

AUBG 18th Student-faculty Conference "Fellowship of the Mind" 2024

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AUBG

Book of Abstracts

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Afternoon Talks / 1

Urban Evolution in the European Union: Assessing Zipf's and Gibrat's Laws in EU Cities Post-Integration**Author:** Ceyhun Elgin¹¹ AUBG**Corresponding Author:** ceyhunelgin@gmail.com

Academic research indicates that urban systems exhibit a population distribution adhering to a power law, when there is unrestricted labor mobility within the population. In theory, a parallel power law population distribution is expected for sub-populations experiencing full labor mobility. Given this, in the landscape of the European Union (EU), this study investigates the relationship between urban population dynamics and regional integration. Focused on the post-integration era, we explore the extent to which cities in EU member countries adhere to the principles outlined by Zipf's and Gibrat's laws, particularly in light of the free labor mobility facilitated by EU membership. This research endeavors to shed light on the transformative impact of increased mobility and economic collaboration on the demographic patterns of cities within the EU. Utilizing an extensive dataset spanning three decades, our analysis aims to unravel the population distributions in EU cities and discern the theoretical expectations set by Zipf's and Gibrat's laws. We scrutinize the relationship between urban development and regional integration, considering factors such as economic growth, innovation, and spatial relationships in shaping demographic landscapes. In this regard, this study not only contributes to the understanding of urban dynamics within the EU but also offers insights into the broader implications of regional integration on city development. By dissecting population trends in the context of EU membership, our findings provide valuable perspectives for policymakers and urban planners navigating the complexities of sustainable city development in an interconnected and ever-changing global context.

Title:

Urban Evolution in the European Union: Assessing Zipf's and Gibrat's Laws in EU Cities Post-Integration

Afternoon Talks / 2

How can current business students identify those areas of expertise viewed as critical when applying for positions employing artificial intelligence (AI) technology?**Author:** Timothy Cleary¹**Co-author:** Maria Hristova¹¹ AUBG**Corresponding Authors:** mbh220@aubg.edu, tcleary@aubg.edu

Cost-effective AI-type applications have arrived with a vengeance. It appears that organizations worldwide are re-engineering their systems and processes to take advantage of the efficiencies and savings that can be provided by deploying such technology. Therefore, it could be argued that the positives regarding the performance/outcomes of employing AI-type technology are overwhelming. However, it could also be argued that there is a certain downside in terms of employment (fewer workers needed to perform a particular task), a reduction in wages for current workers (due to competition for fewer employment opportunities), a loss in control as such systems become more autonomous and a general sense of confusion as employees and employers transition to the new

ways of conducting business and general decision making/processing. The contra argument is seductive, to say the least, and there is plenty of evidence to suggest large-scale job destruction in industries of every description when there is a dramatic transformation in the technology being employed. Nevertheless, it has also been argued that despite such destruction, the long-term impact of technological changes invariably results in more jobs being created than those that have been eliminated.

Concerning business-type students, it is suggested that there can be a certain anxiety amongst this body about identifying the nature of those skills they should acquire, which might accentuate their job opportunities for positions requiring AI-type technology. The reason for this anxiety, it is argued, is that many business-type students do not possess or are not taught certain hard computing skills, such as programming. The absence of such skills could, as a consequence, dissuade business-type students from applying for such jobs employing AI-type technology on the understanding that they are not adequately qualified to do so.

However, it is argued that AI-type technology itself is evolving, and the skills associated with successfully employing it are changing as more and more applications of this type require less in the way of hard computing skills and more in the way of soft skills such as communication and leadership. To this end, the paper seeks to navigate such nuances and provide a road map to business-type students whereby they can identify and project those skills that are of use to potential employers using AI-type technology, thus enhancing potential employment prospects.

Title:

How can current business students identify those areas of expertise viewed as critical when applying for positions employing artificial intelligence (AI) technology?

Morning Talks / 3

Crossing the Rainbow: The Sworn Virgins of Albania

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Abstract:

In this paper, I delve into the unique cultural phenomenon of burrnesha within Albanian tribal society, exploring its historical context, social significance, and implications for understanding gender dynamics. I examine how the burrnesha practice, rooted in the patriarchal and honor-based structure of Albanian tribal communities, challenges traditional binary notions of gender by allowing women to assume male social roles and privileges through a solemn vow of abstinence from marriage and sex. Through an analysis of historical sources, ethnographic accounts, and cultural beliefs, I demonstrate the complex interplay between gender, tradition, and societal norms that shaped the existence and perception of burrnesha. Moreover, I contextualize the burrnesha practice within the broader framework of Albanian tribal society, examining its connections to the Kanun, customary laws, and concepts of honor and besa. Despite its decline in modern times, this tradition serves as a poignant reminder of the resilience and adaptability of cultural practices in the face of societal changes. By interrogating the burrnesha phenomenon, we not only gain insights into Albanian tribal society but also provoke broader reflections on gender, tradition, and identity. My findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the fluidity and complexity of gender constructs and their intersections with cultural practices, shedding light on the diverse ways in which individuals navigate and negotiate gender roles within specific cultural contexts.

Title:

Crossing the Rainbow: The Sworn Virgins of Albania

Noon Talks / 4

UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS OF THE SHADOW ECONOMY ON ECONOMIC GROWTH USING SOLOW'S GROWTH ACCOUNTING ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Using the theoretical framework of Robert M. Solow's growth accounting, the paper examines the effects of the shadow economy on the growth of each factor of production and overall GDP per-capita for 44 countries from 1990 through 2018. The measurements for the size of the informal sector are obtained from Elgin et al. (2021). In particular, this paper relies mainly on the Dynamic General Equilibrium model estimation of the size of the shadow economy but also considers the MIMIC model estimates for the robustness exercise. The rest of the data is taken from the Penn World Table 10.01. The findings of this study suggest an inverse relation between shadow practices and economic growth. The DGE as well as the MIMIC model-based analysis, in the case of all 44 states, show that informal economic activities reduce the growth of Total Factor Productivity (TFP), and consequently, GDP per-capita. Furthermore, increasing growth in the capital-to-output ratio is associated with the diminishing marginal productivity of capital. The analysis also points that growth accounting is unable to capture any changes in the growth of the average-annual-hours per-capita variable. Due to a three times greater decline in the growth of TFP and on average two times larger size of the informal sector, economic growth in upper-middle-income countries is more susceptible to the shadow economy than it is in high-income ones.

