

## 2021 Academy of Business Economics Conference Program and Proceedings

**Wednesday, March 24, 2021**

### **BUSINESS ECONOMICS**

**1:30 – 2:45 p.m. .... Logan Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor**

**Theme: Topics in Microeconomics**

Chair: Mark Jelavich, Baker University

**The impact of executives and directors on corporate social responsibility (CSR): political and social identity perspectives**

Tao Zeng, Wilfrid Laurier University

#### ***Abstract***

The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of executives and directors on corporate social responsibility (CSR) based on politics and identity theories. This paper is an empirical work using panel data analysis of a sample of 2,407 firm-year observations with data collected from Compustat and Datastream for publicly traded firms in Canada from 2010 to 2017. CSR performance is measured as the overall CSR scores and the scores of the four CSR dimensions including social, governance, economic, and environmental CSR scores. Results found in this study indicate that firms with politically connected executives or directors engage in a higher level of overall CSR, as well as the social, economic, and environmental dimension of CSR than other firms. This study also finds that, relative to other firms, firms with executives or directors having social responsibility identity have a higher level of CSR performance including overall CSR and all the four dimensions of CSR - social, governance, economic, and environmental CSR engagement. Collectively, this study sheds some lights on the importance of political connection and social identity in shaping a firm's CSR practices. It explores the role played by executives and directors in motivating firms to pursue CSR. It provides evidence supporting the political and social identity perspectives in explaining why firms engage in CSR.

**State Poverty Rates, Rurality, Economic Freedom and Labor Market Regulation**

Mark Jelavich, Baker University

#### ***Abstract***

Many US local economic development strategies rely on tax and other monetary incentives to attract employers. This study looks at whether other incentives related to "economic freedom" and labor market regulation could also improve local conditions. Two measures developed by Murphy (JRAP, 2020) are used to proxy these incentives. Using 2019 cross sectional state level data, from least squares estimates it appears that such incentives can reduce state level poverty rates. Some policy implications are discussed, including for the recently enacted federal Opportunity Zone policy. JEL: J, R

**The Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Businesses, Pollution, and the Environment**

Thomas R. Sadler, Western Illinois University

**Abstract**

A pandemic forces countries to implement interventions that both reduce human contact and shutter non-essential forms of economic activity. During the process of economic shutdown, recessionary forces emerge. The provision of services declines. Global supply chains sever. Travel decreases. Unemployment rises. But several indirect effects occur, which serve as this paper’s topic, including a reduction in pollution and a change in environmental quality. In this context, the environment provides raw materials, energy, and water to the economy. After the economy uses these resources for the production of output, they return to the environment in the form of pollution and waste. But when economic activity declines, less pollution flows into the air, water, and Earth. Urban areas experience cleaner skies. This paper acknowledges, however, that without sustained policy to address pollution and waste, changes in business and pollution activity may be short-lived.

**BUSINESS ECONOMICS**

**3:00 – 4:15 p.m. .... Logan Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor**

**Theme: Data Analytics and Microeconomic Issues**

Chair: Nodir Adilov, Purdue University Fort Wayne

**Data Analytics Implementation and Team Performance in the National Football League**

John-Gabriel Licht, St. Norbert College

John Michalak, St. Norbert College

Benjamin L. Huegel, St. Norbert College

Marc Schaffer, St. Norbert College

**Abstract**

Using data analytics can have a profound positive effect on firm performance – e.g., as has been chronicled for professional baseball teams, both empirically and in popular media. But does this effect generalize to all other professional sports industries? Skepticism exists, perhaps most so in the National Football League (NFL). Very little empirical work has investigated the effectiveness of data analytics in the NFL. We provide new evidence by analyzing data for all 32 NFL teams over 6 seasons. We operationalize the independent variable – teams’ usage of data analytics – based on a 2015 journalistic analysis of data analytics implementation in the NFL. Using OLS regression analysis, we analyze the relationship between data analytics and team performance, across multiple operationalizations of performance. Our analyses support the existence of a positive effect of data analytics on NFL team performance. Further, we discuss the importance of effectively operationalizing performance, and considering time-lagged effects.

