



ISSUES IN POLITICAL ECONOMY
Undergraduate Student Research in Economics

Volume 32
Issue 1
June 2023

Editor

James Grant, Elon University
Martin Adams, Elon University

Associate Editors

Christopher Boyette, Elon University
Ava de Bruin, Elon University
Riley Corvin, Elon University
Dillon Duroche, Mary Washington University
Ravi Palat, Mary Washington University

Elon University

University of Mary Washington

Mission Statement

Issues in Political Economy is committed to supporting and encouraging quality undergraduate research in all areas of economics. The Journal was founded on the belief that the best way to learn economics is to do economics. Through the process of research, writing, and peer review, students actively engage the discipline in a way not possible by simply listening to lectures and reading textbooks. In short, undergraduate research is a vital component in an economics education. The literature suggests that students take projects more seriously and learn more when the project is directed towards an external rather than an internal audience such as a class assignment. *IPE* is designed to provide an external audience for such research.

Issues in Political Economy is edited and refereed entirely by students, with oversight from faculty at Elon University and University of Mary Washington. In order to maintain quality and objectivity, we follow a double-blind review process. The only requirements for submission are that the article pertains to some aspect of economics, that it was written during undergraduate study, and that it be submitted through a faculty sponsor. Though submissions on all topics in economics will receive consideration, papers should be analytical and seek to add new understanding to the topic

For additional information please visit our website <http://www.elon.edu/ipe>

Faculty Sponsors:

Steven A. Greenlaw
Professor of Economics
University of Mary Washington
Fredericksburg, VA 22401
Email : sgreenlaw@umw.edu

Stephen B. DeLoach
Professor of Economics
Department of Economics
Elon University
Elon, NC 27244
Email: deloach@elon.edu

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Issues in Political Economy began over a decade ago with the goal of developing a forum to further the understanding of economics among undergraduate students. The original journal was conceived and cultivated by dedicated students and faculty at Bellarmine College in Louisville, Kentucky.

In 1999, Elon University and the University of Mary Washington inherited the sponsorship and editorial responsibilities of Issues in Political Economy. Since then, IPE has gained international recognition as one of only two undergraduate research journals, and has received submissions from all over the world.

The IPE not only focuses on promoting undergraduate research, but also is a student lead incentive. While faculty oversees the project, an editorial team of senior economic majors primarily leads the journal. Students review all submissions and the final decision-making rests in the hands of the editorial team.

We would like to thank Dr. Steve DeLoach from Elon University and Dr. Amrita Dhar from the University of Mary Washington for their guidance and support. These faculty members steered much of the process, and the final result would not be possible without them.

The Journal also sponsors an undergraduate session every year, typically in conjunction with the Annual Eastern Economics Association Conference. This year's 28th annual IPE Conference was held in New York City, NY and was a great success, hosting many student papers and allowing students to serve as session chairs and discussants. We would also encourage any future submitters to consider presenting at the conference as well as submitting to the Journal, as the experience of a live presentation is not something to ignore.

It is our hope that each year's Issues in Political Economy will build upon the success of the past and continue to be a creative and beneficial journal for all involved.

Co-editors

James Grant, Elon University
Martin Adams, Elon University

FOREWORD

Karthik Nemani and Barrett Buhler, from University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, are the first to examine all U.S. public equity Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) funds offered by the Forum for Sustainable and Responsible Investment's (SIF). Their analysis reveals that the ESG Composite returns are primarily driven by under levered exposure to market returns as well as prevalence of mid-to-large cap and high beta stocks, and the that largest fund in the ESG Composite significantly outperforms the S&P 500 on an overall returns basis. Ultimately, their conclusions supplement the discussion on ESG usefulness and present actionable investment insights.

Paul Reynolds, from Bellarmine University, seeks to understand which personal factors have the greatest impact on an individual's ability to have a stable source to transportation, specifically looking at people in the urban area of Louisville, Kentucky. Reynolds finds that income level, employment status, and living situation are the most influential factors in determining whether an individual has stable access to transportation.

Lauren Garrison, from Furman University, examines the effect of unemployment levels and changes on the vote share for far-left populist parties across 31 European countries from 2000-2019. Garrison finds a positive relationship between unemployment and far-left populist vote share and acknowledges that future work should consider the supply of these parties by using a two-stage model to examine the relationship between unemployment and left-wing populism.

Ajay Raman, from Boston University, studies the relationship between income and home ownership status across time looking specifically at times of economic crisis such as the great recession and the COVID-19 pandemic. Raman finds that as income increases, white households become less likely to own a house compared to non-white households. This means that home ownership is a bigger focus for non-white households as they accumulate wealth.

Matthew Klinger, from Muhlenberg College, looks at how changes in political-economic sentiment, such as neoliberalism, has impacted inequality, political sentiment, and economic growth. Klinger's analysis demonstrates that to fully expand American democracy, a middle-road solution must be implemented that uses the ideals of the US Constitution to ensure a thriving democracy.

Co-editors

James Grant, Elon University
Martin Adams, Elon University