

# IPE @ WU NEWSLETTER

Institute for  
International Political Economy

Winter 2023

**WU**  
INTERNATIONAL  
POLITICAL  
ECONOMY



Institute for International Political Economy  
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# IPE-NEWS IN WINTER

*Editorial by*  
MATTHIAS KOUREK, MA  
*Administrative Assistant*

DEAR COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS,

Winter has arrived – and quite suddenly. No problem, we thought, it gives us more time to write. And indeed, just in time for Christmas, we are able to present you with another packed issue of our newsletter, complete with a winter-themed front page.

Why not go travelling when it's cold outside? Our colleague Sidan Raeskyesa takes you on a trip to Indonesia in his leading article. Our Head of Institute, Prof Jonas Bunte, has also been travelling – on pages 22 and 23 of this issue, he again reports on conferences at which our Institute was represented by him: this time in Washington, D.C., and in Witten, Germany.

We embark on a journey of a different kind on page 12 with the report on the 5th edition of our "PPP" film screening event. And with our student Matthias Hofinger, we explore the connections between socioeconomics and sports.

The Institute team also continues to introduce itself: This time, get to know our Teaching and Research Associate Teresa Hübner, who joined us in June 2023. Speaking of reinforcements: We are looking for an e-assistant – the application deadline is just a few days away.

Nothing works without teamwork. We therefore also report on a trip to a pottery workshop and, of course, on the latest successes of our colleagues. In general, a lot is happening at the institute, which is why we strongly recommend visiting our website from time to time. There is a lot of exciting new content waiting for you there, including in the new sections "IPE@WU Analysis" with podcasts by our students, "IPE@WU Careers" with new interviewees and soon also "IPE@WU Explains" with short video contributions by our students in which key concepts from our courses are explained briefly.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition.

Thank you for your interest in International Political Economy.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact us at: [ipe@wu.ac.at](mailto:ipe@wu.ac.at). We will be happy to get in touch with you.

## IPE in the world

# POLITICAL THREADS: HOW GOVERNMENT STABILITY AND CONSUMER INTERESTS SHAPE SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENTS IN INDONESIA

Leading article by

D. G. SIDAN RAESKYESA, MSC

Teaching and Research Associate

Have you ever wondered about the technology that makes up your clothing? Check whether your clothes contain fabric made by TENCEL, ECOVERO, or VEOCEL. If yes, congratulations! You have supported the sustainability movement! Next question: Do you know who created that technology?

It is Lenzing AG, an Austrian company that focuses on producing sustainable wood-based fibers. The company recently received an EU Ecolabel for environmentally friendly fiber production at its Indonesian production plant. Austria's foreign direct investment (FDI) firm has been in Indonesia since 1983. Since 2021, the company has invested up to 100 million Euros to upgrade its production site to be more environmentally friendly. However, why did Lenzing AG choose Indonesia? And why does Lenzing AG put so much effort into upgrading its production plant in Indonesia?

One may point out the Indonesian government's stability. Indeed, the government's ability to maintain a stable political situation attracts and retains foreign investment, as stability allows investors to thrive in the host countries' economies. Moreover, Indonesia has many tropical forests, providing abundant wood resources, which Lenzing AG needs. Another reason would be the availability of labor, which is plentiful in Indonesia.



Sidan Raeskyesa, M.Sc.  
© IPE / Raeskyesa

Continue on the next page ...



Map of Indonesia - © moarfa23, Faiq Arsa's Images

*Continuing:*

## POLITICAL THREADS

These facts can explain why Lenzing AG invests in Indonesia, but they don't tell us why Lenzing AG has put so much effort into upgrading its facilities to be more environmentally friendly.

In this case, the politics and the power of groups from the country where the foreign investors come from (home country) have influence. Politics is not only about power but also about preferences. Start with the ability of the consumers to influence the companies' interests in environmental issues by buying products from companies that conduct environmentally friendly operations within their supply chain (e.g., low-emission factories). At the same time, these consumers are also voters. They can vote for politicians supporting sustainable policies, such as increasing spending on public research for renewable energy or programs supporting companies investing in technology that generates less environmental damage.

Consequently, governments from the country where the foreign investors come from may respond to this particular interest. They may create new regulations and programs that align with society's interests. For example, at the supranational level, Lenzing AG and Södra from Sweden received funding from the European Union in June 2023, up to EUR 10 million for their project developing methods to recycle textile waste on an industrial scale. The funding program is part of the LIFE Project, the EU's environmental and climate action funding instrument.