**The Distribution of Grade Probabilities for Undergraduate Economics Students: Model and Survey Evidence**

Joshua J. Lewer, Bradley University

Jannett Highfill, Bradley University

Tanya Marcum, Bradley University

Colin Corbett, Bradley University

***Abstract***

The purpose of this research is to argue that grading at the course level should be less focused on course GPA and more focused on the distribution of grade probabilities across the students in the class. The motivating idea is that from a student's point of view knowledge does not always translate into the appropriate grade. No matter how hard an instructor works on exam and syllabus design there is always a positive probability that a student gets a grade higher or lower than would be appropriate for a person with that level of knowledge. Student decisions about study time must be made ex-ante, before they have seen the exam, and perhaps before they know what the grading curve will be. They might prefer that they could be certain of the grade they will get from a given amount of study, but they do not have that information.

We will construct a student effort model where student utility depends on the probability of a higher grade rather than a grade itself. The model is used to investigate the effects of grade cutoffs and grading protocols (such as partial credit policies) on student outcomes especially the probability of a higher grade and leisure. We will complement this theory with student survey evidence from undergraduates economics majors taking principles-level and upper-level economics courses. Students will report their experiences with flexible grading systems (e.g. make-up exam for a missed final, extra credit opportunities, cut-off scenarios, etc.), controlling variables (e.g. overall GPA, time endowment, gender, etc.), and provide their utility index, study effort time, and grade expectations.

**An economic analysis of orbital debris mitigation policies**

Nodir Adilov, Purdue University Fort Wayne

***Abstract***

Orbital debris are human-made non-operational objects in Earth orbits. The research explores the role of economic incentives in accumulation of debris through economic modelling and simulations. It assesses and discusses the accuracy of economic models in predicting economic activity and debris levels. The effects of different debris mitigation policy options on medium- and long-run satellite launches to low Earth orbit are analyzed.

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Thursday, March 25, 2021

**BUSINESS ECONOMICS**

9:15 – 10:30 a.m. .... Logan Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

**Theme: Undergraduate Research Session**

Chair: Jayme Gerring, Purdue University Fort Wayne

**How do Misery Index Levels Impact Income Inequality within the United States?**

Kathryn M. McIlroy, Marietta College

***Abstract***

As inevitable in economically developed societies, income inequality has become increasingly more prevalent within the United States. As this process is ineluctable, it has become necessary to determine the main contributors to income inequality in attempt to close the gap between high-income and low-income earners. As limited domestic research exists in this specific field within the United States, the aim of this paper is to weigh the impact of the misery index (the summation of unemployment and inflation) on income inequality as measured by the Gini coefficient for each of the fifty U.S. states plus Washington D.C. Through the utilization of panel data and generalized least squares regression analysis, it was determined that the misery index is positively correlated with income inequality within the U.S. Therefore, as the misery index increases, so does income inequality. Considering this relationship, it can be concluded that when inflation and unemployment are higher, the average U.S. citizen is unable to adequately close the gap due to binding circumstances limiting their economic opportunities. It is thus recommended that state legislatures and policymakers understand the influence the misery index has on their state Gini coefficient and work toward combatting this issue through various legislative mechanisms.

**Income Inequality and Educational Outcomes – A Case Study of Northwest Indiana**

Taylor Kroon, Purdue University Northwest

SeyedSoroosh Azizi, Purdue University Northwest

Amlan Mitra, Purdue University Northwest

***Abstract***

Past studies have examined the association between income and educational inequality. While some focused on the causes of income and education inequality, others examined the causal relationships between the two inequalities. The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the socioeconomic status (SES) and income distribution in the cities and school districts of Northwest Indiana (NWI) and analyze their impacts on educational outcomes.