Keywords: shadow economy, informal sector, economic growth, growth accounting, TFP, the Capital-to-output ratio, GDP per-capita growth, average-annual-hours per-capita, DGE model, MIMIC model, Robert M. Solow

Title:

UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS OF THE SHADOW ECONOMY ON ECONOMIC GROWTH USING SOLOW'S GROWTH ACCOUNTING ANALYSIS

Morning Talks / 5

Navigating the Regulatory Artificial Intelligence: Examining Landscape of New Legal Instruments and Frameworks

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Digital sphere is rapidly developing and new legal instruments emerge both in the United States and within the European Union. The new Artificial Intelligence Act, which is expected to be adopted in 2024, as well as the Artificial Intelligence Liability Directive both aim to address certain issues, which AI raises. 2023 was the year in which AI becomes an everyday tool for many people both in terms of their everyday work and as source of information and a tool for self-expression. In the USA, President Biden's administration proposed a new Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights. What are the

legal safeguards regarding AI and other automated systems and are they effective enough in terms of users' protection is the main topic, which will be discussed in the current research. The paper presents the latest developments in the regulatory framework related to Artificial Intelligence and discusses some specific issues, related to copyright over AI works and protection of artists.

Title:

Afternoon Talks / 7

The Shifting Sands of Diplomacy: US Policy and Norm Diffusion in the Western Sahara

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This paper examines the impact of the United States' recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara on other states' acceptance of Morocco's Autonomy Plan. The analysis draws on norm diffusion theory to explore whether US endorsement triggered a norm cascade, leading other countries to follow suit.

The paper begins with a background of the Western Sahara conflict, highlighting the key actors and historical events. It then delves into the concept of norm diffusion, explaining how ideas and practices spread among states. The analysis explores how the US decision might have influenced other countries' perceptions of the conflict and their willingness to accept the UN-backed Autonomy Plan proposed by Morocco.

The paper utilizes case studies from various geographic regions to understand how different actors could react to various normative influences in international relations. It examines the European Union's approach, considering its emphasis on democracy and potential tensions with its neighborhood policy. The role of regional organizations like the African Union and ECOWAS is also explored, along with their norms of non-interference and collective security. Additionally, the paper considers the strategies employed by smaller states like Indonesia, which leverage their "actorness" to promote regional norms.

By analyzing these various perspectives, the paper aims to determine whether the US decision created a norm diffusion effect or if other factors played a more prominent role in increasing state acceptance of Morocco's Autonomy Plan.

Title:

Morning Talks / 8

Uyghurs subculture in China

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Early Chinese historians documented that the practices of the "Western Hu" referring to early Central and Inner Asians, did not align with Chinese customs. Recently, China has experienced dissatisfaction in its dealings with the Uyghurs, who are considered distant descendants of the Hu. The region inhabited by the Uyghurs has great political, economic, and demographic importance for the Beijing administration (Dwyer 1,2). Xinjiang is situated on the northwestern frontier of China, sharing borders with Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. Xinjiang has a Uyghur population of 22.64 million according to a 2013 census, along with smaller communities of Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Oyrat Mongols, Sibes, Chinese Muslims (Huis), and

other ethnicities (Dwyer 2; Pawan 81,82). The Uyghurs in Xinjiang are dedicated to preserving their identity as people from the oasis, the Silk Road, and Turkic Central Asia. Many Uyghurs assert their distinctiveness from the Han Chinese and identify themselves as a *milli*, or in this case, a "nationality". Uyghurs have preserved a distinct identity based on their ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic differences from the Han Chinese majority. Contemporary Uyghur identity is shaped by unique cultural characteristics and their contrast with mainstream Chinese culture, known as *Zhonghua minzu*. The strong ethnic identity and differences in Xinjiang have caused cultural conflicts between ethnic minorities and the Han Chinese, contrasting with Beijing's unification policy of different ethnic groups via Chinese nationalism (Erkin 418).

In this paper, we will explore the different facets of the Uyghurs subculture namely by identifying the national concepts and identity, religion, etiquette and norms, communication practices, social organization and gender roles, and last but not least the do's and don'ts. In addition, we would like to analyze three of the most important Uyghur cultural artifacts namely, the local architecture, the Meshrep festival, and the fractal designs of Uyghur Quman hats. We will substantiate our analysis by using qualitative data as well as the quantitative data proposed by Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Our paper aims to understand where the Uyghur culture sits within the dominant Han culture of China. Moreover, it is worth noting that Uyghurs do not reside in mainland China only, but are also spread across Central Asian countries—especially Kazakhstan; as well as the intensified cultural clashes between the Han and the Uyghurs since the Urumchi riots in 2009. We believe that our question will help shed more light on this topic seen the lack of research due to the restrictions and censorship imposed by the Chinese government on the Uyghur minority group.

Title:

Afternoon Talks / 9

The evolution of a sustainability oriented student project - a journey on the nexus of academia and practice

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Abstract:

Topic: The evolution of a sustainability oriented student project - a journey on the nexus of academia and practice

Explanation:

The integration of sustainable entrepreneurship under the mentorship of Professor Evelina Van Mensel holds profound significance for our academic journey. It's not merely an academic pursuit but a practical necessity in addressing contemporary challenges, as a result of its experiential learning nature. Sustainability isn't just an abstract concept; it's a guiding principle that shapes our approach to business. Professor Van Mensel's emphasis on sustainability underscores its critical role in our field. It guides us to understand that successful entrepreneurship isn't solely about profit margins but also about creating lasting, positive impacts on society and the environment. Through our experiences, we've realized that sustainability must be integrated into every facet of entrepreneurial endeavors. Our journey serves as a testament to the transformative potential of integrating sustainability into entrepreneurship, as well as experiential learning in the curriculum. We hope that this journey will inspire others to prioritize social and environmental impact alongside financial success.

Key message:

Sustainable entrepreneurship, guided by mentorship and driven by innovation, holds the power to create positive change in the world. By integrating sustainability into business practices, we can address pressing societal and environmental challenges while fostering economic growth and

societal well-being. Through collaboration, networking, and ethical entrepreneurship, we have the opportunity to build a more sustainable and equitable future for generations to come.

This presentation showcases the evolution of a sustainability-oriented student project, emerged from the entrepreneurship course (ENT3000) under the guidance of Professor Evelina Van Mensel during the spring semester of 2023 at the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG): <https://app.rebelbase.co/project/2932>. Embarking on this journey were myself and my colleague Martin, whose collaborative efforts epitomize the fusion of academic learning and practical application in the realm of sustainability. Our initial endeavor into sustainability entrepreneurship was marked by the exploration of novel business ideas. We delved into the intricacies of problem-solution dynamics, unearthing the potential for integrating recycling vending machines on campus. Throughout the semester, we navigated the terrain of entrepreneurship, grappling with concepts such as the most viable product, pivot, spin-off, and the depths of problem-solving. Our endeavors were characterized by relentless validation efforts, encompassing interviews, focus groups, and interactions with international and local manufacturers. Guided by Professor Van Mensel, we honed our pitching skills, engaged with investors, and sought funding avenues to bring our vision to fruition.

