

Report on the 16th Carroll Round

20-23 April 2017

General information on the Carroll Round

The Carroll Round is an annual international economics conference at Georgetown University that provides a unique forum for research and discussion among the world's top undergraduates. The goal of the Carroll Round is to foster the exchange of ideas among leading undergraduate international economics and political economy students by encouraging and supporting the pursuit of scholarly innovation in the field.

The conference encourages an informed and productive dialogue about global economic issues by bringing together participants and prominent members of the academic and policy-making communities through presentations, discussions, and lectures.

As an academic conference, the Carroll Round revolves around the presentation and discussion of original research by undergraduates. Students present their findings in journal-length articles and summarize their project in discussion panels moderated by economics professors and practitioners. Papers focus on a wide variety of the latest topics within International Economics.

Arriving early to catch the spirit of Washington DC

We all arrived early in DC to both see the city and beat the jet lag before the conference kicked off. Since we flew in from all across Europe we decided to meet up at the conference center on Thursday morning. We dropped off our stuff and made our way to the White House. While it indeed was very white, it was otherwise unimpressive so we swiftly walked on, heading towards the "National Mall". This is a national park in the middle of DC along which most of the large museums and monuments in DC are situated. It was a beautiful walk, and we had fabulous weather. However, the walk quickly made us hungry and so we headed to "Five Guys" a delicious fast-food burger place. Afterwards, we continued our walk along the "Mall" until we came to Capitol Hill. It was getting quite late by this point, so we only managed to see the House of Representative chamber. Before heading back to the conference center, we stopped by a local beer garden, and drenched our dry throats the German way.

Our presentations and topics

The presentations are structured as follows: (1) 20-25 minutes of presentation, (2) 5 minutes criticism by discussant, (3) 10-15 minutes of Q&A. The conference awards rewards for best paper and best participant each year, both have been won by Tim and David, respectively.

The first Warwick student presenting was David. He explored how conflict is affected by exogenous income shocks in Nigeria between 1999 and 2014. Specifically, he investigated the effect of increases in budget transfers to decentralised government constituencies, on conflict in the areas.

Marcel was presenting on the impact of election polls on voting behaviour in the European Parliament. He showed that performing worse in polls increases the probability of defection from the European party and that the effect depends on the time until the next election. Questions concerning the research have been mainly focused on the endogeneity and applicability of the research.

Tim analysed international price discrimination in the airline market. In particular, his paper assesses if language and cultural barriers might be a possible driver for price discrimination. For the analysis, a novel set of price data has been collected from over 10,000 flights.

Topics of other participants

(1) Political economy: Three papers have been interesting, which connected political and economic variables. One investigated the impact of political scandals on the stock market price of Korean companies in dependency of their political connections. Another looked at the impact of the oil price on voting behaviour in the UN assembly while the third applied UN assembly voting as the independent variables. It described the behaviour of voting on bond market ratings.

(2) Financial economics: Throughout the conference several papers covered financial economics. Most interestingly, one paper analysed determinants of a country's credit rating. In particular the paper evaluated if being closer aligned to the US (culturally and politically) results in a higher ranking and finds a differentiated effect for democracies and dictatorial regimes. Furthermore, the effect of QE announcements on the bond market as well as the performance of a hedge fund strategy have been assessed.

(3) Development economics: Regarding development economics, there were two which really stood out to us. The first one estimated the impact of refugee flows on countries by using an adapted Solow growth model. The second one considered the effect of rural migration in China on equality, using quantile regressions. Especially, the latter displayed an impressive comprehension of the subject matter and provided convincing evidence that rural migration in China improves equality.

Advice for future applicants

The most important advice is to choose a topic, which you are passionate about because you will need to spend a lot of time on the dissertation. Further, the Carroll Round usually focuses on papers from those three fields, which all our papers belong to: (1) international economics, (2) development economics, and (3) political economy. The deadline for the Carroll Round application will be at the end of January. At that time, you should have some primary results and be able to convince people why your research matters. It is crucial that by the time the Carroll Round Committee requests further information the applicants provide as final results as possible, for example in form of a presentation. Students from the University of Warwick are known for their high research quality, so we are confident that some exceptional work will be presented next year again.

We had the privilege to participate in a lecture with renowned Professor Nobuhiro Kiyotaki as part of the conference.



As part of the conference we met Dr. Jason Furman, former of the Council of Economic Advisers.





Catching the spirit of DC before the conference