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NWI consists of urban and rural areas with varying levels of income and educational attainment. It is necessary for policy makers to identify the causes of these inequalities. Census data (2016-2017) on SES and school enrollment from 53 cities across seven counties were used. These included population, income, educational attainment, single parent households, student enrollment by race/ethnicity, percent rural, disability status, special education needs, free reduced lunch, English language learners, etc.

The overall hypothesis is that socioeconomic status and income distribution impact educational outcomes in Northwest Indiana. Before testing the research hypothesis, both sets of data were described and the differences in the SES variables among the cities and school districts were identified. Educational outcomes were defined as the percentage of students who passed the Grade 10 Indiana standardized test (ISTEP 10) and the graduation rates. A Panel Ordinary Least Squares Regression technique was used to estimate the impact of these variables on the educational outcomes.

Four empirical models were developed and compared to estimate the impacts of city and school enrollment characteristics on educational outcomes. The first set of models estimated the impacts of enrollment data on ISTEP 10 and graduation rates. The second set focused on estimating the impact of population data on ISTEP 10 and graduation rates. The results from the four regression models show that both demographic and socioeconomic variables have greater statistically significant impacts on standard tests than on the high school graduation rates. The impacts of race and ethnicity on educational outcomes were mixed. Students from African-American and Native American backgrounds were relatively behind in academic performance compared to students from Asian and Hispanic origins. Students from single parent households negatively impacted educational outcomes. While enrollments in English language learner requirements have negative significant impacts on educational outcomes, special education enrollment helped to improve educational outcomes. The percentage of students in the free reduced lunch program do not have positive significant impacts on both ISTEP and graduation rates.

In conclusion, this research contributed to a better understanding of the demographic and socio-economic factors that are impacting the educational outcomes in Northwest Indiana. The findings of this study could be used to assist policy makers and economic development agencies to improve the educational outcomes. Future studies are needed with recent data for validity and replicability of these results as well as for addressing any methodological issues due to data limitations.

### **The Marvel Effect: Cinematic Universes and their Impact on Box Office Receipts**

Jayme Gerring, Purdue University Fort Wayne

#### ***Abstract***

This paper investigates the effects of cinematic universes in films on box office receipts using data from 250 films released between 2009 and 2019. Regarding the non-Marvel Cinematic Universes, there is a statistically significant impact on the opening weekend box office receipts, but the same is not true with respect to a film's initial run. Alternatively, the Marvel Cinematic Universe has a statistically significant effect on box office receipts over opening weekend and during the film's first run. In addition, female star power remains statistically significant with the inclusion of more confounding variables while male and director star power become statistically insignificant regarding the opening weekend box office receipts.

**BUSINESS ECONOMICS**

**10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. .... Logan Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor**

**Theme: Topics in Pedagogy**

Chair: Tim Schibik, University of Southern Indiana

**Integrating New Digital Economic Theories in College Education**

Robert Kao, Park University

***Abstract***

Several new modern economic theories have developed in the digital economy era recently. The developments of platform-based capitalism, self-decision-making management, and crowd-based equilibrium have created many different economic and sociopolitical scenarios. Many critical pedagogies have suggested integrating these new theories in teaching economics. How will the newly created productivity and income be distributed in the realm of capitalism? Will robotic automation and artificial intelligence (AI) surge unemployment and major reskilling of the workforce? Are emerging technologies generating a gap in social provisions and fiscal revenues? Will world economies be likely impacted differently by the diffusion of AI and robotics technologies? What will be the government's roles for navigating effective transitions into the digital world? Will the digital evolutionary economies reshape or benefit societies and balanced trades? Will the pandemic accelerate digital transactions? Students will consider these questions in different circumstances to interact digital economics with other fields, including sociology, engineering, technology, regulations, etc.

Consequently, teaching modern economic theories should contain the technological changes in the digital economy. They should be including the influence of AI and robotic automation in professional skills, the values of the digital economics of networks and participants, the natural tendency of the digital economy towards monopoly, the euphemisms of digital economics in productivity and income distribution, and the welfares of the digital economy. Diverse pedagogies for teaching modern economics should illustrate in a new learning environment. The assessment will be a mixed method of a multiple-point rating system and open-ended questions. The inclusion of these modern economic theories in course assignments can measure how effectively the teaching outcomes. The supplemental materials for the students should also apply journal articles, case studies, and team projects.