Amidst the dynamic landscape of entrepreneurship, we seized opportunities to showcase our progress, notably during the Sustainability Week on campus and the Startup Weekend, where our small prototype garnered acclaim by gathering over 10kg of recyclable materials. These milestones underscored the tangible impact of our project and validated the efficacy of our sustainability-driven approach. Moreover, our participation in the SEAccelerator program provided us with invaluable opportunities to refine our idea. Recognized for our academic performance, we actively engaged in pitching sessions, which further honed our presentation skills and refined our business proposition. This experience has been instrumental in shaping our entrepreneurial journey, offering valuable insights and networking opportunities.

Following our entrepreneurship course (ENT3000), where we initially explored integrating recycling vending machines on campus, market challenges necessitated a pivot. However, amidst our subsequent participation in a work and travel program, our determination to effect change persisted. Harnessing the collective desire to benefit society, we embarked on a quest to find a sustainable business idea, aligning with upcoming Sustainability and Social Entrepreneurship courses. Upon our return to AUBG in fall 2023, we set our sights on addressing the global issue of food waste by transforming it into nutrient-rich compost. Under Professor Van Mensel's mentorship, our journey was characterized by structured validation, market targeting, go-to-market strategy formulation, and prototyping: <https://app.rebelbase.co/project/3613>. Engaged within Bulgaria's startup ecosystem, we leveraged opportunities, including international competitions, sessions with successful social entrepreneurs, and participation in the OSUN course. In the Sustainability course of Prof. Petrova and Prof. Van Mensel we proposed a campaign for Kaufland on how to stimulate composting among their customers. During the presentation of our idea in front of the CSR Director of the company, we received very positive feedback and this potential partnership will aid us tremendously in further developing our idea.

The pinnacle of our endeavor came with our participation in the global Disrupt to Sustain Competition, where we secured 2nd place out of 32+ teams, underscoring the efficacy of our sustainable business model. Subsequently, our entry into the Elevate Accelerator Program heralded further growth and validation of our venture. Notably, our involvement in the Disrupt to Sustain Competition facilitated invaluable feedback and networking opportunities. Engaging with renowned professionals in social entrepreneurship broadened our perspective and enriched our understanding of sustainable business practices. This exposure to diverse perspectives has been pivotal in shaping our entrepreneurial journey and fostering meaningful connections within the global sustainability community.

In our current phase, we remain in constant communication with our mentor, seeking guidance and insights to navigate the intricacies of sustainable entrepreneurship. As we iterate on our ideas and strategies, we are fueled by the collective aspiration to create positive societal impact while ensuring environmental sustainability. In a continuation of our academic journey, we seek to Lead Change on campus: <https://app.rebelbase.co/project/3930>. This succession of complementing courses has helped bring together all pieces of the puzzle, allowing us to effectively lead change in sustainability both through new businesses and through existing organizations.

Our journey exemplifies the power of experiential learning in fostering sustainable entrepreneurship. As we navigate the complexities of societal challenges, we remain steadfast in our commitment to realizing a business win-win-win: for the people, for us, and for the planet. In sharing our journey, we illuminate the transformative potential inherent in the intersection of academia and

practice. Our experience underscores the instrumental role of mentorship, collaboration on a global and local level, learning by doing, succession of courses allowing us to pivot and improve our idea, utilizing extra-curriculum opportunities and relentless perseverance in navigating the complexities of sustainable entrepreneurship. As we reflect on our trajectory, we envision a future marked by continued innovation and commitment to fostering sustainability in academia and beyond.

Keywords: Sustainability Entrepreneurship, Academic-Practice Nexus, Mentorship, Innovation, Sustainability Week, Startup Weekend, American University in Bulgaria (AUBG).

Title:

The evolution of a sustainability oriented student project - a journey on the nexus of academia and practice

Noon Talks / 10

Echoes from Al-Ándalus: How Islam Whispers in Spanish Culture

Author: Omar Cherchmi^{None}

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Tariq Ibn Ziyad led an Amazigh—the indigenous people of North Africa—force that arrived on the coasts of al-Andalus in 711, initiating the invasion that would lead to the capture of much of Spain and the fall of the faltering Visigothic kingdom in a matter of months. Except for a small area in the northwest of the Peninsula, which is today known as Asturias, the Muslims were successful in eradicating the preceding Visigothic state and civilization. Muslims created an Islamic administration and created new laws and customs after conquering al-Andalus, much as they had done in other parts of the empire. Religion served as the basis for the categorization and division of the various social groupings, and it also shaped how they interacted with one another. This historical event changed to a great extent the course of Spanish history and all medieval European history at large (MARÍN-GUZMÁN, 1991; Roth, 1976).

The Muslims of Spain—later referred to as the Moors—ruled over the country's politics, culture, and economy for several centuries. The Moors made scientific, mathematical, literary, agricultural, industrial, horticultural, and architectural contributions to Spanish civilization. They also founded respected universities and libraries all around Spain. However, in 1492 catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella started the Reconquista warfare to reclaim the peninsula back from the Moors. They persecuted and discriminated against Jews and Moors, eventually expelling them from Spain until the last one of them in 1609 (Woodward, 1956; MARÍN-GUZMÁN, 1991).

From sociological and anthropological perspectives, al-Andalus was a melting pot of Mediterranean civilizations, a synthesis of influences from Greco-Roman, Muslim, Jewish, Catholic, and Romani cultures (Llorent-Bedmar & Cortés-Vázquez, 2023). These civilizations left their mark on many aspects of Spanish daily lives, sometimes without knowing where they came from, and some of which are now registered as UNESCO World Heritage sites. How did the seven-century-long Muslim conquest of Spain bring about these rich cultural legacies that made Spain stand out from its neighbors? This essay will delve into three key areas – calligraphy, architecture, and Flamenco dance – to illuminate how the Islamic presence fostered a rich and vibrant legacy.

Title:

Morning Talks / 11

Homomorphic Encryption Algorithms: A Comparative Study for Data Security and Integrity

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As a solution to the needs of many applications that operate on sensitive data, homomorphic algorithms – algorithms that allow calculations with encrypted information – were developed. They present a viable alternative to traditional cryptosystems which typically require such applications to decrypt and re-encrypt the information numerous times. Driven by the interesting nature and expanding use cases of these algorithms, this project intends to research and compare two well-known partially homomorphic algorithms (ones that can only support a few binary operations) – namely, the Paillier and exponential ElGamal schemes. After detailing their implementation and providing a brief mathematical explanation of their properties and how they arise, the algorithms will be comparatively analyzed through a series of benchmarks that aim to test their general effectiveness, efficiency, and accuracy. At the end, a preview of the application designed for this purpose will be provided and a summary of the results will be presented and compiled into various informative charts.

