental Fatigue, and Motor Movement" Jessica Berrios

Following are presentation abstracts:

1. CJ Churchill: "Fundraising and its Facades: Cause Crusaders and Capitalist Commitments in Telefundraising"

Telephone fundraising (telefundraising) is a for-profit industry employed by some US non-profit organizations (NPOs). Scant sociological research has been conducted of this relationship. While telefundraising's influence may have diminished with the rise of caller identification technology and other communications options, it remains an element of NPO financing. It sustains a split between the ideals of NPOs which use it and telefundraising companies' capitalist mandate to be profitable. This paper examines evidence of this split through: (1) how the industry orchestrates the social interaction between the caller and the call recipient (hereafter, "prospect") in order to maximize its corporate profitability and NPO donations; (2) how telefundraising workers (hereafter, "callers") negotiate fundraising conversations in the absence of signals available during face-to-face encounters; and (3) how techniques utilized by callers often contradict standards which NPO fundraising professionals claim they demand for these solicitations. Within this practice, contradictory pressures and commitments to fundraising and money-making become evident. As such, it can illuminate dilemmas at the intersection of American welfare capitalism and some nonprofit organizations that advocate left-liberal reforms, at the same time as these nonprofits gather resources by taking part in a profit-maximizing repertoire of behaviors and sentiments.

2. Elizabeth Finnegan: "Me, myself and you! Pronoun confusion in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder."

Pronoun reversal has long been considered a characteristic of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Many theories, linked to a core social-communication deficit exist on why pronoun confusion is evident in children with autism. In fact, many people with autism do not exhibit this trait, and those that do usually learn to use pronouns appropriately. During this presentation, a brief summary of a meta-analysis on pronoun use in individuals with autism will be given. Contextual information on why myths regarding pronoun confusion persist will be provided. Discoveries on language use in individuals with autism has implications for both their education and societal inclusion, which will be discussed.

3. Ben Wagner: “The Influence of National Symbols on Anti-Black Attitudes”

In some countries, exposure to national symbols can unify members of the population and reduce partisanship and factionalism (Hassin, Ferguson, & Shidlovski, 2007). One reason may be that national symbols activate abstract, superordinate identities that cut across partisan and ideological lines (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). In the United States, however, exposure to national symbols can have paradoxical effects: individuals can become more conservative (Carter, Ferguson, & Hassin, 2011) or more ideologically polarized (Chan, 2017) when presented with national symbols. Given that political conservatism in the United States is associated with anti-Black attitudes (Henry & Sears, 2002), we reasoned that exposure to national symbols could have two effects: it could polarize racial attitudes along ideological lines, it could shift racial attitudes in a more negative direction, or it could have both effects simultaneously. In our study, we randomly assigned STAC student participants to complete a measure of anti-Black attitudes on a survey form that subtly displayed one of the following: (a) the U.S. flag, (b) the STAC flag, or (c) the U.N. flag. Results demonstrated that anti-Black attitudes did not differ as a function of flag condition. Possible explanations for our null effect include the subtle nature of the manipulation and the (relatively low) baseline levels of anti-Black attitudes in our sample.

4. Meghan Dewitt: “Group-Like Properties of Swarms”

Group theory (the study of symmetries between objects) is used to describe and predict countless events and swarms will be the next. Many of these biological groups exhibit behaviors that may be able to be connected by guidelines of algebraic group theory. These behaviors include a maximum and minimum distance between group members and a collective between them, such as direction of movement. These behaviors are currently being researched using differential equations. However, we believe that we looked at them using group theory. We investigate the group-like structure of swarms and seek to develop how these structures work with each other by taking advantage of the similarity to groups. The symmetrical tendencies behavioral patterns exhibit will be crucial in understanding the way swarms operate. Swarms often depend on environmental conditions and mate recognition with the largest density of individuals concentrated in the center of the swarm according to a 2009 study by Manoukis et. al.

5. Heath Bowen: “Honest Failure and 19th Century Political Economy”

This paper analyzes the application letters sent to government officials by individuals hoping to resolve their financial burdens by working as a clerk in the federal government. Otherwise known as “begging letters,” these letters provide important insights into the social backgrounds and gendered attitudes of government office-seekers. In addition to declaring party devotion, office-seekers commonly conveyed to sympathetic political officials a brief narrative of honest failure in exchange for an alternative livelihood and government salary for support. Government clerkships, accordingly, provided a compensatory safety net for a developing middle class and failed professionals in particular.

6. Meghan Mihal: "A Look at the Potential Impact of U.S. Monetary Policy Normalization upon Latin American Emerging Markets."

The recent Global Financial Crisis led to extraordinary and prolonged monetary policy stimulus in advanced economies. This stimulus came in the form of ultra- low interest rates which served to boost asset prices and speed the flight of capital to emerging market economies. As advanced economies begin the process of normalizing monetary policy there is concern regarding the effects of such tightening on emerging market economies. This paper builds upon the existing literature by examining the potential impact upon selected Latin American economies of U.S. monetary policy tightening. We utilize monthly data from the U.S., Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru, to run a vector autoregressive model (VAR) so as to analyze the potential economic impact of monetary policy normalization. In addition, we examine the monetary policy impact on the trade balance, spillovers to other countries through demand augmenting and demand diverting effects, and the Mundell-Fleming trilemma. Further, we study the degree to which these economies may be more vulnerable to monetary policy normalization. We conclude with consideration of the responsibilities of the central banks of advanced economies in fostering global financial stability.

7. Jessica Berrios: "Digital Technology Use, Mental Fatigue, and Motor Movement"

In the generation of digital natives, the use of technology is an integral part of our lives. Information is easily achieved through hand held smart phones. Our level of information processing is higher than ever before, coupled with others tasks we are performing on a daily basis. The prevalence of mental fatigue may be rampant. The objective of this research topic is to elucidate the extent of mental fatigue in various higher education populations resulting from the combination of high information processing (both mental and technologically induced) coupled with the volume of handheld technology use and exposure on motor movement.