**The Marriage of Business Education with Liberal Arts and Humanities**

Ramin Cooper Maysami, California State University Los Angeles

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William A. Cohen, California State University Los Angeles

### **Abstract**

The development of MBA programs has followed a circular path. At its early inception, in 1881 at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, the goal of the Masters of Business Administration program was to develop leaders who could administer businesses masterfully—developing well-rounded managers for manufacturing firms required teaching individuals with strong technical and analytical skills the art and science of management. And it worked as intended for a while.

Starting the 1960s, however, MBA programs were criticized for lack of academic rigor, and by the early 1970s business schools had begun to raise admissions and teaching standards with an added emphasis on academic research. The '70s witnessed the creation of the classic American MBA model: first year core courses and second year of electives for specialization or deeper study. The MBA had metamorphized into a Master of Science in business administration, it seemed.

Peter Drucker, often known as one of the most influential figures in modern entrepreneurship education, subscribed to the philosophy that liberal arts and business education were necessarily inter-related, at the time the opposite was happening in MBA education: In the 1970s, Drucker taught his students: “Numbers are but one input to executive decision-making; a manager must make his decisions primarily with judgment, using one’s gut.” In 1990 he wrote: “Management is what tradition used to call a liberal art: “liberal” because it deals with the fundamentals of knowledge, self-knowledge, wisdom, and leadership; “art” because it deals with practice and application and results” (<https://medium.com/swlh/the-most-ignored-advice-from-steve-jobs-and-how-it-can-be-your-secret-weapon-3995c51d54fc>). The comments were interesting, and perhaps revolutionary, when business schools around the world had spent years seeking to prove that management was above all else a science. More and more they were stressing quantitative methods for decision-making. It was a revolutionary statement back then, and one which had resurfaced.

The 1990s, indeed, saw the reversal of the earlier criticisms: MBA programs were criticized for lack of relevance to modern business – too academic, too theoretical and divorced from real-life business practice. The century ended with denigration of MBA graduates as too analytical and quantitative while lacking needed managerial skills such as leadership and teamwork. By the end of the first decade of the new millennium, globalization, technology-driven disruption, emerging non-traditional competitors, data analytics and secular stagnation had begun to significantly impact key performance indicators of companies including revenue, market share and growth. This “new normal” forced yet further re-evaluation of MBA programs.

Synthesis of Rubin & Dierdorff (2009) and Costigan & Brink (2015) findings suggest that competencies which were overemphasized in MBA curricula but less emphasized in program learning goals tended to focus on functional knowledge. On the other hand, competencies that were underemphasized in MBA curricula but more emphasized in learning goals tended to focus on soft skills (e.g., human capital) and cognitive abilities (e.g., decision making).

The move towards infusing liberal arts education into MBA program, indeed, has picked up speed. The benefit of liberal arts education in successful business practices has been known to many success creators. At the launch of the iPad 2, for example, Steve Jobs shared what many people over the years have deemed the secret to Apple’s success: “it is in Apple’s DNA that technology alone is not enough—

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it’s technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities, that yields us the results that make our heart sing.”

California Institution of Advanced Management (CiAM), a small private institution in the Los Angeles Greater area, offering a Drucker-influenced MBA curriculum, has developed a graduate business program with heavy emphasis on Management as a Liberal Art. This presentation discusses the integration of liberal arts principles into a traditional business curriculum, presents the challenges encountered in delivering a liberal arts-infused business education and the resulting benefits in augmenting the learning outcome of MBA students interested in administering businesses successfully.