Keywords: Cryptography, homomorphic algorithms, Paillier encryption, ElGamal encryption, software development

Title:

Homomorphic Encryption Algorithms: A Comparative Study for Data Security and Integrity

Afternoon Talks / 12

The Spanish rising rainbow: Spain's LGBTQ+ historical journey of rights

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This research article aims to investigate the development of LGBTQ+ rights and the perception of Spanish society in the context of social and historical factors, from the time of Franco's dictatorship to the most recent adoption of the national law of "real and effective equality for trans people". Franco's strict regime which pressured homosexuals through the 1970 Law on Social Danger and Rehabilitation and the imprisonment in several concentration camps, laid the ground for the first Spanish pride movements in Barcelona and Madrid. Through an exhaustive literature review, different aspects related to the history and evolution of LGBTQ+ rights in Spain are analyzed. Three key historical stages are explored: pre-gay, gay and post-gay, characterized by the evolution of distinct terms and social acceptance of sexual and gender diversity. In addition, contemporary phenomena such as "LGBT+ tourism" in Malaga and Torremolinos are examined, as well as the politicization of LGBTQ+ rights and their commercialization, highlighting the implementation of key laws such as the 2005 same-sex marriage and adoption law, the 2007 registered sex rectification law, and the recent 2023 trans law. The influence of the Christian religion on the evolution of LGBTQ+ rights in Spain is contextualized, comparing it with similar cases in the United States, Australia and New Zealand. Finally, current issues within the LGBTQ+ community in Spain, including discrimination based on nationality, social class and age, are addressed through the prism of queer theory. In conclusion, this work offers a comprehensive overview of the history, progress, and ongoing challenges to LGBTQ+ rights in Spain, providing a solid foundation for future research and action in this field.

Key words: LGBTQ, Spain, rights, history, religion, activism, LGBTQ tourism, queer theory.

Title:

The Spanish rising rainbow: Spain's LGBTQ+ historical journey of rights

Noon Talks / 13

Use of Data Science in City Planning in Spain and Europe

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This cross-disciplinary paper aims to explore the use of Data Science when it comes to the process of planning the development of cities across Spain and compare it to the one in other European countries. It will also base some of its arguments on the trends of the urbanization process in Spain and Europe. By examining various data-driven strategies and the importance of better planned cities, it will answer the research question "How is Data Science used in data-driven planning and development of cities in Spain and Europe?". The growing population around the world has had its subsequent changes when it comes to organizing the cities people live in. What's more, with the increased use of data in all aspects of our lives, data also become key in the process of city organizing. The significance of the concepts of urbanization and the need for better city planning has also been growing and one way to further develop them is through Data Science. There are noticeable trends in urbanization across Spain and Europe shown by data in various contexts. In addition, data and Data Science have been actively used in Spain's education, politics, and economy, but they can be used to develop the urban areas of the cities so they can benefit in terms of transport, security, pedestrian zones, and in other aspects. Other countries in Europe have used data-driven strategies to better organize their cities in such a way that they can become what are called "Smart Cities" and among the benefits of them is their positive impact regarding the countries' politics and society. When comparing Spain with other countries in Europe with regard to their use of Data Science in the context of city planning, it becomes clear that having better planned cities is important and contributes to achieving a better functioning society.

Keywords: trend, urbanization, city planning, Spain, Europe, data, data-driven, Data Science, Smart Cities, development, society, politics, culture.

Title:

Morning Talks / 14

Tsar Alexei Mikhaelovich and the Genesis of Russian Modernization

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Tsar Alexei Mikhaelovich, the second tsar of the Romanov dynasty, ruled from 1645 to 1676. Though not as celebrated as his son Peter's era of Westernization, Alexei's reign marked the beginnings of the modernization of Russia in the following aspects: state centralization, the rule of law, foreign policy, elite culture, and theology. Alexei asserted state authority by putting down three major revolts and stabilizing the chaos that had reigned during the Time of Troubles. He also issued a standardized law code, the Ulozheniye, which structured Russian law for the next 200 years. Alexei also brought Russia closer to "great power" status by annexing Western Ukraine from Poland after a bitter thirteen-year war. Now subjects of the tsar, elites from Kiev brought Western tastes such as ballet to Russia's gentry culture. Lastly, Alexei presided over a liturgical renovation in the Orthodox church that both

divided and updated Russian worship. In light of all these fundamental developments in Russian society, it is clear that Alexei's rule should no longer be viewed as the last gasp of traditionalism before Peter the Great, but rather as the foundation that Peter and his successors continued to build upon.

Title:

Afternoon Talks / 15

Coalition Foreign Policy: Understanding Bulgaria's U-Turn on North Macedonian EU Accession

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During the 2018 Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Bulgarian government placed the integration of the Western Balkans into the European Union as one of its top priorities of its agenda. The GERB and United Patriots coalition government (2017-2021) had likely seen an opportunity for Bulgaria to assume an active role on the international scene through its promotion of West Balkans' EU integration. Bulgaria symbolically used its own national motto as the presidency's motto – "United we stand strong," and organized the first EU-Western Balkans summit meeting since the 2003 Thessaloniki meeting (Matias, 2018).

It was only two years later, however, that the same government that had hosted the Council of the European Union in Sofia and pioneered for further EU expansion would impose a veto on North Macedonia's EU accession process. On October 10, 2019, heated discussions took over the Bulgarian Parliament's Plenary session. Despite the absence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ekaterina Zaharieva and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Krasimir Karakachanov, parliament unanimously passed a declaration, characterized by different media outlets as "tough", which introduced further challenges ahead of North Macedonia's EU accession aspirations (Gotev et al., 2020). What makes the case even more intriguing is that it was Krasimir Karakachanov, then Minister of Defense and leader of VMRO (the biggest party inside the United Patriots national alliance), who first announced Bulgaria's decision to put a stop to North Macedonia's EU integration. Karakachanov, a historian by education, is an experienced specialist on the Macedonian issue. He graduated History in Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski and holds a PhD from South-West University "Neofit Rilski" with a dissertation on "The Foreign Policy Activity of IMRO (1893 – 1918)" (Brunnbauer, 2022).

Less than 16 months after the end of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the same Bulgarian government had drastically changed its position on North Macedonian EU accession. One approach in trying to understand the fundamental shift in the Bulgarian government's positions and the sharp foreign policy turn it took is to investigate the intra-coalition relations between the parties in government – GERB and United Patriots. Part of the explanation for Bulgaria's decision to veto North Macedonia's EU accession may lie within the internal coalition dynamics between GERB and the United Patriots alliance.

In order to develop a better understanding of Bulgaria's decision to take a sharp turn in its foreign policy trajectory by vetoing North Macedonia's EU accession, I will focus on observing the intra-coalition dynamics between GERB and United Patriots, utilizing existing literature on coalition government foreign policy, cases studies design and methods, discourse analysis, and literature on Bulgarian-North Macedonian relations.

This case study will utilize the triangulation case studies method, outlined by Robert K. Yin in his *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, and approach the issue from several different ways – namely by looking at archival records, secondary literature, and discourse analysis of political actors' statements in an attempt to remove bias and increase the credibility of the research.