At the same time, from the company's side, Lenzing AG has adopted addressing climate change as one of its missions. Lenzing AG is aware that the textile industry is one of the most significant contributors to climate change. They aim to improve their technologies to use less energy and water, which has become one of the reasons for upgrading their production site in Indonesia. In addition, the company recognizes the importance of sustainability practices in their production process, which is essential for their Austrian customers to buy their products.

As the host country, the government of Indonesia welcomes the facilities enhancement. Indonesia wants to maintain its commitment to a better climate by promoting technology that generates less emissions and supports renewable energy. However, the link between FDI and sustainability does not only come from the government. The interests of consumers and firms can also be a medium influencing FDI to be more sustainable towards environmental conditions. Analyzing the interests of groups in society and their impact on socioeconomic development is something that we do passionately at the Institute of International Political Economy.



Temple in Bali, Indonesia - © Michelle\_Maria, pixabay

# LIFE AT THE INSTITUTE: FROM CLAY TO COLLABORATION - THE ART OF TEAMWORK AT POTTERIA

*Team report by*

ASHLEY B. SIMPSON, MSC

*Teaching and Research Associate*

At the Institute for International Political Economy, we value excellence in research, teaching, and third-mission engagement. But our work doesn't only take place in the office! Effective teamwork and support for each other as academics and individuals are vital to us achieving our goals. To cultivate this collaborative spirit, we organize team-building events every few months. Since my arrival in August 2022, these events have included dinner on the Danube, visits to Christmas markets, successful navigation of an escape room (with a mere 5 minutes to spare!), and leisurely afternoons in Prater Park.

Most recently, we participated in a pottery-making class at Potteria in Vienna's third district. It was an enjoyable experience, offering the opportunity to get our hands dirty and explore something new. Notably, each participant's "work" personality manifested in their finished creations. Jonas' bowls, for instance, demonstrated precision and consistency, while Sidan showcased a clear vision and the confidence to craft a heart-shaped container on his first attempt. Teresa's coffee mugs reflected her meticulous attention to detail and team spirit (the mugs will be used for discussions over coffee during work). Matthias' creations illustrated his creative and explorative thinking. These team-building events contribute to fostering a caring and enjoyable team culture and form the bedrock of our research, teaching, and third-mission engagement endeavors. Please let us know if you have any ideas for what we should do next!



↑ Team building at a pottery taster course  
f.l.t.r.: S. Raeskyesa, M. Kourek,  
A. Simpson, T. Hübel, J. Bunte  
© Potteria / IPE

→ Team building at a pottery taster course  
f.l.t.r.: A. Simpson, T. Hübel  
© IPE / Bunte



# We Are Hiring

# E-ASSISTANT

The Institute for International Political Economy at the Vienna University of Economics and Business is looking for a part-time **e-assistant** (8 hours per week) from 1st January 2024, limited to one (1) year.

- **Start of employment:** 1st January 2024
- **Salary:** EUR 476.04 gross per month
- **What to expect / Tasks:**
  - Creation and implementation of digital teaching and learning scenarios.
  - Supporting the course lecturer in creating surveys for students using the tools "Qualtrics" and "Mentimeter".
  - Management of social media accounts (Twitter/X, Instagram, Slack, etc.) to involve students in the course.
  - Supporting the course lecturer in managing the "LEARN" and "Canvas" learning platforms as well as the "Planet eStream" platform.
  - Production of short video contributions with information on the content of the course for students.
- **What you have to offer:**
  - You are currently enrolled in a Bachelor's or Master's degree.
  - Familiarity with learning platforms such as "LEARN" and "Canvas".
  - Knowledge of editing video and audio contributions with the corresponding software solutions, for example "Audacity", "Canva" and "Doodly", is a plus.
  - Knowledge of using survey tools such as "Qualtrics" or "Mentimeter" is also a plus.
  - Experience in handling and managing institutional social media accounts.
  - Programming skills are a plus.
  - **Please note:** Only people who **do not have a diploma or master's degree** can be considered for the position of e-assistant!
- The deadline for applications is the **13th December 2023** (ID 1965).

For further information, please go to our website at:

[www.wu.ac.at/en/ipe/news](http://www.wu.ac.at/en/ipe/news).

Applications are possible through the Job Center of WU Vienna:

**Job Advertisement December 2023.**



Scan me

# IPE Means Success

# CONGRATULATIONS MATTHIAS, MA!

In our "IPE Means Success" section, we extend our congratulations to our colleague, Matthias Kourek, for successfully completing his Master's in Geography at the University of Vienna.