**Mapping Foundations of Logical Analysis to Principles of Microeconomics Courses**

Dan Friesner, North Dakota State University

Donald Hackney, Gonzaga University

Tim Schibik, University of Southern Indiana

**Abstract**

The economic education literature espouses the use of “critical thinking”, yet, evidence suggests that students continue to display gaps in critical thinking. Moreover, few widespread changes have been made to teaching undergraduate economics courses to address this gap. This manuscript illustrates how to create a curriculum map linking foundational logical reasoning skills to a principles of micro-economics course. In doing so, the map identifies potential gaps in logical reasoning, and gives general direction to address those gaps. We find that principles of microeconomics courses require essential foundational logical reasoning skills that represent approximately half of a semester-long course on logical reasoning. About one-fourth of the logical reasoning course content was not directly applicable to principles of microeconomic content, and the final 25 percent, would be helpful, but is not essential, in understanding microeconomic content at the principles level.

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**1:30 – 2:45 p.m. .... Logan Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor**

**Theme: Topics in Time Series**

Chair: Ranajoy Ray-Chaudhuri, Muhlenberg College

**Analysis of Club Convergence in the U.S. after the Great Recession**

María Candelaria Barrios González, Universidad de La Laguna

Heather L.R. Tierney, Purdue University Fort Wayne

Zafar Nazarov, Purdue University Fort Wayne

Myeong Hwan Kim, Purdue University Fort Wayne

**Abstract**

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This paper examines club convergence using per capita real state domestic product and three technological variables, which are patents, research and development, and bachelor's degrees in science and engineering in the 50 states of the U.S. as it exits the Great Recession. This study finds the states that are in higher clubs with respect to per capita real state domestic product also ranks higher in the technological clubs, which is in keeping with clustering around different steady-state equilibria. In terms of policy implications, this paper also finds there to be a more direct nonrandom, statistically significant association between per capita real state domestic product and research and development, and bachelor's degrees in science and engineering and an indirect association with patents.

### **“Is money neutral?” and the Causal Relation between Economic Growth, Money Supply, Inflation: Evidence from four South Asian Countries.**

Abdus Samad, Utah Valley University

#### **Abstract**

This paper examines the causality relationship between inflation, money supply, and economic growth of the four South Asian countries; Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, during 1970-2018. Using annual time series data, this applied the vector error correction (VEC) model and the Granger causality test in exploring causal relation.

As required, before applying the VEC (Vector Error Correction), the paper applied, the Augmented-Dicky Fuller (ADF) test, the Phillip-Paron (PP) test, and Andrew-Zivot (Zvot) for stationary test. Results of these tests showed that all variables are non-stationary at level but stationary at first difference. Once the stationarity of series was determined, the paper performed the Johansen Cointegration test in determining whether series were cointegrated. Results test Johansen Cointegration shows all series: price, money, and GDP are cointegrated.

Results of the VEC showed that the coefficient of the ECT for CPI are (-0.27), (-0.39), and (-0.12) for Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka respectively suggesting that inflation is error correcting that any disequilibrium in inflation will be corrected at the rate of 27%, 39%, and 14% for Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka respectively.

The Vector Error Correction Cointegration Estimate shows that money supply has negative and economic growth has positive long run impact on price level for all four countries.

The coefficient of lagged  $\Delta M1$  and  $\Delta GDP$  (which represent short run effect) show that they are not significant for Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. However, for India  $\Delta M1$  and  $\Delta GDP$  have significant impact on price level in the short run.

Results of VEC Granger Causality/Block Exogeneity Wald Test, in Table 5, showed that money supply (M1) Granger caused price level (CPI) for India and Bangladesh. The unidirectional relation running from money supply to price level suggest **money is neutral** in India and Bangladesh. Both money supply (M1) and economic growth (GDP) have impact on price level.

India is only country that shows bidirectional causality between money and price level.

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For Sri Lanka, money Granger causes GDP. This unidirectional Granger causality running from M1 to GDP (economic growth) suggesting that **money is not neutral** in Sri Lanka. GDP had no impact on money and price.