Title:

Afternoon Talks / 16**Xi Jinping's Evolution Towards Personalism: A Study in Metadiscourse****Author:** Maria Terzieva¹¹ AUBG**Corresponding Author:** mgt200@aubg.edu

Since his inauguration as the general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party in 2012, Chinese politician Xi Jinping has been in the spotlight of international politics as the leader of one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. His appointment put him at the helm of a unitary one-party socialist republic, which has increased its international presence exponentially in the last couple of decades.

At the beginning of his governance, Xi Jinping was an enigma to the international community and the hope was that he would be the Chinese leader who would open up and reform the state's political system after the leadership stagnation under his predecessor Hu Jintao. However, this Western expectation was replaced by surprise – the new Chinese president seemed to be becoming a "modern emperor". Many scholars have written about how Xi Jinping has been increasingly consolidating power all the while personalising the state's leadership. However, all of these conclusions can be drawn only in retrospect, which begs the question of whether there were any signs of his personalisation in his speeches throughout the years.

This research project wants to examine whether there is a traceable evolution towards personalist authoritarianism in Xi Jinping's speeches in front of the National People's Congress in 2013, 2018 and 2023. The three speeches will be analysed through Ken Hyland's methodology on metadiscourse, using his interpersonal model in particular. Since the focus of the study is President Xi himself, the methodology was further refined based on Hongyu Mai's classification of Hyland's different model resources through the lens of Aristotle's three persuasion modes – logos, pathos and ethos. The focus of the current paper is on the four ethotic resources, namely evidentials, hedges, boosters, and self-mentions, and whether their presence and use indicate a personalist evolution. The aim of this paper is also to provide interpretivist interpretations of the data and to analyse whether the given methodology can detect such a political shift in Xi's discourse.

Key words: Xi Jinping, personalism, personalist, authoritarianism, metadiscourse, political discourse, ethos

Title:

Xi Jinping's Evolution Towards Personalism: A Study in Metadiscourse

Noon Talks / 17**Predictive Analytics in Cardiology: Best Machine Learning Algorithms for Heart Disease Diagnosis****Author:** Stojan Lisichkov^{None}**Corresponding Author:** snl200@aubg.edu

This project harnesses the power of machine learning to advance the predictive diagnosis of heart disease, a leading cause of morbidity worldwide. Utilizing a well-regarded dataset from the UCI Machine Learning Repository, I implement and compare the efficacy of K-means clustering and logistic regression algorithms to identify patterns and predictors of cardiovascular abnormalities. The research focuses on the critical analysis of 14 attributes, including age, chest pain type, resting blood

pressure, and serum cholesterol, among others, to explore their associative strengths in relation to heart disease diagnosis.

My methodological approach integrates rigorous data preprocessing steps, involving reading, cleaning, and vectorizing the data, ensuring a robust foundation for the application of machine learning models. I abstain from developing UX/UI elements, adhering to a research-centric paradigm that prioritizes computational accuracy and resource optimization. K-fold cross-validation techniques are employed to validate the models, providing a comprehensive evaluation of their generalizability and performance.

This study aims to contribute to predictive modeling in cardiology, offering insights that could inform early intervention strategies and enhance patient outcomes. By interpreting the complex interplay of various medical indicators, I aspire to refine the accuracy of heart disease diagnosis, testing which algorithm works best for cardiovascular health predictions.

Title:

Predictive Analytics in Cardiology: Best Machine Learning Algorithms for Heart Disease Diagnosis

Noon Talks / 18

One Question, Many Answers: Who was La Malinche?

Author: Malainie O'Brien^{None}

Corresponding Author: mro220@aubg.edu

Malainie O'Brien
Professor Konedareva
Introduction To Language And Culture Studies
11 April 2024

One Question, Many Answers: Who was La Malinche?

La Malinche was a Nahua woman who represents a wide array of values. What brought about this controversy was her work for Hernán Cortés, a Spanish conquistador. La Malinche acted as an interpreter between the indigenous communities and the conquistadors, ultimately helping the Spanish.

La Malinche is credited for facilitating much of the successes of the colonizers, and for this she is the subject of both praise and ridicule. She is widely regarded as a traitor to her people, and blamed for the atrocities that followed Spanish colonization. To some, she is a victim who was forced to use her knowledge for Spanish gain. To others, she is a hero, symbolizing a trailblazer who broke societal restrictions placed on women. The subject of La Malinche is multi-faceted, and asking what she represents will not receive a clear answer.

The scope of this paper will focus on the historical period of La Malinche and how her influence is perceived in modern day society. The objectives of the paper are to reexamine the case of La Malinche through a modern lens with cultural and historical context. The paper's purpose is to analyze the various perspectives of what La Malinche symbolizes, and how these interpretations reflect cultural values.

The research approach is to gain understanding of each of the main arguments regarding what La Malinche stands for. Understanding the historical context of her life is critical in understanding what factors influenced her mindset. Not only does it provide clarity to La Malinche's decisions, but also to how she was treated by her own society and by the conquistadors.

Research will consist of factual articles regarding the history surrounding the symbol, as well as opposing interpretations of these facts. The paper will first state what is known about the symbol, then deconstruct each approach to this data, and then provide commentary as to how these perceptions reveal insight into the values of the culture. Supportive tools include examples of how La

Malinche is symbolized linguistically, for example in phrases such as "malinchista". The paper will feature how the cultural symbol is present in art and literature. Other supportive tools may include commentaries and quotes related to the cultural values present in the story of La Malinche.

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Title:

Morning Talks / 19

Bad boys, bad boys, who's gotta thing for you?: Examining the sexual appeal of the bad boy archetype

Author: Benjamin Custer¹

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Mass media messages transcending genres and generations lead many of us to believe that nice guys finish behind bad boys in the mate selection process, particularly in short-term contexts. However, evidence for the validity of that claim is elusive. This dissertation takes an interdisciplinary approach to testing the enduring stereotype by mapping communication behaviors onto underlying biological and psychological mechanisms. In an experimental research design, 189 young, straight cisgender women were presented with online dating profiles manipulated by the author and asked to evaluate the depicted men on their physical attractiveness and short- and long-term mate appeal. Results failed to substantiate the bad boy stereotype, although the means for each hypothesis were in the predicted direction. Nevertheless, a significant main effect of testosterone on physical attractiveness was found, which is noteworthy because although phenotypic signs of high testosterone are not exclusive to bad boys, they represent a signature characteristic of the archetype. Interpretations and implications of the results are discussed with an emphasis on exploring explanations for their nonsignificance and avenues for future research.

