

Graduate Student Council Research Grant

Project Description

My project will look at how incidental exposure to traumatic events via social media affects a person's political behaviors and perceived trust in government agencies. I plan to use instances of police brutality as the traumatic event to focus on. The idea for this project came from reading a 2010 study by Weaver and Lerman (*Political Consequences of the Carceral State*) in my American Politics seminar last fall. It concluded that personal interactions with law enforcement have negative impacts on the participants' political participation and feelings towards the government.

Most social media platforms have livestreaming capabilities. A person could be scrolling online, stumble upon a livestream, and experience it as if they were there. This makes it possible to be incidentally exposed to traumatic events, like police brutality, through people present at the event livestreaming it. Because of the accidental nature of this exposure, the emotional effects can be greater than exposure in a more traditional sense, such as a person choosing to read a news article. These types of exposures will be the premise of my study as I dive into the different effects they have on individuals.

The research will be conducted through Amazon's Mechanical Turk data collection services. I will create a survey that encompasses all the aspects of the study and information necessary to control for variables that might impact the results. The money I receive from this grant will go towards any fees associated with creating the survey, as well as compensation for the participants.

In today's climate, most people learn about police brutality through livestreams posted to social media. The results of a study like mine can contribute to our understanding of the political effects of these incidental exposures and help us better grasp the importance and urgency of preventing events like this from occurring in the future.

Budget:

The funding for my project is currently coming from my personal savings from working parttime while going to school. This budget was guided by Dr. John Smith, my thesis advisor.

Amazon Mechanical Turk: will be used for data collection

- \$0.20 payment per participant x 1,700 participants = \$340.00
 - 40% fee from Amazon for using their service = \$136.00
- Total = **\$476.00**