*Success story by*

MATTHIAS KOUREK, MA  
ASHLEY B. SIMPSON, MSC

*Administrative Assistant*

*Teaching and Research Associate*



*Matthias Kourek after his successful thesis defense*  
© Thurner / IPE

Matthias works with us part-time as an administrative assistant. Over the last few months, he has worked intensively on his Master's thesis. In mid-October, he successfully defended his thesis before the University of Vienna's Examination Committee. The official confirmation of his degree came in mid-November, following the recording of all grades and issuance of necessary documents.

Matthias' thesis delved into Colombia's "post-conflict" society, exploring the challenges and obstacles in establishing enduring peace after the 2016 peace agreement between the Colombian government and the prominent guerrilla group, "FARC." He focused on the country's political situation and historical and current social contexts. The development of the conflict between the Colombian army, the FARC guerrillas, and other armed actors in the country was particularly relevant to Matthias' analyses. Moreover, the thesis probed the feasibility of moving towards a peace agreement after over half a century of armed conflict, raising interesting questions that could motivate further political-economic research.

We congratulate Matthias once again on his successful graduation. Matthias would also like to explicitly thank the team: "The team at the Institute for International Political Economy actively supported me through numerous discussions about the difficulties of writing academic theses and ensuring that completing my thesis was compatible with my work for the Institute. These past months have showcased our excellent teamwork and the value of our team spirit. Many thanks for that."



*World Map Illustration*  
© Additya Arora, Pexels



## Meet Our Team

# TERESA HÜBEL

## BEYOND THE “SAFE” CHOICE: PURSUING A CAREER IN IPE

**Many years ago, I attended a master's studies fair. That day, I decided to pursue a career in economics. It was a defining moment, not because I decided to do a master's in economics, but because I realized why I hadn't decided to do so much earlier.**

At that time, I was studying in the economic and social sciences bachelor's program at the WU. I specialized in entrepreneurship and innovation as well as consumer research. Initially, I expected to gain inspiration regarding which business area to specialize in. However, when I listened to the talk about WU's master's in economics, I was filled with curiosity and excitement and remembered something that I had almost forgotten: My initial motivation to study economics and social sciences was an economics course I had taken as a high school student during a semester abroad in New Zealand. I realized I had switched to business mainly because of two subconscious beliefs.

First, I thought that economics was an occupation without options. All too often, when I had expressed interest in the subject, I was met with confusion and skeptical looks. "Hmm, interesting...and what exactly can you do with that later?" Second, I was uncertain whether my math skills would be sufficient to pursue a career in that area. Unconsciously, I had decided to stick with the "safer" option and specialize in business.

Once I identified this thought pattern, I decided to discard my doubts and give it a go. I attended some extra classes in the specialization of economics, brushed up my math with some additional courses at the University of Vienna, and applied to the master's degree in economics. My doubts proved unfounded, and I never looked back. My decision opened exciting job opportunities. I was glad to find out that the quantitative skills needed at university only tangentially related to high school math and resembled the problem-solving I had always enjoyed.

*Continue on the next page ...*



Continuing:

## MEET OUR TEAM: TERESA HÜBEL

When I think back, I am really happy that I attended my school's master's fair. If I could give my 18-year-old self some advice, I'd tell her to pause whenever she decides against her intuition and goes with the "reasonable choice." Are there any subconscious beliefs influencing your decision? There is always time to change directions and switch to something else. This is the nice thing about the bologna system. Instead of one more extended degree, we have a natural cut between bachelor's and master's that allows us to pause and think about which steps to take next.

What is more, following my intuition paved the way for a career in economics and allowed me to confidently opt for the "unreasonable" choice and pursue a Ph.D. after finishing graduate school. I have always been fascinated by the interplay of politics and economics. I found the perfect fit for my research interests with the Institute for International Political Economy. This time around, I wasn't deterred by notions of job market prospects of different career choices. As a result, I'm able to pursue my passions, pass on knowledge to students, and think about some of society's most pressing issues!