Keywords: bad boy archetype, mate appeal, parental investment theory, costly signaling theory, evolutionary psychology

Title:

Morning Talks / 20

Catholic community in South Bulgaria 1878-2000

Author: Frantsiska Kutevska^{None}

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This senior thesis deals with the immergence of the Catholic community in Bulgaria and its state and development within the boundaries of modern Bulgaria. There are three major stages of the development of the community. The first stage is the immergence of the community in the 17th c. and its development under Ottoman rule when Franciscan missionaries started converting the small religious sect of Paulicians both in North and South Bulgaria. The next stage of the community's development is within modern Bulgaria. First, South Bulgaria was part of Eastern Rumelia where religious and ethnic minorities had more rights in terms of representation in the government and the establishment of educational institutions. In the Tsardom of Bulgaria, the Catholics no longer had representatives in the central authority, however the fact that tsar Ferdinand I was a Catholic gave them certain privileges in terms of sponsorship of social institutions such as hospitals and orphanages. The third stage of development of the community was under the communist regime. While the religious institutions were not banned, they were heavily persecuted, and their activity was hindered by the state confiscating their property and driving their followers away. Furthermore, the Catholics suffered a heavy blow in the 1950s when the regime tried and executed several Catholic priests that had been accused of espionage and preparation for armed rebellion. A case in point is the village of Zhitnitsa, previously named Hambarlii, and how it developed since its first mentioning in Ottoman registers from the 16-17th centuries. Named as one of the core Catholic settlements in South Bulgaria, it developed as a chiflik at first where Paulicians settled and lived with Muslims and Orthodox Christians. After the liberation of Bulgaria and the establishment of Eastern Rumelia, only Catholics remained in the village. Missions of priests from different orders maintained the religiosity of the community. However, the communist regime restricted the activity of the Catholic priests and although not forbidden going to the church was not advisable, which disrupted the tradition of people of all ages visiting the temple.

Key words: Catholic, Paulicians, South Bulgaria, Tsardom of Bulgaria, Communist Bulgaria

Title:

Noon Talks / 21

The Socio-Political Allegory of La Cour des Miracles: A Comparative Analysis of Hugo's "Hunchback of Notre-Dame" and Gilles Maheu's eponym musical

Author: Monika Gocevska^{None}

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The Court of Miracles (Cour des Miracles), is a mark left by the past existence of a marginalized society of the poor, the sick and the criminals of medieval Paris, organized as a monarchic system, between the XVI and XVII century. Thanks to Victor Hugo's renowned gothic novel "The Hunchback of Notre Dame", today we are able to discover the no-longer existing Court of Miracles. The legend of this marginalized society continues to live not only through the words of Hugo, but also through the 1998 French eponym musical adaptation directed by Gilles Maheu. The two works of art show the symbolic significance of solidarity against the oppression of the Court of Miracles. Hugo's novel blends historical fiction, gothic elements, and social commentary, offering detailed insights through various character viewpoints, more specifically from the perspective of a French bohemian poet called Gringoire. Conversely, the musical adaptation, particularly Luck Mervil's rendition of "Cour des miracles", presents a poetic portrayal from the viewpoint of Clopin Trouillefou, the king of the Court of Miracles. Both works depict the Court as a refuge for the marginalized, highlighting themes of solidarity amidst societal injustices. Historical context reveals the Court's hierarchical organization and subversion of traditional morality, ultimately dismantled by royal decree. Gringoire's subjective portrayal in Hugo's novel and Trouillefou's celebratory depiction in the musical underscore the Court's transient unity amidst adversity. This analysis aims

to interpret and understand the Court of Miracles as a symbol of unconventional solidarity, surviving on the margins of medieval Parisian society.

Key words: Cour des Miracles, Victor Hugo, History, Hunchback of Notre Dame, French Literature, Marginalization, Medieval Paris

Title:

The Socio-Political Allegory of La Cour des Miracles: A Comparative Analysis of Hugo's "Hunchback of Notre-Dame" and Gilles Maheu's eponym musical

22

Bank Management Application with Fingerprint Authentication

Author: Elena Ivanova^{None}

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The Bank Management Application with Fingerprint Authentication updates the usual way banks work by using advanced security measures. This system uses a fingerprint check instead of a bank card, making banking safer and more straightforward. Built on a Raspberry Pi and programmed in C++, this application employs a fingerprint sensor that uses two cameras and a special prism to verify someone's identity accurately. Using fingerprints, which are unique and cannot be copied like bank cards, reduces the risk of fraud and theft. This method is not only more secure than traditional bank cards, which can be lost or stolen, but it also makes banking much easier and safer.

Title:

23

Tsar Alexander III and the Failing Russian Monarchy

Authors: Boston Francesca^{None}; Fani Nesheva^{None}

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Tsar Alexander III, known by modern historians as "The Peacemaker" in international affairs, earned a contrasting reputation towards his own people. Alexander's policies of Russification and autocracy fostered an oppressive rule, which stood in contrast to the rule of his more liberal father. The Russification policies were designed to consolidate power and foster a strong sense of Russian national identity. He promoted the Russian Orthodox Church at the expense of non-orthodox Christian religious groups, notably the Jewish minority. While Alexander's Russification policies and violence towards the minority groups within Russia borders were harsh, he also sought progress that would improve the Russian State. He ordered the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway in 1891, which was the longest railway in the world and remains such to this day. In 1892, due to poor farming conditions and a consequence of Russia's already fragile socio-economic status, a famine swept across Russia. While Alexander III held a semi-isolationist government, he asked for international financial assistance from Great Britain and the United States, His rule can be viewed through a semi-isolationist rule with a focus on nationalist beliefs. Alexander's III rule is an early insight into the failing monarchical rule in Russia that would end with his son, Nicholas II. Alexander's rule is a unique case study into how Russia's struggle to adapt and move with Western ideas of modernity would be its downfall.

Key Words:

Alexander III

Imperial Russia

Modernity
Russification

Title:

Morning Talks / 24

Justifying the Need for Gatekeeper Training at the American University in Bulgaria through Assessment of Student Well-being

Authors: Angelina Kuznetsova¹; Matthew Whoolery¹

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This study explores the prevalence of non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) and related mental health issues among students at the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG) to advocate for the implementation of gatekeeper training programs. Through a mixed-methods approach involving quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, this research aims to assess the overall mental well-being of the student body and identify gaps in the current support system. Preliminary data suggest a significant underestimation of mental health concerns among students, including incidences of NSSI and suicidal ideation, which underscores the critical need for comprehensive support mechanisms on campus. By establishing the prevalence and nature of these issues, the study intends to demonstrate the necessity for structured training programs like "Question, Persuade, Refer" (QPR) and "SafeTALK", which can equip university staff and peers with the skills to effectively identify and assist at-risk students. The anticipated findings will provide a data-driven basis for recommending the adoption of gatekeeper training to enhance the mental health framework at AUBG.