For Pakistan, there is a bidirectional Granger causality between GDP and CPI. Money has no impact on economic growth nor economic growth have impact on money

Both VEC Residual serial correlation LM test and VEC Residual Heteroskedasty show that there are no serial correlation and no heteroskedasticity in the regression results for all four countries. High chi square value cannot reject the null hypothesis of no serio correlation and heteroskedasticity

**Keywords:** Inflation, Money, Economic growth, causality, VEC.

**JEL Classification:** E12, E13, E31, E40, E41

### **Central Banking and Policy Making without a National Currency: An European Case Study**

Ranajoy Ray-Chaudhuri, Muhlenberg College

#### **Abstract**

This paper analyzes how countries that unilaterally adopt a foreign currency without being explicitly authorized to do so stabilize their economies, encourage savings, and promote investment and economic growth. While the Eastern European nation of Kosovo is used as a case study, the lessons are applicable to multiple other countries that have similarly adopted the euro or the dollar.

The ECB is the central bank for the nineteen countries that form the official Eurozone and controls money supply in the region. However, the breakaway Serbian region of Kosovo unilaterally adopted the euro during the Yugoslav Wars (1991-2001). Since Kosovo does not belong to the Eurozone and is far from meeting its membership benchmarks, the ECB does not supply it with euros; instead, Kosovo relies on tourism and remittances for sourcing its euros. Countries normally use a mix of fiscal and monetary policies to manage their economies. My findings suggest that Kosovo's lack of control over its own money supply affects this policy mix in several ways. First, the Central Bank of Kosovo is unable to use some of the standard monetary policy tools that are used by most central banks. Second, despite these constraints, the Central Bank of Kosovo does have some monetary policy tools at its disposal. Finally, this places a greater reliance on fiscal policy in the country.

**JEL Classification:** E52, E58, E62, E63, G21, G28

**Key Words:** Central Banking, Monetary Policy, Fiscal Policy, Macroeconomic Indicators, European Central Bank, Euro, Eurozone, Kosovo.

### **BUSINESS ECONOMICS**

**3:00 – 4:15 p.m. .... Logan Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor**

**Theme: Bankruptcy and Survey Methods**

Chair: Donald Hackney, Gonzaga University

**The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Consumer Bankruptcies: Evidence from Eastern Washington**

Donald Hackney, Gonzaga University

Dan Friesner, North Dakota State University

***Abstract***

The COVID-19 pandemic that swept through the United States in 2020 profoundly impacted the health and well-being of many of its citizens, and profoundly disrupted many of its (formal and informal) socio-economic institutions. Among the most obvious policy-driven disruptions were the “lockdowns” that shuttered public schools, many businesses, and other community organizations in many states. The primary benefit of these lockdowns is that they ensured sufficient social distancing to prevent the rapid spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus throughout the population. One (but not the only) notable consequence of the lockdown was that it created an economic recession. While most individuals experiencing job losses were eligible to seek unemployment insurance benefits, there is a delay in the receipt of those benefits, and the amount of benefits does not fully offset lost income. The longer households experience a reduction in income and sustained unemployment, the more likely households are at risk of insolvency. Once insolvent, the primary means to resolve the insolvency is through the consumer bankruptcy process. The aforementioned argument makes a critical assumption; namely, that dire economic conditions actually increase use of the consumer bankruptcy process. The purpose of this manuscript is to conduct a simple, exploratory analysis to test the appropriateness of this assumption. We operate under the null hypothesis of no prior knowledge of the nature of the relationship between economic conditions and consumer bankruptcy filings. We test this null hypothesis using data drawn from the Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) database maintained by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court’s Eastern District of Washington. Data are drawn from the time period immediately before the onset of the COVID pandemic, as well as after the pandemic. We examine the frequency of bankruptcy filings (both Chapter 7 and Chapter 13) during the pre-and post-COVID periods to determine if the number of filings has increased and decreased. We also conduct an analysis to determine whether the distribution of the typical filer’s debts and income are significantly different before, and after the onset of the pandemic. We find little systematic evidence to conclude that the COVID-19 pandemic systematically impacted the use of the bankruptcy process. Moreover, what evidence exists suggests reduced use of the consumer bankruptcy process.

**Consumer Bankruptcy as an Evolutionary Marker in Community Development**

Dan Friesner, North Dakota State University

Donald Hackney, Gonzaga University

Vivek Patil, Gonzaga University

***Abstract***

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The use of consumer bankruptcy as a form of social insurance has received considerable attention from academic researchers. Less attention is given to the role of consumer bankruptcy in local economic development. As a form of social insurance, consumer bankruptcy helps ensure a lower bound on the economic well-being of a community. Greater use of the consumer bankruptcy process in a community suggests i) lower economic prosperity; ii) greater economic disparity between households within a community; or iii) a combination of i) and ii). Such information should be useful to policy makers who want to implement initiatives that enhance the overall economic well-being and/or reduce economic disparities within their communities. A longitudinal assessment of bankruptcy filings is especially informative as it provides an evolutionary context to assess the degree of progress, stagnation, or regress, in number (and characteristics) of the community's economically vulnerable residents. The purpose of this manuscript is to present a case study that conducts a longitudinal, evolutionary assessment of bankruptcy filings in a single community. In doing so, it informs policy makers in the community from which the data are drawn, and it provides a template for researchers and policy makers in other communities to follow in conducting their own assessments. Given the longitudinal, evolutionary paradigm utilized in the study, this analysis uses simple graphs and other tools of data analytics (rather than advanced regression analysis) to visually depict trends in bankruptcy filings. We focus on filings whose residents reside in the community of Spokane, Washington, and more specifically Spokane's Logan neighborhood (relative to other Spokane neighborhoods). The Logan neighborhood is home to Gonzaga University – a private, Catholic institution, whose students, as well as many of its employees, live in the Logan neighborhood. Its remaining residents' incomes are typically employed in manual labor and earn incomes below the mean for Spokane as a whole. This allows for simple comparisons to assess evolutionary changes in bankruptcy filings, not only within the Logan neighborhood over time, but also relative to other Spokane neighborhoods that have less economic diversity and higher mean incomes.

### **Designing Community Asset Mapping Surveys: What Types of Questions Generate the Most Informative Responses?**

Matthew McPherson, Gonzaga University

Dan Friesner, North Dakota State University

Carl S. Bozman, Gonzaga University

#### ***Abstract***

Community asset mapping (CAM) has become a popular means to identify community resources, structures, and institutions that stakeholders within the community (residents, businesses, etc.) highly value. Asset mapping is an exploratory, collaborative process typically operationalized through key stakeholder interviews, group listening sessions, and surveys. Surveys are used to collect general perceptions for a large number of community stakeholders over a broad array of issues. Listening sessions and interviews add context and insight that refine the broad issues characterized in the survey and weight them in terms of impact and/or importance. This process provides accurate and reliable information to community leaders, which in turn allows them to allocate limited funds to initiatives that are most impactful within the community. It also leads to policy development that reflects attitudes, values, beliefs, and preferences present in the community. A critical first step in this process is designing and administering a survey that generates data that are informative, reliable, valid, and comprehensively

reflect the assets available in the community. This requires both a detailed knowledge of the community, as well as knowledge of survey design and administration. This manuscript conducts an exploratory analysis of the quantity of information contained in CAM survey responses. More specifically, we assess differences in the quantity of information based on the nature of the community asset being evaluated, as well as the framing (i.e., focusing on *whether/how much* the asset exists, versus how much of the asset *should* exist) of the survey item assessing that asset. The quantity of information is characterized using an adaptation of Shannon and Jaynes' concepts of information entropy. Non-parametric hypothesis tests are used to assess whether statistically significant differences in the quantity of information exist across survey items based on i) the asset being evaluated; and ii) the framing of the evaluation of the asset. We find that survey items concerning which assets *should exist* contain higher quantities of information than otherwise comparable items asking what assets *actually* exist in the community.