WU Vienna Campus overview  
© WU Vienna

# The People of IPE - Our Students

Matthias Hofinger  
© Köstler / Hofinger

## MATTHIAS HOFINGER SOCIOECONOMICS AND SPORTS

**Socioeconomics provides a good overview of the interaction between economy and politics. As a student of socioeconomics, one notices these interdependencies and their effects on other areas of society. As a passionate volleyball player, I know that in the world of sports, both economics and politics are crucial to succeed, regardless of whether you compete as an individual athlete or a team.**



Football fans worldwide have witnessed a paradigm shift over the last twenty years, where the economic activity of their favorite clubs has gained significant importance. Those massive clubs work like every other big company nowadays. So, they are pursuing a balanced account or even trying to generate profit to invest the surplus in the progress of their athletes. Since typically, only some of their money demands are covered by their revenues, like ticket sales, merchandising, or TV rights, sponsorships are another critical aspect in the relationship between sports and the economy. Companies mainly finance the teams because they see a good opportunity to promote their firm or specific products. Therefore, a sponsoring partnership could also be a beneficial symbiosis for all participating parties. Examples can be found in big American sports leagues, like the NBA, NFL, & MLS, or in the big football leagues in Europe, where the expenditures regarding the signing of new players have more than doubled in the last ten years. Simultaneously, sponsor presence and TV ad prices have risen significantly to finance constant improvements and the bidding for new stars.

In a more local context, the connection between sports clubs and companies goes beyond sponsorships: Networks and favors play a more significant role than pure economic interests as the people acting behind the sporting organizations move more into the spotlight. Furthermore, the interaction between politics and sports becomes increasingly important at the regional level. Whether we talk about professional, semiprofessional, or amateur sports, providing and administrating the infrastructure is key for all sports. In a big city with over 2 million inhabitants like Vienna, the public authorities have to manage several indoor and outdoor facilities, combined with many different problems if the demands cannot be fulfilled. For example, lately, WestWien, the champion of Austria's first handball division, had to be relegated to the second league because they could not find a suitable and affordable facility in Vienna. Their provisional hall was not a durable solution. Additionally, public funding falls under the responsibility of politics and enables marginal sports to be financed, especially when the interest in sponsorships and cooperation is nonexistent.

The interdependencies between politics, economic factors, and the world of sports should not be underestimated. Moreover, it is essential to consider the different circumstances and to be aware that the interaction of those factors produces different outcomes in various settings. Implementing policies in the sports sector can be a tough decision for the public authorities. Since there are so many other interest groups, meeting all of their needs and expectations is almost impossible.

# Pizza, Politics & (Motion) Picture - 5th edition

## SLICING THROUGH SUSTAINABILITY: *“THE LORAX”*

On 2nd November 2023, the Institute organised the 5th edition of the “Pizza, Politics & (Motion) Picture” (PPP) event series. More than 25 students studying social sciences gathered to watch *“The Lorax”* and discuss its main messages through the lens of International Political Economy.

Report by

D. G. SIDAN RAESKYESA, MSC  
Teaching and Research Associate

We were excited to see some old faces from previous events and new attendees not studying at the WU. This means that PPP has increased its popularity beyond the border of the WU Wien! Moreover, the various backgrounds of the attendees contribute to the fruitful discussion about the movie. For example, many students thought *“The Lorax”* was about aligning business activities with environmental values. In contrast, others believed that *“The Lorax”* is about the unequal balance of power between the state and the entrepreneur. The group also discussed how these two interests from both parties can be aligned. One of the students pointed out the importance of state regulations to protect the environment, which limits entrepreneurs from being more and more greedy in using resources. Other students thought that the taxes paid by the entrepreneurs should be allocated to help the local people so that they could participate in the economy and replace the damage done by the production process. Meanwhile, others raised the importance of the integrity of the government in implementing the regulations. We concluded that it is crucial to maintain the balance between entrepreneurial activities and the environment, as the market alone cannot fix its externalities.



PPP Participants on 2nd November 2023  
© IPE / Kourek



Advertisement for *“The Lorax”*  
© IPE / Kourek

Continuing:

# PPP: "THE LORAX"



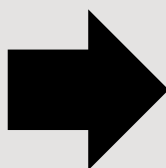
Pizza buffet at the 5th PPP event  
© IPE / Kourek



PPP will continue -  
see you again on the  
**18th January 2024**

Any suggestions for the  
next edition? Let us know!

[bit.ly/3V61BEc](https://bit.ly/3V61BEc)



## Third Mission

# IPE@WU ANALYSIS: COMPARING AUTOCRATS IN CHAD AND SUDAN

We already reported on our new "IPE@WU Analysis" series in the summer edition of our newsletter. Nine exciting podcasts are now available on our website - and more topics are in the pipeline. Our student Sophie Palige reports on one of them in the following article.



*IPE@WU Analysis Logo*  
© WU Vienna / IPE

### **Why do some incumbents take measures to boost the economy in the months before an upcoming election while others do not?**

For our Modern Societies I seminar with Prof. Jonas Bunte, we were given the opportunity to look into the topic of Political Business Cycles. This theory aims to explain why some incumbents take government actions to promote economic growth, particularly in the months before an upcoming election. However, this theory only reflects the behavior of some politicians.

We were provided with a puzzle about two African autocrats and their re-elections to find possible explanations of why that is the case. Omar al-Bashir, who ruled Sudan, stimulated the economy by increasing government spending and investing in infrastructure shortly before the election in 2010. However, Idriss Déby, the autocrat of Chad, did not take similar measures before the election in 2006.

Sudan and Chad are among the poorest countries in the world. Both have been performing poorly in terms of economic growth and the Human Development Index. While comparing the two countries, we concluded that Sudan had continuously been doing slightly better than Chad. Moreover, both autocrats ruled for thirty years at the time of the election and came to power through a military coup. Another similarity we found was the ongoing wars both autocrats had been waging within and outside their state borders.

*Continuing:*

## COMPARING AUTOCRATS IN CHAD AND SUDAN

So, what could have been decisive factors that ultimately led to the difference in their pre-election behaviors? Chad's situation before and during the election year was chaotic. Although Idriss Déby announced that he would not be a candidate for the 2006 presidential election, he altered the constitution to stay in office on short notice. At the same time, an intrastate conflict led to the proclamation of a state of emergency while his power was simultaneously threatened by an attempted military coup shortly before the election. While Sudan faced similar crises, the incumbent seemed to have more time to take measures before the election.

Sudan's election date was set for 2009, but it had been postponed due to the lack of ballot papers and a national census. Therefore, our first explanation is that, unlike Chad, Sudan's autocrat had more time and monetary resources before the election and used them to boost the economy to obtain a greater share of votes.

The second explanation we came up with involves the arrest warrant against the Sudanese incumbent issued by the International Criminal Court in 2009. As al-Bashir had to face a trial for multiple charges, including crimes against humanity, he may have had an incentive to improve the lives of some citizens to gain popularity and support among the Sudanese population and prevent a potential coup in the near future. In contrast, Chad's incumbent did not face an international uproar right before his election.

It is important to mention at this point that both autocrats were re-elected with the majority of votes and have been accused of electoral fraud internationally. As a group, we concluded that the first explanation may be more plausible since it is based on multiple events and data. In contrast, the second one may be slightly more far-fetched.

We summarized our analysis in a podcast episode. Setting up a podcast is a creative process, so we were willing to invest more time and effort than usual for a conventional presentation. Our group dynamic was also different from our past experiences. Everyone brought forward wonderful ideas, and we genuinely had fun recording our findings. Altogether, this task was a more meaningful experience than conventional group presentations.



*Sudan - Aerial photo of the Sudanese capital Khartoum  
© Abd Almohimen Sayed, Getty Images*

## Third Mission

# IPE@WU CAREERS: HARRY BEACHCROFT-SHAW'S UNIDO EXPERIENCE

Report by  
PROF. JONAS BUNTE, PHD  
Head of the Institute

Are you a student at WU studying International Political Economy (IPE) but have yet to decide what career to pursue once you graduate? Are you looking for an opportunity to learn more about a particular field but need to know who to ask? Do you wonder what your life might look like in a specific career?



IPE@WU Careers Logo  
© WU Vienna / IPE

That's why we created IPE@WU Careers: You submit your questions anonymously, we collect and organize them, and then pose them to someone with an interesting job. In this context, we had the opportunity to interview Harry Beachcroft-Shaw. Harry works for UNIDO, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. This organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations that promotes industrial development for poverty reduction, inclusive globalization, and environmental sustainability. The purpose of UNIDO is to support countries in their efforts to achieve industrialization, which is seen as a vital driver of economic growth, job creation, and technological advancement. UNIDO works towards these goals by providing technical assistance, capacity-building, policy advice, and fostering partnerships between governments, businesses, and other stakeholders.



Harry Beachcroft-Shaw  
© Beachcroft-Shaw / IPE



Flag of UNIDO  
© Public domain



Continuing:

## HARRY BEACHCROFT-SHAW'S UNIDO EXPERIENCE

Harry's job title is that of a Project Coordinator for Technical Cooperation. Specifically, he works on development projects in Northern Iraq. His focus is on water. He is currently involved in projects related to the maintenance of a hydroelectric power dam by organizing the provision of training and technical assistance to workers. This is challenging work for two reasons. First, the conflict with ISIS scarred the region tremendously, which is why technical expertise is complex to come by. Second, access to water is a human right. Yet, the multitude of ethnic, economic, and political faultlines complicate the negotiations (think water from Turkey flowing into Kurdish and Iraqi territories).

Before the interview, we invited our students to submit questions that we would (anonymously) ask Harry. Fifty-three students raised a total of 103 questions. Among these were interesting questions, such as "What has been your most moving experience while working in Iraq or with Iraqis, and why?" or "Working for such a huge organization, isn't it too bureaucratic?" Quite a number of students were interested in how politics and economics relate to each other in the context of his work, such as "What is it like to work with political decisions by local authorities even though they might go against your personal beliefs?" or "How does politics intervene in the technical and engineering decisions your team has to make?"

**Watch the whole video on our website and social media channels soon and stay tuned for future work!**



Iraq countryside - Diyala Governorate  
© Mode21, pixabay

# Peeking into the lecture halls

## TEACHING IPE

Teaching description by  
TERESA HÜBEL, MSC  
Teaching and Research Associate

### Trade, Politics and Sustainability

**BSc Business, Economics and Social Sciences**  
**Course series Zukunftsfähiges Wirtschaften / Sustainable Economics**

Have you ever wondered why it feels like we are entering an era of de-globalization? Recently, protectionist policies have been on the rise. Most notably, the US-China trade war marks a quick reversal of liberal trade policies by the world's two biggest economies and is estimated to dampen real income in both the US and China. In 2020, the United Kingdom was the first to withdraw from the European Union. COVID prompted many countries to emphasize self-reliance more strongly and sparked debates about shortening supply chains and bringing critical industries home. What effect will these trends have on our society, our environment, and our economy?

The course "Trade, Politics, and Sustainability (PI 6137)" addresses these issues and more. We will discuss why some countries favor protectionist trade policies while others embrace free trade. Why does the government heavily subsidize some industries to better compete in international markets but not others? Why does trade impact domestic job markets and economic inequality within countries? This course seeks to answer such questions by analyzing how politics affects trade and how trade shapes politics. Specifically, we will investigate how citizens, corporations, politicians, and international organizations shape trade policies and how trade influences sustainable development issues such as inequality, inclusive economic growth, and climate change.

The course will be offered as part of "Sustainable Economics and Business II (ZUWI II)" in the upcoming summer term. It will be held by Teresa Hübel, one of our Institute's Research and Teaching Associates, and is expected to be scheduled on Tuesdays from 10 AM to 12 PM. We would love to see you there!

You want to learn more about our courses and our teaching philosophy? Visit our website:  
[www.wu.ac.at/en/ipe/teaching](http://www.wu.ac.at/en/ipe/teaching)



# Teaching News

# INSIGHTS INTO SUSTAINABLE ECONOMICS COURSE OFFERINGS

Report by  
 PROF. JONAS BUNTE, PHD  
 Head of the Institute

The Institute for International Political Economy is responsible for organizing several courses in the sequence "Zukunftsfähiges Wirtschaften" (in English, "Sustainable Economics"). Specifically, we set up the course offering for a) "Zukunftsfähiges Wirtschaften: Vertiefung und Anwendung" which is part of the new WUPol degree program, as well as b) "Zukunftsfähiges Wirtschaften (alt)" and c) "Zukunftsfähiges Wirtschaften für Jurist\*innen," both of which are part of the old "Socioeconomics" degree.

In total, 37 different courses needed to be organized across these three programs. Thanks to all the fantastic lecturers in the Department of Socioeconomics, we can offer an impressive lineup of courses. For example, in "Zukunftsfähiges Wirtschaften: Vertiefung und Anwendung" offerings include the course "The Political Economy of International Trade and Supply Chains" (taught by Dennis Kolcava) as well as "The Housing Crisis From a Social, Economic, and Political Perspective" (Katharina Litschauer).

The range of course offerings in "ZuWi 2" includes interesting topics such as "Global Circular Economy - Way Out of the Throwaway Economy?" (Anja Grüll) or "On the Future Viability of Modern Democracies" (Daniel Hausknost). Our own Teresa Hübel will offer "Trade, Politics, and Sustainability," (see page 18) which promises to be an exciting course examining the interplay between political protectionism, environmental effects, and labor standards.

For students interested in a legal perspective, ZuWi Jus will offer courses such as "UN Agenda 2030 and Paris Climate Agreement - A Coordinate System for Sustainable Navigation?" (Christoph Müller) and "Sustainability, International Trade and Investment Protection" (Stefan Mayr). We hope these courses will help meet the growing demand of students interested in how economics, politics, and the environment interact.



# Teaching News

# SETTING NEW STANDARDS: EVALUATING INNOVATIVE TEACHING AT THE INSTITUTE

Report by

MATTHIAS KOUREK, MA

Administrative Assistant

In the summer edition of our newsletter, we reported that our team has been setting new standards in our courses' creative and innovative design based on teaching concepts we have been developing since January this year. In addition to the specific course content, an essential part of our teaching work is the regular evaluation of our teaching quality.

These evaluations are based on standardized university questionnaires and were supplemented by the Institute for International Political Economy with additional questions about the teaching concepts and the implementation of the course. In this way, we want to assess how students receive our understanding of innovative teaching and whether they perceive our courses as a meaningful and enriching experience.

In the summer edition of the newsletter, we presented the first results of these evaluations for the courses of our two colleagues, Ashley Simpson and Sidan Raeskyesa, from the summer semester of 2023 in a series of basic graphs.

Since then, we have made further edits and set up a new section on our website where we will report the current evaluations of our courses after each semester. Quantitative analyses are supplemented by testimonials from some students.

**Take a look: [www.wu.ac.at/en/ipe/teaching/teaching-quality](http://www.wu.ac.at/en/ipe/teaching/teaching-quality)**



# Teaching IPE - Pedagogic Insight

## FROM THEORY TO TIKTOK: HOW STUDENTS VISUALISE COMPLEX IDEAS IN ECONOMICS AND POLITICS

There are specific goals behind each assignment we ask our students to complete. One of our more creative tasks is the short video. Students pick a fundamental concept vital to understanding more complex issues in politics and economics and create a quick, fun, one-minute TikTok-style video illustrating the topic.

There are several motivations behind this assignment. First, one must understand the basics of any field before being able to explain complicated processes. For example, to understand banks' regulation preferences, you must first understand how a bank makes profits.

Second, technology and communications competencies are increasingly important. Many job positions require some familiarity with social media, and all positions require effective communication. The abilities to think creatively and to communicate academic topics to a lay audience are essential for students to develop.

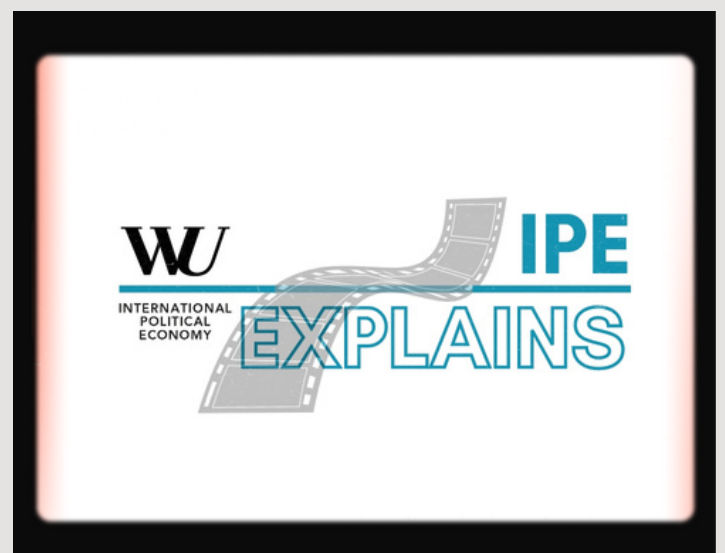
So far, students have taken on the challenge of this assignment with gusto. Students have used their pets to illustrate political business cycles and government responses to banking crises, hand-drawn digital art to explain FinTech regulation, and backyard barbeques to describe stock market crashes. Some of our students' videos will be posted on our website, so stay tuned!

Teaching insight by  
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Ashley B. Simpson, MSc.  
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# IPE on the Road

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM IPES' GLOBAL CONFERENCE IN D.C.

Conference report by  
PROF. JONAS B. BUNTE, PHD  
Head of the Institute

The International Political Economy Society (IPES) is dedicated to promoting an in-depth understanding of the complex interplay between politics and economics at the global level. Its members study issues in International Political Economy, such as trade, development, and global governance. It aims to provide valuable insights to policymakers, academics, and the general public.

I attended IPES' annual conference in Washington, DC, at Georgetown University. It was a fascinating event, as about 100 scholars presented cutting-edge work on issues such as "Offshoring And The Decline Of Labor Unions: How Globalization Fosters Technological Change" (Erica Owen and Sojun Park ), "What Do Voters Expect From Populist Parties?" (Evelyne Hubscher and Thomas Sattler), and "Hoarding By Beijing: Understanding China's Rare Earth Industrial Policy And Its Global Impact" (Zenobia Chan, Noel Foster, Kwok-Kin Lui).

I presented my paper, coauthored with Patrick Bayer, titled "Carbon Disclosure and Governmental Kickbacks: Evidence From The US EXIM Bank." The paper examines the possibility that it is not clean but dirty firms that reveal the level of their emissions. Higher-polluting firms do this to receive monetary benefits from governments, which use export credits to secure jobs for their voters.

Most importantly, since the conference took place in the capital of the United States, we had the opportunity to interact with two high-level officials of the Biden Administration. Ambassador Jayme White, Deputy United States Trade Representative, and Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade, Marisa Lago, visited the conference and carefully answered all kinds of questions about President Biden's plans for industrial policy, how the rise of China shapes his re-election campaign, and how the increasing polarization of voters within the United States presents challenges for governing effectively.



U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.  
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Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.  
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## IPE on the Road

# ON THE ROAD IN WITTEN: MEETING POLITICAL ECONOMY RESEARCHERS FROM GERMANY

*Conference report by*  
PROF. JONAS B. BUNTE, PHD  
*Head of the Institute*



University of Witten/Herdecke  
© IPE / Bunte

I also had the opportunity to visit the University of Witten/Herdecke in September 2023. The "Section for Political Economy" of the German Association for Political Science held its annual meeting at the University Witten/Herdecke. The conference was a great introduction to all the excellent work done at German universities, as evidenced by panels on "The Politics of Precarious Work," "Finance and the Green Transition," as well as "Sustainability, Growth, and Geopolitics." I presented my paper on "Politics and Export Credit Agency Support for Women-Owned Businesses," coauthored with Ashley Simpson.

Interestingly, travel back to Vienna was challenging. The conference ended on a Saturday afternoon, and Witten/Herdecke is in the Ruhrpott in Germany. Soccer holds immense cultural significance in that region of Germany, transcending mere sport to become an essential element of local identity. The fervent support for football clubs like Borussia Dortmund, Duisburg, Fortuna Düsseldorf, or FC Schalke 04 is deeply ingrained in the social fabric, fostering a sense of communal pride and unity. Match days serve as celebrations, where the passion for the sport reflects the love for the game and symbolizes the resilience and solidarity of the Ruhrpott community. Not surprisingly, trains were packed with fans of Bochum and Dortmund, both of which had a home game that afternoon.

## Research News

# NEW BACHELOR'S THESIS TOPICS

Report by

ASHLEY B. SIMPSON, MSC

Teaching and Research Associate

**Are you a bachelor's student in need of a thesis topic? If so, look at the Teaching – Theses page on our website! We have updated the page to include numerous puzzles that could be the basis for a bachelor's thesis. These puzzles do not have an answer yet, so they are perfect topics for students who want their thesis to produce new knowledge using rigorous empirical methods.**

The puzzles connect politics to economic issues, including foreign direct investment (FDI), FinTech, banks, stock markets, and government policies. For example, why does India succeed in attracting greenfield FDI while Indonesia remains an unpopular destination for these projects? Why did peripheral markets such as India, the Philippines, and Indonesia experience an immense capital outflow after the COVID-19 pandemic, whereas China did not see much capital being withdrawn from its market? Why does Scotland's capital, Edinburgh, ban the operation of strip clubs under a 2019 regional law change, while the city of Glasgow does not? Why have China's newer Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) included more protection for international investors, while India is adopting more protectionist policies that could steer investors away? Why did the Austrian government bail out Hypo Alpe Adria with investments worth billions but accept the insolvency of Sberbank Europe AG?



**Are you still looking for  
INSPIRATION?**



**If any of these puzzles pique your interest, please read our guidelines for writing a thesis with our Institute and email us! We look forward to hearing from you.**

Looking for inspiration for Bachelor's theses

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# LOOKING AHEAD - IMPORTANT DATE



**18th January 2024**

**Pizza, Politics & (Motion) Picture**  
Sixth Edition

## *Scientist's joke*

*What do you get when you cross a mosquito  
with a mountain climber?*

*Nothing. You can't cross a vector with a  
scaler.*

# Get in Touch

## CLICK & FOLLOW

Are you still looking for inspiration for your bachelor's thesis?

We have compiled a list of potential topics and research questions for bachelor's theses that can help you find your way.



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