Title:

25

The Development of the Muscovite Autocracy: Ivan III and Vasilji III

Author: Gabriela Tsvetanova¹

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The reign of Tsar Ivan III Vasilyevich, famously known as Ivan the Great, spanned from 1462 to 1505 and marks the beginning of Russian history as it is known today. Ivan III's "Gathering of Russian Lands" saw the expansion of Muscovy through the absorption of surrounding principalities. It was under Ivan III that the Muscovite principality cut ties with the Mongols. Even in his personal affairs, Ivan III strengthened his position politically through his marriage to Byzantine princess Sophia Paleologue, declaring Moscow, Russia the "Third Rome." Additionally, Ivan III initiated a noteworthy building campaign in Moscow and codified new laws in 1497, further solidifying the city's prominence and position as the Third Rome. Ivan III's reign, characterized by pragmatic governance, military successes, and cultural initiatives, established Moscow as the preeminent power in Russia, earning him the title of the first national Russian Sovereign and setting the stage for the expansion of the Russian Empire. The successor of Ivan III was his son Vasilji III, who reigned from 1505 to his death in 1533, consolidating and expanding the Russian Empire. Continuing his father's legacy, Vasilji III annexed more of the remaining surrounding appanages. He exerted pressure on the Kazan

Khanate, fostering expansion and supporting pro-Russian factions within the Khanate. Vasilji III cultivated alliances with many world rulers at the time showcasing his diplomacy skills. His stern rule over the boyars and appanage families helped to centralize power in the growing state, forbidding deviation and heightening obligations. There were struggles in his personal affairs, but ultimately he managed to bear a son who became one of the most famous rulers in Russian history, Ivan the Terrible. Most notable of Vasilji III's reign, it marked the transition from appanages to centralized governance, which shaped Russia's geopolitical landscape for centuries to come.

Title:

26

Landau levels versus Hydrogen atom

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Landau problem and harmonic oscillator in the plane share a Hilbert space which carries a structure of Dirac's remarkable $so(2,3)$ representation.

We show that the orthosymplectic algebra $osp(1|4)$ is the spectrum generating algebra for Landau problem and hence for 2D isotropic harmonic oscillator. The 2D harmonic oscillator is in duality with 2D quantum Coulomb-Kepler system with $osp(1|4)$ -symmetry broken down to the conformal symmetry $so(2,3)$. The even $so(2,3)$ -submodule generated from the ground state of zero angular momentum is identified with Hilbert space of 2D Hydrogen atom. An odd element of the super algebra $osp(1|4)$ creates from the vacuum a pseudo-vacuum with intrinsic angular momentum $1/2$. The $so(2,3)$ submodule built upon the pseudo vacuum is the Hilbert space of a magnetized 2D hydrogen atom: a quantum system of a dyon and an electron. Hence the Hilbert space of Landau problem is a direct sum of a two massless unitary $so(2,3)$ representation.

Title:

Noon Talks / 27

Examining The Integration of CEE Markets with Developed Markets - Johansen Cointegration Procedure

Author: Konstantina Georgieva^{None}

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This paper studies how integrated emerging Central Eastern European markets are with Western Europe and the US. The CEE countries under investigation are Hungary, Romania, Poland, Bulgaria, and the Czech Republic. The variables I use are monthly log prices of national stock market indices and 10-year government bonds yields as proxies for long-term interest rates. The dataset covers the period from January 2005 to October 2023. The issue the paper aims to investigate is the response of CEE markets to shocks from developed markets as a sign of their level of integration. By examining those shocks, I will assess which CEE countries react permanently and which transitorily to disturbances in Western markets. The empirical research is based on the multivariate Johansen cointegration procedure, supported by preliminary bivariate cointegration tests. Though the financial integration of CEE countries has been widely researched considering their EU accession, the number of studies using more recent data is limited. Furthermore, there is little literature investigating both long-term interest rate cointegration and stock market cointegration.

Title:

Afternoon Talks / 28

CREDIT RISK AND COMPETITIVE BEHAVIOR IN EUROPEAN BANKING DURING 2000-2019

Author: Didar Erdinc¹

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This paper analyzes the determinants of non-performing loans (NPLs) and banking sector stability based on a panel data of 28 European countries during 2000 to 2019. We employ system GMM estimations and find that bank concentration and market power harm credit quality inducing more risk-taking at lower levels of bank competition, lending support for the competition-stability view. By contrast, increased competition reduces credit risk up to a certain threshold beyond which excessive competition again harms credit quality-competition-fragility view. We employ the Lerner index as an indicator of market concentration. Our findings support the existence of a U-shaped relationship between bank competition and credit risk such that there exists an optimal level of bank competition consistent with the minimal level of NPLs. We control for several macroeconomic and bank-specific indicators, and also confirm the dramatic adverse effect of the global crisis on the credit risks of European banks during 2008-2010 period. Our results suggest that regulatory policy may target an optimal degree of bank competition as an additional channel to promote stability in banking.

Keywords: Non-performing loans, Bank competition, Lerner Index, System GMM Estimation

Title:

CREDIT RISK AND COMPETITIVE BEHAVIOR IN EUROPEAN BANKING DURING 2000-2019

Afternoon Talks / 29

Heterodox Economics of Military Spending

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Please see the attached abstract.

Title:

30

Exhibition of logos created by MLA students to promote the MLA department and its programs

Author: MLA students¹

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The exhibition will take place in the AUBG Panitza Library.

Title:

Exhibition of logos created by MLA students to promote the MLA department and its programs

Morning Talks / 31

The evolution of the fairytale "Cinderella" from its origin to modern interpretations

Author: Adriana Nashkova¹

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The presentation explores the evolution of the fairytale "Cinderella" from its origin to modern interpretations. It begins with an overview of potential origins, highlighting mediaeval precursors and legends that have similar elements to the Cinderella story. Despite much research conducted on the topic, the origins of the fairytale cannot be clearly defined. The reason for that is that the fairytale integrates various narratives. There are two main types of stories that form the fairytale "Cinderella". The first type features children who are mistreated by their stepmothers but find help from animals. The second type of narratives involves the motif of the lost shoe which comes from an ancient story about Rhodopis. Additionally, the Chinese version of Cinderella introduces another popular motif, namely the magical animal that helps the heroine. Also, the tiny foot of Cinderella originates from Chinese culture, and represents high social status, symbolising elegance and beauty. Furthermore, the presentation discusses the first written Cinderella story from the Italian Author Giambattista Basile and the contrasting versions from the Brothers Grimm and from Charles Perrault. There are many differences to be found between the two adaptations such as the portrayal of the main character, the nature of the helper figure and the ending. The glass slipper motif in Perrault's version sparks controversy. Some researchers claim that Perrault misunderstood the word for fur with glass when he heard the story in French. Overall, Perrault's adaptation tends to be more child-friendly because it excludes the moments of violence which are present in the German story. The presentation concludes with a modern interpretation of the Cinderella story in the novel "Just Ella" from Margaret Peterson Haddix. The novel shows a different perspective of the story, focusing on the independence of the heroine. Through these modern interpretations, Cinderella inspires new generations and conveys its timeless messages.

Title:**Afternoon Talks / 32**

Dimitar Dimov's Portrayal of Spanish Society in 'Damned Souls' just before the Civil War

Author: Kristia Vasileva^{None}

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Works of notable authors such as Ernest Hemingway (1940) remind us of the grim reality of the Spanish Civil War, presenting the complexities within the society. The captivating greatness of Spain contradicts its fragility when it comes to beliefs. Still, the literature of this period assures that the country has always evoked fascination in those fortunate enough to experience this colorful landscape of values, even if for a short period.

Among them was the great Bulgarian writer Dimitar Dimov. Spending only a year in Spain for his studies between 1943 and 1944, he immersed himself to such an extent in the Spanish culture, that he created a tangible and valuable heritage for the generations ahead, namely the novel "Damned

Souls". Dimov's journey in Spain happens to be during one of the most crucial moments of Spanish history, Franco's dictatorship.

While Dimov's representation of the Spanish landscape is explicit, it is the characters' emotions and inner conflicts that reflect the country's distinctiveness and give life to Dimov's Spain, making them a primary reference in this essay.

By examining Dimov's perspective in his novel, this paper focuses on his reading of Spanish society just before the Civil War. The research takes into consideration the author's prism of experiences, critical thinking, and artistic soul, daring enough to even challenge the communist dogma in his following work.

Title:

Afternoon Talks / 33

Bank Capital and Securitization

Author: Ali Termos¹

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Global banks use their own internal risk models to determine their capital adequacy and loan loss provisions. However, these models are not always aligned with regulatory models, namely, the Bank for International Settlement (BIS) Basel III models. The banks' argument is that their internal models are far more robust. In this paper, I show how global banks' internal models fare regarding regulatory ones in maintaining the levels of capital that warrant immunity of loan losses in distressed times. Because internal models are mostly proprietary, I use Merton (1973)'s model to determine the Expected Default Frequency (EDF) of these banks throughout various business cycles while gauging this to the EDF of the other group of banks that uses external models. Furthermore, I examine the correlation between EDF and the level of loan securitization by banks.

Title:

Bank Capital and Securitization

Afternoon Talks / 34

Proverbs in their Multilinguistic Diversity and Uniformity

Author: Iskra Dobrova^{None}

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The project aims to show the high range of diversity of proverbs vocabulary in their multiple linguistic versions, and simultaneously, detect few proverbs which apply uniform vocabulary in the studied languages (Europe, Mediterranean and beyond). The study is not exhaustive, just the opposite, it is at a very initial, preliminary stage, but has the potential to grow into a broader and systematic paremiological project. Proverbs are very dynamic and also very conservative folk creations, they belong to the verbal/spoken speech, that is why in their majority proverbs are very ancient pieces of folk literature dating back to pre-scriptural ages of human history. In their metaphorical semantics and short and rhythmic structure, proverbs enable the conveyance of complex ideas in a concise and clear form. That is why they are found in all registers ranging from folk tales and to philosophical tractates.

Methodology: The initial task was to choose a Spanish proverb from the site: refranero.cvc.cervantes.es and find its equivalents in other languages, such as English, German, French, Italian, and other languages from the Central and Eastern Europe, Mediterranean and Central Asia regions, depending

on student own native language(s). Thus we obtained the multiple linguistic versions of some 12 proverbs. Next, students had to analyze their literal and metaphoric meanings and compare the vocabulary and morpho-syntactic structures applied in the different languages.

Results: Two Types of proverbs emerged: those which are characterized with high degree of lexical diversity in their multilinguistic equivalents (Type I) and those characterized by the absence of diversity, i.e. they are uniform both in terms of vocabulary and grammatical structures in all their multilinguistic equivalents.

In particular, Type I (diverse) proverbs have different agents who perform diverse actions rendering the same meaning/ wisdom, for instance: the donkey who goes to Mekka returns the same donkey and the monkey who gets dress in silk, remains the same monkey. In turn Type II (uniform) proverbs preserve the same vocabulary and semantics in all their cross-linguistic versions, for instance: Better late than never / Más vale tarde que nunca, etc. applies the same structure all over European and Asian languages.

Type I proverbs have the following syntactic and semantic structure: Agent + verb+ object(s);

Type II proverbs have the following syntactic and semantic structure: verb+ adverb(s).

Hypothesis: Proverbs syntactic structure determines their multilinguistic lexical diversity or uniformity.

Further studies: Further studies are needed to confirm, rule out and precise the emerging hypothesis which requires the expansion of the proverbial corpus and finding their multilinguistic equivalents in the optimum scenario in consultation with native speakers and further grouping into Type I or Type II based on their semantic and syntactic analysis.

Title:

Morning Talks / 35

El doblaje español de la serie You (2018)

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The following paper aims to explore, analyze, and describe the main characteristics of the neutral Spanish language and the European Spanish language as used in the process of dubbing movies and TV series for the Spanish-speaking audience. The paper will talk about the well-established tradition of dubbing in Spain, the reason why dubbing films and TV series is so popular in Spain, and how the neutral Spanish language appeared. This paper aims to highlight the main differences of neutral Spanish when compared to European Spanish, looking into potential vocabulary differences, grammatical differences, and pronunciation differences. For the purpose of this paper, a direct comparison between the dubbing in each language is made through examples from the first episode of the first season of the TV series You (2018) using the dubbing of identical sentences or words in each language. This paper discovers significant differences between the two and gives a perspective on how and why each language is used.

Title:

Noon Talks / 37

Domestic vs ECB Monetary Policy – Which is More Important for Euro Area Neighbors?

Author: Teodor Nedev¹

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This paper investigates the extent to which monetary policy decisions by the European Central Bank affect non-Eurozone EU members, in comparison to the actions of domestic central banks. More specifically, it focuses on the countries that neither use the euro, nor is their currency pegged to it, i.e., Poland, Hungary, Czechia, Romania, and Sweden (which I refer to as 'periphery countries'). The study period spans from the January 2000 to December 2023. I construct a structural vector autoregression model (SVAR) for each of the five countries, which includes domestic production, inflation, and short-term interest rate, as well as the Euro Area short-term rate. The SVARs are identified via sign restrictions, through which I define four shocks, representing movements in supply, demand, domestic monetary policy, and foreign (ECB) monetary policy. I find that inflation in periphery countries responds more strongly to Euro Area monetary shocks than to domestic ones. Production, on the other hand, responds similarly to both monetary shocks, though the domestic one lasts somewhat longer across countries. Czechia, the country with the highest trade exposure to the Euro Area and the highest presence of Euro Area banks, demonstrates the strongest responses to Eurozone shocks. Sweden, which has the lowest trade and financial integration with the Euro Area, responds the weakest to its shocks.

Title: