



# Center for Study of Public Choice

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Annual Report: 2020-2021

## From the Director



When I wrote last year's message, COVID-19 had killed more than five hundred thousand people globally. As I write today, COVID-19 has killed more than six hundred thousand Americans alone and at least four million people globally. Total deaths are probably much higher than four million as many deaths are now coming from India and sub-Saharan Africa where they are under-estimated.

In the United States today vaccines are widely available. It has been a long and frustrating road to get to this point, however, and one which verifies many insights from public choice. Early in the crisis I argued that investing in vaccines was the world's easiest cost-benefit test.

Well, every government around the world failed that test. Governments in Europe dickered for weeks to save a few dollars on a \$20 vaccine that was worth thousands! The US's Operation Warp Speed performed the best but even the US should have invested much more in accelerating vaccines. Once vaccines were available we should have moved to first doses first (as Britain and Canada did, speeding up vaccinations and savings lives) and we should have investigated fractional dosing.

Trump's mishandling of the pandemic makes it easy to blame him and call it a day. But the rot is deep. Our leaders failed but so did many of our institutions. The CDC failed in its primary mission to protect the United States from a pandemic. Indeed, the CDC often slowed our response. Why? Why was the Strategic National Stockpile allowed to wither away? Why did the NIH not quickly fund COVID research giving us better insight on the virus and its spread? Why were the states so moribund and listless? Why was the FDA so slow to approve rapid antigen tests?

Scholars at the Center for Study of Public Choice have much to say about designing institutions that can help us to rebuild on a more solid foundation. In his book *10% Less Democracy*, Garrett Jones makes the case for more independent agencies. The Federal Reserve, for example, is governed by a seven-member board each of whom is appointed to a single 14- year term, making it rare for a President to be able to appoint a majority of the board. Moreover, since members cannot be reappointed there is less incentive to curry political favor. The structure of the Federal Reserve has enabled it to reject democratic pressures for inflationary stimulus, at least relative to less independent structures. Should the CDC be structured similarly? But then how to confine CDC authority to truly necessary tools to fight a pandemic? The balancing of independence and accountability isn't easy, but we need to revisit questions like this if we are to be truly prepared for the next emergency.

Many more accomplishments from our faculty are detailed in the pages herein.

*Alex Tabarrok*

August 2021

\*Cover art: The Assembly Room of Independence Hall in Philadelphia where the U.S. Constitution was debated and signed.

## Spotlight on Jonathan Schulz

**Q: I want to ask how we became so WEIRD, but before doing so can you explain what it means to be Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic, and how and why these attributes cluster?**

**A:** A large body of research has shown that there exists substantial psychological variation across the world and WEIRD societies often anchor at the extreme of those global behavioral distributions. For example, WEIRD people are more individualistic, less conformists, rely more heavily on analytic thinking over more holistic approaches, prioritize impersonal pro-sociality over interpersonal relationships, reveal less in-group loyalty, and nepotism.



*Jonathan Schulz*

So how did this variation emerge? For several years I had been traveling around the world conducting economic experiments to capture impersonal cooperation. A striking pattern emerged: a longer exposure to the medieval Catholic Church was associated with higher cooperation while political institutions such as socialism had less predictive power. At the same time, societies characterized by high levels of cousin marriage and the presence of clans and lineages showed lower levels of cooperation. This got me interested in the hypothesis that the medieval Church's marriage regulations that included prohibitions on polygamy, divorce, and cousin marriage dissolved European clan-based societies and created an almost unique family system in which the nuclear family dominates. Freed from the collective demands of clans, tribes, and lineages people's psychology became more individualistic, impartial pro-social, and less nepotistic. Teaming up with Joe Henrich, Duman Bahrami-Rad, and Jonathan Beauchamp we tested this hypothesis.

**Q: Ok, now you have a theory about WEIRD people, namely that WEIRD psychology is a product of the ban on cousin marriage or more generally related marriage by the Church in Western Europe. First, what do the basic data say and what is the evidence for the theory?**

**A:** Across the world medieval Church exposure is associated with weaker kinship ties. This holds not only across countries, but also across pre-industrial ancestral ethnicities and even across regions within European countries. At the same time, weaker kinship intensity is associated with a more individualistic-impersonal psychology. Italy is a nice illustration of these relations. Even though South Italy is associated with strong Catholicism now, it only became integrated into the realm of the Catholic Church relatively late, missing out a large part of the medieval Church's prohibitions. Today the South of Italy has a less individualistic-impersonal psychology and the data also shows comparably higher 20<sup>th</sup>-century cousin marriage rates in South compared to North Italy.

**Q: Cousin marriage remains high in many parts of the world including the Middle East and parts of India. What drives cousin marriage. Will these change over time?**

**A:** That's a tough question to answer. Social norms that govern marriage are deeply rooted in societies' culture and often times there are functional reasons for its presence. For example, cousin marriage allows to keep the property within the family and – absent functioning government – strong extended families provide a safety net.

## Spotlight on Jonathan Schulz

In Europe, religious proscriptions changed marriage norms in a process that likely took many centuries. China is an example where the one-child policy likely also strengthened the nuclear family. Yet, it is important to keep in mind that laws and regulations that destroy extended families can imply considerable hardship on people since it may deprive them of their safety net.

### **Q: Is this a barrier to democracy today?**

**A:** Economists put a lot of emphasize on formal institutions. But these institutions rest on culture and informal norms. For functioning democratic institutions, cooperation across the boundaries of in-groups is essential. Yet, loyalty demands of tight family networks hinder this form of non-kin-based cooperation. Empirically, the rate of cousin marriage is a major predictor of democratic institutions. Yet, similar relation can already be found in the medieval France. In the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century the Church was not yet a cohesive unit and local marriage regulation varied. Those areas in France that were more strongly exposed to marriage prohibitions were more likely to form local participatory institutions as captured by medieval cities with self-governance.

### **Q: Many years ago I wrote a blog post saying that with autonomous cars we were soon going to have to embed our decisions to the famous trolley problem in computer code so cars would know what to do when faced with driving a car with a single passenger over a cliff or hitting 3 pedestrians in the roadway. Working with co-authors you gathered nearly 40 million decisions from millions of people on how they would solve these problems. What did you find?**

**A:** Yes, with autonomous cars these moral dilemmas will have to be addressed. For example, should self-driving cars consider the age, gender, or status of people? Are humans more important than animals? Overall, we found strong preferences for sparing humans over animals, a greater number of people over a few, and the young over the old.

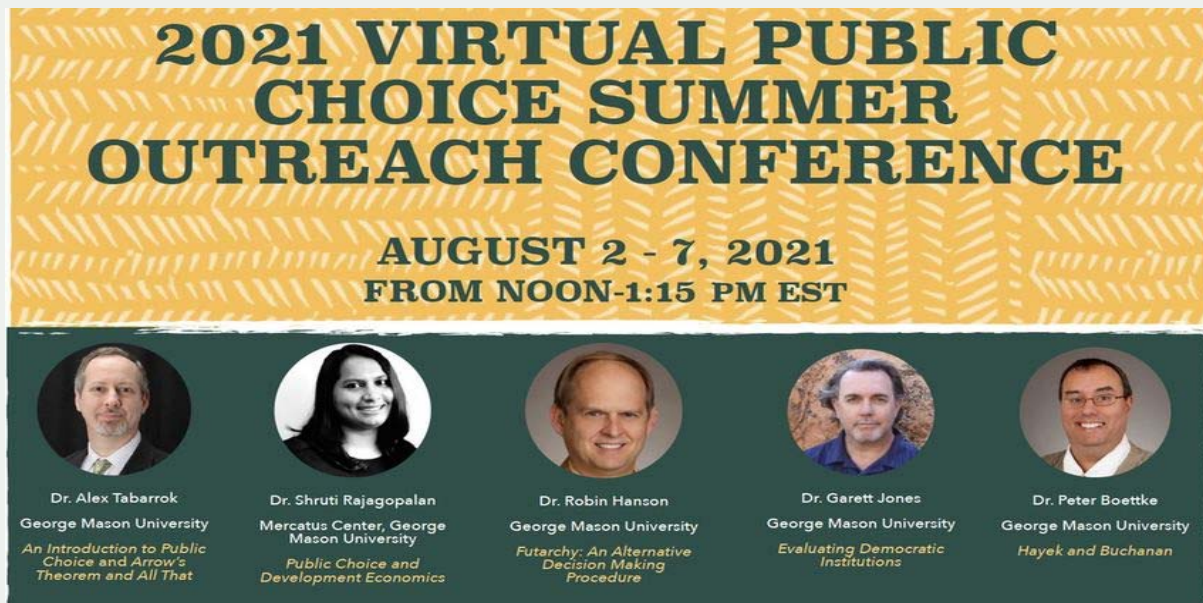
### **Q: So are WEIRD people also different on AI ethics?**

**A:** Yes! People in WEIRD societies state a stronger preference to spare a greater number of people over few, while people in more collectivistic societies, i.e. societies that emphasize respect towards elders, show a relatively weaker preference for sparing the young. Participants from countries with weak institutions are more tolerant of pedestrians who cross illegally, while participants in countries with strong rule of law state stronger preferences to spare the lawful. People in Latin American countries seem to value animals to a higher degree.

### **Q: What are you working on now?**

**A:** I am fascinated by the role of kinship or relational networks. How do these networks impact psychology, culture, and what is their downstream impact on political institutions and economic prosperity? Currently, we are investigating the role of relational and kin networks on innovation in the US and we'll dive into the role of relational networks on populism and attitudes towards liberty.





Outreach remained virtual in 2021 – but in an exciting new live format. Participants from all over the world logged in each day to engage with the lectures and participate in the discussions afterward. In the format the conference was able to be held for a week, giving the group more opportunity to engage with the Public Choice-related material.

While we missed the live version of the conference, the virtual aspect of this year's meeting let us expand to 63 participants from all over the world including Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Columbia, India, Pakistan, Iran and elsewhere.

Here are just a few comments from student attendees:

*It was extremely valuable for me as a young student to be able to interact with great scholars of George Mason and be able to ask questions. This, along with the interaction of other people created a very virtuous experience in which I learned a lot about public choice and political economy. – Attendee*

*I thoroughly enjoyed the conference. The content was engaging and I'm leaving with a bunch of further reading recommendations to explore which is exactly what I wanted out of this conference. – Attendee*



Alex Tabarrok lecturing at the 2021 Outreach Seminar.

# The Center for Study of Public Choice Seminar Series

**Fall  
2020**

Date	Name	Affiliation	Presentation
9/9	Marco Tabellini,	<a href="#">Harvard University</a>	<a href="#">Discrimination, Disenfranchisement and African American WWII Military Enlistment</a>
9/30	Luigi Guiso	<a href="#">Einaudi Institute for Economics and Finance</a>	<a href="#">From Patriarchy to Partnership: Gender Equality and Household Finance</a>
10/14	Jean-Philippe Platteau	<a href="#">Université de Namur</a>	<a href="#">Behind the Veil of Cultural Persistence: Marriage and Divorce in a Migrant Community</a>
10/28	Tim Besley	<a href="#">London School of Economics and Political Science</a>	The Political Economy of Lockdown: Does Free Media Make a Difference?
11/4	Jean-Paul Carvalho	<a href="#">University of California, Irvine</a>	<a href="#">Identity and Underrepresentation: Interactions between Race and Gender</a>
11/11	Katia Zhuravskaya	<a href="#">Paris School of Economics</a>	
12/2	Chenzi Xu	<a href="#">Stanford University</a>	<a href="#">Reshaping Global Trade: The Immediate and Long-Run Effects of Bank Failures</a>
12/9	Mara Squicciarini	<a href="#">Bocconi University</a>	<a href="#">Technology Adoption and Productivity Growth: Evidence from Industrialization in France</a>
12/16	Volha Charnysh	<a href="#">Massachusetts Institute of Technology</a>	<a href="#">Accountability in Markovian Elections</a>
3/31	Samuel Bazzi	<a href="#">University of California, San Diego</a>	<a href="#">Explaining outgroup bias in weak states: religion and legibility in the 1891-92 Russian famine</a>

# The Center for Study of Public Choice Seminar Series

**Spring  
2021**

Date	Name	Affiliation	Presentation
1/27	Dan Bogart	<a href="#">UC Irvine</a>	<a href="#">Organizations and efficiency in lighthouses: The English case revisited</a>
2/3	Andreas Ferrara	<a href="#">University of Pittsburgh</a>	<a href="#">Discrimination, Migration, and Economic Outcomes: Evidence from World War I</a>
2/10	Hilton Root	<a href="#">George Mason University</a>	<a href="#">The Embeddedness of Social Institutions: Networks of Church and State in China and the Europe</a>
2/17	David de la Croix	<a href="#">UCLouvain (Belgium)</a>	<a href="#">Nepotism vs. Intergenerational Transmission of Human Capital in Academia (1088-1800)</a>
2/24	Maria Petrova	<a href="#">Universitat Pompeu Fabra</a>	<a href="#">Bombs, Broadcasts and Resistance: Allied Intervention and Domestic Opposition to the Nazi Regime during World War II</a>
3/3	Alexey Makarin	<a href="#">Einaudi Institute for Economics and Finance (EIEF)</a>	<a href="#">Conflict and Inter-Group Trade: Evidence from the 2014 Russia-Ukraine Crisis</a>
3/10	Jared Rubin	<a href="#">Chapman University</a>	<a href="#">Culture, Institutions &amp; the Long Divergence</a>
3/17	Johannes Buggle	<a href="#">University of Lausanne</a>	<a href="#">The Refugee's Dilemma: Evidence from Jewish Migration Out of Nazi Germany</a>
3/24	John Duggan	<a href="#">University of Rochester</a>	<a href="#">Accountability in Markovian Elections</a>
3/31	Samuel Bazzi	<a href="#">University of California, San Diego</a>	<a href="#">Islam and the State: Religious Education in the Age of Mass Schooling</a>
4/7	Leah Boustan	<a href="#">Princeton University</a>	Automation before robots: Machine tools and the US labor market
4/14	Vicky Fouka	<a href="#">Stanford University</a>	<a href="#">Racial Diversity, Electoral Preferences, and the Supply of Policy: The Great Migration and Civil Rights</a>
4/21	Marianne Wanamaker	<a href="#">University of Tennessee</a>	Black Americans' Landholding and Economic Mobility after Emancipation: New Evidence on the Significance of 40 Acres
4/28	Mara Squicciarini	<a href="#">Bocconi University</a>	<a href="#">Technology Adoption and Productivity Growth: Evidence from Industrialization in France</a>

### Alex Tabarrok

#### [J&J Covid-19 Vaccine Pause Poses Another Test for Balancing Pandemic Risks](#)

April 14, 2021 – *The Wall Street Journal*

“It’s very clear that the dangers of Covid are much larger than the dangers of the J&J vaccine or the AstraZeneca vaccine for that matter,” said Alex Tabarrok, an economist at George Mason University who has advocated for bolder approval and distribution of vaccines. “I worry that the public will confuse a pause to mean that the FDA thinks people shouldn’t take the J&J vaccine.”

#### [NYT considers Dr. Tabarrok's critique of regulatory caution in the Covid response](#)

April 1, 2021 – *New York Times*

Tabarrok praised in New York Times: Are We Way Too Timid in the Way We Fight Covid-19?

“The through line of Tabarrok’s critique is that regulators and politicians have been too cautious, too reluctant to upend old institutions and protocols, so fearful of the consequences of change that they’ve permitted calamities through inaction.”

#### [Alex Tabarrok on 'First Doses First'](#)

April 2021 – *Reason*

“When you push out the first doses faster, you get to herd immunity faster. So the more you spread out the first doses, the slower the transmission rate of the virus is, because now fewer people are getting the disease, and it looks then that fewer people will be transmitting the disease.”

#### [Tyler Cowen and Alex Tabarrok ranked among the world's most influential economists](#)

August 2020 – *Richtopia*,

“I am happy to see the world taking greater notice of the accomplishments of George Mason University economics, ... And I am honored to be one part of that. That said, I don't believe in getting too caught up in any particular possible praise of oneself. Mostly, receipt of such praise has a long-term negative influence on critical thinking.” – Tyler Cowen

“It’s nice to be recognized, ... but a quick look at U.S. policy belies the idea of influence! Most of all, I appreciate the spirit of open inquiry and free expression at George Mason University that has made it possible for the Mason [Department of Economics](#) to be one of the most influential in the world.” – Alex Tabarrok

#### Opinion

### Are We Much Too Timid in the Way We Fight Covid-19?

The debate among doctors, epidemiologists and economists is still going strong.



## Bryan Caplan

### [Capitalism: What Is It?](#)

June 24, 2021 – *NPR*

Bryan Caplan discusses capitalism on *NPR*'s "THROUGHLINE."

"[T]here are a lot of problems with the existing systems, but the most pressing problems really come down to having too little capitalism, not too much. And this is a system that produces, for all of its faults, an enormous mountain of stuff at very low prices, which enables us to go and live - livings - to have living standards that are far beyond almost anything that even the monarchs of earlier periods could ever have hoped to have."



### [Exploring the economic argument for a return to open US borders](#)

June 16, 2021 – *PBS News Hour*

Paul Solman interviews Bryan Caplan for the *PBS* series "Making Sense," on the economic debate around fully opening the country's borders.

"Right now, immigration laws are trapping enormous amounts of human talent in low-productivity countries. If you don't know anything else about economics, just learn this: The secret of mass consumption is mass production. Countries that produce a lot of stuff have a high living standard. Countries that produce a small amount of stuff have a low living standard. That is why people want to live in rich countries, because production per person is high in rich countries."

## Robin Hanson

### [How Far Away Are Expansionist Aliens?](#)

December 27, 2020 – *Science, Technology & the Future*

"Robin discusses his new model for predicting how far (in space & time) expansionist (or aggressive or grabby (GC)) alien civs might be. He describes his median estimate that (conditional on our survival and continued expansionist growth), we will meet this kind of alien in approximately 500 million years."

## Peter Leeson

### [To solve U.S. hacker problem, look to how we handled pirates in the past](#)

May 17, 2021 – *The Baltimore Sun*

"In his magnificent book 'The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates,' Peter Leeson describes the incredibly sophisticated ethical (and even constitutional) systems created by pirates to regulate and guide their profession. 'Pirates' system of constitutional democracy predated constitutional democracy in France, Spain, the United States, and arguably even England,' Leeson writes."

### Donald Boudreaux

#### Donald Boudreaux and Douglas Irwin on free-trade tips from 1846

Ending tariffs on grain lowered food prices and unleashed economic growth—and offers lessons for today



#### [Boudreaux co-authors article on free trade tips from the 1840s and repeal of the Corn Laws](#)

June 25, 2021 – *The Economics*

“Ending tariffs on grain lowered food prices and unleashed economic growth—and offers lessons for today.”

#### [Will 2020 Prove to Be the Beginning of the End of Modernity?](#)

June 10, 2021 – *Chicago's Morning Answer*

“Modernity is impossible without widespread peaceful engagement with strangers. And such engagement is impossible without mutual trust. Yet abruptly starting 16 months ago, we were told to abandon our modern, liberal sensibilities.”

#### [America Has Abandoned Reason for Fear](#)

February 17, 2021 – *Kibbe on Liberty Podcast*

Dr. Boudreaux discusses Covid-19 response and America's the lack of rational risk assessment.

### Tyler Cowen

#### [Overrated/Underrated After The Great Stagnation](#)

December 21, 2020 – *NPR*

Tyler discusses whether or not this period of stagnation is “coming to a close.”

“Most books will be overrated in this world. Books are static, which is fine. They can communicate enduring truths. But what you ought to care about is figuring out what the heck is going on. So I'm recommending that people consume more YouTube videos because those are updated much more frequently than our books.”

podcasts ▶ business

#### The Indicator from Planet Money

From NPR



#### Overrated/Underrated After The Great Stagnation

There's no denying that 2020 has been a rough year, but economist Tyler Cowen brings the show a source of hope: the possible return of productivity growth. And he plays overrated/underrated! | Support public radio here.

#### [The pandemic is rewriting the rules of science. But at what cost?](#)

October 19, 2020 – *The Washington Post*

*The Washington Post* cites Cowen and Fast Grants for speeding funds to support Covid research projects.

“He identified philanthropic funding and put together a panel of 20 anonymous reviewers, half women, half people of color, who promise decisions within two weeks. Out of about 5,000 applications, Fast Grants has been able to underwrite almost 200 projects, Cowen said, typically with \$10,000 to \$500,000.”

## 2020–2021 Center for Study of Public Choice Doctorates



**Joshua Bedi**

Defended the dissertation, “Immigration and Entrepreneurship.” Dr. Bryan Caplan chaired the committee.



**David C. Coker**

Defended the dissertation, “From Economics to Social Philosophy: The Foundations of John Rawls’s Contribution” Dr. David Levy chaired the committee.



**Christopher R. Fleming**

Defended the dissertation, “Talking Points: G. Warren Nutter and the Role of Discussion in a Knightian Foreign Policy and Political Economy.” Dr. David Levy chaired the committee.



**Scott King**

Defended the dissertation, “Political Economy and the Predatory State.” Dr. Peter Leeson chaired the committee.

**Edward Austin Middleton**

Defended the dissertation, “The Problem of Sympathy-seeking Projectors: Adam Smith’s Support of Usury Laws as Prudential Credit Rationing.” Dr. David Levy chaired the committee.



**John A. Vandivier**

Defended the dissertation, “Three Essays on the Economics of Postsecondary Alternative Learning.” Dr. David Levy chaired the committee.

## Focus on Faculty



Don Boudreaux

In May 2021 my book (with Randall Holcombe), [\*The Essential James Buchanan\*](#) was published (by Canada's Fraser Institute). My main work – in addition to teaching and much public speaking – is a [weekly column](#) that I write for the *American Institute for Economic Research*, as well as a reasonably popular economics blog ([Café Hayek](#)). In November, my paper "[The Case for and against a Policy of Unilateral Trade Liberalization](#)," was published by the Mercatus Center. I did a ten-part "[Ask Us Anything](#)" video series, on Adam Smith, for the Mercatus Center.

In the past 12 months I've had op-eds published in the [Wall Street Journal](#), [The Economist](#) (with Douglas Irwin), and the [Detroit News](#) (with Steven Horwitz).



Bryan Caplan

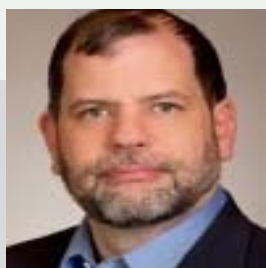
**Bryan Caplan** had another successful year. Publicity for the *New York Times* Bestselling *Open Borders: The Science and Ethics of Immigration* continued apace. Most notably, PBS ran a full 8-minute segment on the book in June, hosted by Paul Solman. Caplan's recurring public debates on "Capitalism versus Socialism" also paved the way for his appearance on NPR's hour-length panel on "Capitalism: What Is It?" opposite socialists Vivek Chibber and Kristen Ghodsee.

Caplan's main project this year has been writing a second non-fiction graphic novel on housing regulation, tentative titled *Build, Baby, Build: The Science and Ethics of Housing*. The script and storyboards are now about two-thirds done, and his new illustrator, Ady Branzei, has finished drafts of about eighty pages. This book will introduce readers to the last two-decades worth of research on the immense economic damage of zoning and land-use policies. As Caplan will explain, these policies do not merely greatly inflate the cost-of-living in America's most desirable locations; they also sharply reduce workforce productivity by discouraging migration to high-productivity regions of the country. His hope is that a graphic format will "make seen the unseen" – to help readers appreciate the massive economic benefits of housing deregulation. Caplan has signed a contract with the Cato Institute to publish the book; if successful, this will be the first in an entire library of Cato educational graphic novels, each of which he will write or edit.

Caplan also continued writing a new academic book, *Poverty: Who to Blame*. *Poverty* combines economic philosophy with economics, sociology, psychology, social work, history, and anthropology to answer some timeless questions, including "Why does poverty persist?," "Who is morally responsible for poverty's continued existence?," and "What, if anything, can be done about it?" The book begins by reviving and defending the classic distinction between the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor. Then it will apply the distinction to the real world, focusing on bad economic policy in the Third World, immigration restrictions (and housing regulation) in the First World, and irresponsible



Last, Caplan has launched an ambitious project to publish *eight* new books collecting his best blog posts from 2005-present. The tentative titles: *Labor Econ Versus the World: Essays on the World's Greatest Market*; *Voters as Mad Scientists: Essays on Political Irrationality*; *How Evil Are Politicians?: Essays on Demagoguery*; *Don't Be a Feminist: Essays on Justice*; *You Will Not Stampede Me: Essays on Non-Conformism*; *Self-Help Is Like a Vaccine: Essays on Living Better*; *You Have No Right to Your Culture: Essays on the Human Condition*; and *Pro-Market AND Pro-Business: Essays on Laissez-Faire*. Other collections of blogged essays have been doing well lately, most notably the five-volumes released by Less Wrong, and Caplan is hoping this market continues to flourish. Typesetting on the first volume, edited by the University of Chicago's Jack Pfeffercorn, is already underway.



Tyler Cowen

### Written work

This year I finished a new book manuscript on the economics of talent, co-authored with venture capitalist Daniel Gross. We now have a contract with St. Martins and the book is due out May of 2022.

Alex Tabarrok and I finished work on the fifth edition of our *Modern Principles: Microeconomics*, and also *Macroeconomics*, with Worth Macmillan. This text is not just a rehash of the

other books on the market but rather it attempts a comprehensive statement of micro and macroeconomics from a "GMU point of view." That book is now actively on the market, in both physical and electronic forms.

I have continued as the regular main economics columnist at *Bloomberg Opinion*, where I publish a column twice a week. For a full listing and reproduction of these, see [https://www.bloomberg.com/view/contributors/AS6n2t3d\\_iA/tyler-cowen](https://www.bloomberg.com/view/contributors/AS6n2t3d_iA/tyler-cowen).

### Other

I continued the *Conversations with Tyler* series, with a new podcast coming out every two weeks. Some of the recent guests have been Mark Zuckerberg, Patrick Collison, Samantha Power, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, Melissa Dell, Nathan Nunn, Paul Romer, Glen Weyl, Philip Tetlock, Ross Douthat, Ezra Klein, Reid Hoffman, Daron Acemoglu, John McWhorter, and Nicholas Bloom, all well-known researchers and public figures. This year the series also promoted our own Garrett Jones. The series has received coverage in virtually every major media outlet and has received several million hits on-line, with a rapidly growing trajectory of interest.

I have continued my directorship at Mercatus, and this year our regular budget now exceeds \$32 million. We support numerous faculty in economics, and over 60 graduate students, making us the largest supporter of graduate students at GMU. Our various



academic outreach programs bring GMU economists and economics to several-hundred graduate students each year.

I also created a new program called Fast Grants, at the Mercatus Center, to support biomedical research directed at fighting Covid-19. The purpose of the program is to show that rigorous, refereed grant decisions can be made in a matter of days when the institutional will is there to do so. We have so far made over 260 major grants and raised over \$50 million for this endeavor, further details can be found on the website <https://fastgrants.org/>; here is [a full accounting of the project](#). I also had the opportunity to present the management of Fast Grants to Harvard Business School.

### Blogging

I have continued the daily blogging of economic and other ideas for [www.marginalrevolution.com](http://www.marginalrevolution.com), which is generally considered the leading economics blog. Our readership remains robust, and we have recently expanded our audience to the new site [marginalrevolution.bulletin.com](http://marginalrevolution.bulletin.com), while continuing our old location.

I also have used **MR** to promote the research being done at GMU by many other faculty members and graduate students, including Daniel Klein, Mark Koyama, Noel Johnson, David Levy, Bryan Caplan and others. It has become perhaps the world's biggest "window" onto our world.

### On-line education

This last year saw the continuation of MRUniversity.com, a site for the on-line teaching of economics, in conjunction with Alex Tabarrok. We now have a dozen or so classes up and running, including Development Economics, The Eurozone, Economics of the Media, The Economy of Mexico, International Economics, and International Finance, among others. We now have a complete and finished Principles of Microeconomics class up and running, and now Principles of Macro is finished, too. We have about 300,000 YouTube subscribers and last year over 12 million unique views.



Tim Groseclose

During the 2020-21 academic year, Tim Groseclose published two peer-reviewed articles. The first, "Do Humans Rationally Discount Biased Signals?", examines data from an experiment to measure the extent to which people discount things like news reports from a biased journalist. It was published in the *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*. The second, "One-Sided Bargaining over a Finite Set of Alternatives," is a game-theoretic model that examines situations such as the bargaining process between the president and the Senate over cabinet and judicial appointments. It is forthcoming in the *Journal of Public Economics Theory*. He published an opinion piece with talk-radio host Dennis Prager. The piece, "What Will Happen if the Democrats Pack the Supreme Court?", was published on the web site *RealClearPolitics.com* as well as several other outlets that publish Prager's syndicated

column. Groseclose's research was discussed in several media outlets and in a judicial opinion by DC Circuit Judge Laurence Sliberman.

Publications:

**"Do Humans Rationally Discount Biased Signals? Evidence from the Crawford-Sobel Game,"** *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 186 (June): 306-17. 2021.

**"One-Sided Bargaining over a Finite Set of Alternatives,"** *Journal of Public Economics Theory*. Forthcoming.

**"What Will Happen If the Democrats Pack the Supreme Court,"** (with Dennis Prager), *RealClearPolitics.com* and several other outlets that distribute Prager's column. October 13, 2020. [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2020/10/13/what\\_will\\_happen\\_if\\_the\\_democrats\\_pack\\_the\\_supreme\\_court\\_144429.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2020/10/13/what_will_happen_if_the_democrats_pack_the_supreme_court_144429.html).



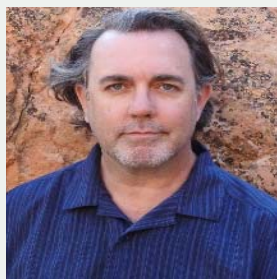
Robin Hanson

This year Robin Hanson published in *Foundations of Physics* on incentives for computing now versus much later in the long-term future of the universe. He also published in *Economics Letters* on empirical trends in automation over the last twenty years, finding no change in which job features predict automation, and no relation between changes in automation and changes in pay or employment. Professor Hanson began a new book on the great unrealized potential of paying for results, in medicine, law, forecasting, and much more.



Ron Heiner

Professor Heiner continues writing a book about players who cooperate contingently in one-shot Prisoners' Dilemmas, depending on signals detected while communicating with their partners. His analysis generalizes signal detection theory from behavioral psychology, by allowing simultaneously shifting signal distributions, caused by contingent cooperators detecting signals more or less cautiously (which affects their probability of cooperating with other players). His analysis shows how the probability of cooperating depends on the four prisoners' dilemma payoffs: the "temptation payoff" (T) when one player defects on another player's cooperation, the "cooperation payoff" (R) when both players cooperate, the "penalty payoff" (P) when both players defect, and the "sucker's payoff" (S) when one player's cooperation is defected on by another player.



Garrett Jones

Professor Jones's latest book, *10% Less Democracy: Why You Should Trust Elites a Little More and the Masses a Little Less*, was translated into Korean, and awaits translation into Ukrainian. *10% Less Democracy* continued to receive strong media attention over the last year, including a segment on Public Radio International's *The World*, a second column by Janan Ganesh of the *Financial Times*, and some critical coverage in *Reason*.

Jones also published a short piece critiquing the econometrics of immigration studies; the paper was coauthored with recent GMU graduate Ryan Fraser, entitled "Immigration and Institutions: The Place of Simpler Evidence." Jones continues work on the third book in his *Singapore Trilogy*; this book focuses on empirical evidence for the cultural persistence that appears to underlie many nation-level economic outcomes.

### Publication

Jones, Garrett, and Ryan Fraser (2021). "Immigration's Effect on Institutional Quality: The Place of Simpler Evidence." *Econ Journal Watch* 18, no. 1.

### Media Appearances

"Many Politicians Claim That Increased Spending Sparks Economic Growth. Here's Why That's Misleading." *Reason*, June 2021.

"US could stand to dial down democracy, says economist." Public Radio International's *The World*, April 2021.

"Democracy works better when there is less of it." *Financial Times*, September 2020.



Noel Johnson

While this was an extraordinary year, Noel managed, with the help of his extremely hard-working and intelligent coauthors, to publish three papers. "The Effects of Historical Pandemics: The Black Death" (with Remi Jedwab and Mark Koyama) is forthcoming in the *Journal of Economic Literature*. It surveys what we know about the economic and social impacts of the 14<sup>th</sup>-century bacterial infection known as the Black Death. This plague killed about half the population of Europe within three years and had profound impacts on, among other things, the relative price of labor to capital and the likelihood that Jewish communities would be blamed for the disease and persecuted. In another paper, "Medieval Cities Through the Lens of Urban Economic Theories" (with Remi Jedwab and Mark Koyama), we survey what we know about cities in the Middle Ages (800-1500) can tell us about modern economic theory. This paper is forthcoming in *Regional Science and Urban Economics*. In a third paper, "The Effects of Land Redistribution: Evidence from the French Revolution" (with Theresa Finley and Raphael Franck), we use the confiscation and redistribution at auction of all land owned by the Catholic Church during the French

Revolution as a natural experiment that helps us understand how to interpret the Coase Theorem. We show that in places with more church land initially (and thus more redistribution through auctions early in the Revolution) feudal landholding patterns disappeared more quickly. In other words, given that transaction costs were high, the initial distribution of property rights mattered a lot for subsequent agricultural productivity. This paper is forthcoming in the *Journal of Law and Economics*.

In addition to these papers, I continued my research into the economic and social impacts of the Black Death. These include separate projects on the impact of the disease shock on the urban system, on guild formation and persistence, on state formation, and on which cities were early adopters of the printing press between 1450 and 1500. I also wrote (with coauthors) popular pieces for *Voxeu* and the *Broadstreet Blog*. Despite the ban on travel for much of last year, I was pleased to present research virtually for the Economics Department at the University of Colorado, at the Benson Center for the Study of Western Civilization, for the Macrohistory Seminar (CEPR), and for the IHS Summer Seminar on the Liberal Tradition. Finally, I was privileged to teach several classes to some great students (virtually) at the Paris School of Economics covering material in my book (with Mark Koyama) on *Persecution and Toleration: The Long Road to Religious Freedom*. I look forward to accepting an invitation from PSE to visit in person sometime in the upcoming Fall or Spring semesters.



Mark Koyama

During Fall 2021, I was on leave. I spent the time on research, both completing current projects and beginning new ones. In Spring 2021, I taught a graduate seminar on Religion and the State in Economic History. Over the course of the year, I completed a new book *How the World Got Rich* with Jared Rubin, which is due to be published in early 2022. I had five papers published or accepted for publication. The "Institutional Foundations of Religious Freedom" was published in the second issue of the *Journal of Economics, Management, and Religion*. "Sea-Power," with Ahmed Rahman and Tuan-Hwee Sng was accepted for publication in the *Journal of Historical Political Economy*. "Health vs. Economy: Politically Optimal Pandemic Policy," with Desiree Desierto was published in *Political Institutions and Political Economy*. "Medieval Cities Through the Lens of Urban Economic Theory," with Remi Jedwab and Noel D. Johnson was published in *Regional Science and Urban Economics*. Another paper "The Economic Impact of the Black Death," with Remi Jedwab and Noel D. Johnson is forthcoming in the *Journal of Economic Literature*.

In terms of other writing, I had an extended review essay on Walter Scheidel's *Escape from Rome* published in the *Journal of Economic Literature*. For a more popular audience I wrote an essay on "Epidemic Disease and the State" for the online magazine *Works in Progress*. I also published a book review of Hilton Root's *Network Origins of the Global Economy*. Finally, I released a new working paper "Shipwrecked by Rents" with Fernando



## Focus on Faculty

Arteaga and Desiree Desierto and we published a *Vox.eu* piece in December 2020 summarizing it.

Together with Desiree Desierto, I've been collecting new data for a project on the political economy of 16<sup>th</sup>-and 17<sup>th</sup>-century England, and we received financial support from IHS and the Mercatus center for preliminary data collection.

Due to Covid-19, there were no visits or in-person conferences. But I presented my work online at ASREC's online conference, Southern Methodist University, the University of Vermont, UC Santa Barbara, Marin Luther University, the Berlin Colloquium on Social and Economic History, and the Colloquium on CSS/CSI at George Mason University. I also participated in a Liberty Fund Conference on free speech and an IHS Conference on the History of Capitalism. I gave online guest lectures at Harvard University and the University of Florida. In the Fall I organized a series of informal online workshops for economic historians in the DC area.

I also continued my work in editing a special issue on Institutions, Culture, and Religion in Economic History for the *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*. I joined the editorial boards of two new journals: the *Journal of Historical Political Economy* and the *Journal of Economics, Management, and Religion*.



Peter T. Leeson

Peter T. Leeson is the Duncan Black Professor of Economics and Law at George Mason University and North American Editor of *Public Choice*.

Dr. Leeson's work studies the economics of nonmarket decision making. In 2020, he published several journal articles, including "[Economics is Not Statistics \(and Vice Versa\)](#)" in the *Journal of Institutional Economics*, "[The Golden Age of Mercenaries](#)" (with Ennio Piano) in the *European Review of Economic History*, and "[Regulating Quack Medicine](#)"

(with Scott King and Tate Fegley) in *Public Choice*. Also in 2020, the *American Institute of Economic Research's* Art Carden published a [birthday appreciation](#) of Leeson; Leeson was a guest on [NPR's Marketplace](#); and his research received mention in media internationally.

To find his work or press coverage, visit Leeson's personal website: [www.PeterLeeson.com](http://www.PeterLeeson.com).





David Levy

The demand for studies of racism and economics has lurched. As I mentioned in last year's annual report, Sandra Peart and I were asked, on very short notice, to prepare a presentation on economics and racism for the online meetings of the Allied Social Sciences Associations. A great part of the year was devoted to preparing this presentation and submitting it for consideration of publication. Peart and I were sent this notice from the *Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, the journal of the History of Economics Society. *Race and Eugenics*

*in the History of Economics: Some Contributions in JHET*

Many voices have risen in economics to condemn the recent expressions of racism and commit to rooting out all possible racist and discriminatory practices within the discipline. Not surprisingly, the links between economics and racism go far back in the discipline's history. Acknowledging this history must be part of raising awareness and dealing with racism and any other form of discrimination today.

The *Journal of the History of Economic Thought (JHET)* has published several articles that analyze race and, especially, the role of the eugenics movement in the history of economics. In this virtual issue we bring together these articles with a twofold intent: first, as a contribution of historians of economics to grapple with this history, and, second, a contribution of *JHET* to promote the discussion and research tending to foster diversity in our own community.

The first in this set is [Levy's \(2001\) article on "How the Dismal Science got its Name:..."](#) reconstructing "the consequences that follow from our ignorance to the role of classical political economic theory in the anti-racial slavery coalition of Biblical literalists and utilitarians," and "[t]he fact that [Carlyle's characterization of economics as the 'dismal science'] was for bringing forward facts which would make the black and white equals has somehow slipped out of memory" (p.31). Levy traces the origins of the term "dismal science" to the Carlyle-Mill debate about property. Whereas John Stuart Mill and "classical British economists, generally speaking, favored property in things and opposed property in people" (p. 6). A position that is directly in line with the idea, dating at least from Adam Smith, that behavioral differences among people can be attributed to "variation in incentives and histories" rather than to any intrinsic characteristic that could differentiate human nature (p.6).

But this episode contrasts with the tight link between economics and eugenics. [Peart and Levy \(2003\)](#) argue that "early eugenic thinking emerged in direct opposition to the classical account of economic decision-making entailing homogeneity" (p.262). In this article we find how Eugenics changed early competition models to include intrinsic differences due to race and influence the policy recommendations economists advanced. Their research then developed in their 2005 book [The Vanity of the Philosopher: From Equality to Hierarchy in Post-Classical Economics](#).

### Article Published

"Statistical discrimination when group members are aware of their stereotype: Learning from David Hume and Adam Smith" *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* Volume 181, January 2021, Pages 86-93

### Chapter Published

"George Stigler" with Sandra Peart in *The Chicago School of Economics*, edited by Robert Cord, Palgrave

### Volume Edited

Special Issue on Liberalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Lessons from the Colloque Walter Lippman. *Journal of Contextual Economics (Schmollers Jahrbuch)*. Edited with Karen Horn, Stefan Kolev and Sandra Peart.

### Presentations

"Economics, Race and Racism: The Long View" with Sandra Peart. Joint panel of the History of Economics Society and the National Economics Association (online)  
Panel of the Levy-Peart *Towards an Economics of Natural Equations*, at the Public Choice Society, Savannah.

### Article Commissioned

"Economics and Race and Racism," with Sandra Peart, *Journal of Economic Literature*

### Chapters Commissioned

"Harriet Martineau" with Sandra Peart. *Essential Women of Liberty*, Fraser Institute.  
"Thomas Nixon Carver" with Sandra Peart, *Harvard Economics*, edited by Robert Cord. Palgrave.



Cesar Martinelli

I started research projects on the economic consequences of mass migration, with reference to the Venezuelan exodus, and on political corruption, with reference to the Odebrecht scandal in Peru. I continued working on revealed preference theory and on communication in games. I gave online seminars at Essex University, DePaul University, and Universidad del Pacifico (Lima), a public conference at INFOX on accountability and corruption, and presented in the World Congress of the Econometric Society and the LACEA political economy group. I continued my work as

advisory editor of *Games and Economic Behavior* and was appointed to the Topics Board of the journal Games.

### Publications:

Accountability and Grand Corruption, forthcoming in *American Economic Journal: Micro*  
A Utility Representation Theorem for General Revealed Preference, with Mikhail Freer, *Mathematical Social Sciences* 111 (2021) 68–76.

## Focus on Faculty

Communication and Information in Games of Collective Decision, with Thomas R. Palfrey, chapter 14, 348–375 in *Handbook of Experimental Game Theory* (C. Monica Capra, Rachel Croson, Mary Rigdon, and Tanya Rosenblat eds.), Edward Elgar Publishing (October 2020)

### Blog posts:

El éxodo venezolano en el Perú (*Foco Económico*, May 14, 2021)

Los senderos que se bifurcan (*Foco Económico*, Ene 15, 2021)

Impacto del Intervencionismo: Pérdida de Productividad, Capital e Ingresos (*IPAE Hoja de Ruta*, December, 2020)

How the World Works: Wilson and Milgrom win a much-deserved economics Nobel for helping us better understand how certain markets function (*Discourse Magazine*, October 16, 2020)

### Media appearances:

[Interview with S&P about the Peruvian presidential election.](#)

[Interview with S&P on caps to interest rates in Peru.](#)

[Interview in the major Peruvian newspaper, El Comercio, Lima, on caps to interest rates in Peru.](#)

[Interview in a major Mexican newspaper, Reforma, on the Nobel Prize and a Mexican early contributor to auction theory.](#)

[FacebookLive discussion on the pandemics and the impact on Peru, organized by puntoysolucion.](#)



Natalya Naumenko

During 2020-21, I taught three different classes: Econ-630 Mathematical Economics, Econ-309 Economic Problems and Public Policies, and Econ-340 Intro to Mathematical Economics. I'm proud of Econ-309, I think students really learned something new in this class; satisfied with Econ-340, it's a standard class, however, I will improve the delivery next time; I need to think how to improve Econ-630 and make it more useful for graduate students.

### Publications:

"The Political Economy of Famine: the Ukrainian Famine of 1933" (solo-authored) came out in the *Journal of Economic History* in March 2021

### Work in progress:

"The Political-Economic Causes of the Soviet Great Famine, 1932–33" with Andrei Markevich and Nancy Qian was presented (among other places) at ASSA 2021 and at NBER Political Economy Spring Session (<https://www.nber.org/conferences/political-economy-program-meeting-spring-2021>). We plan to submit it by the end of next week.

- "Economic consequences of the 1933 Soviet famine" (solo-authored); I'm actively updating the draft now, hope to submit it by the end of the summer
- "Passing for a Russian: Identity Choice and the 1933 Soviet Famine" with Michael Poyker; we're working on the project now, collecting new data
- "The consequences of peaceful nuclear explosions" with Alexei Makarin got delayed -- I couldn't collect data in the Russian archives because of the pandemic; we still hope to work on this project in the future



John Nye

In the last year, I have continued to work on various projects including finishing a long-term project with Greg Clark and a colleague in Moscow on social mobility in Russia from the 1879 to 2016. Other work in progress is under submission at various journals.

I continue to serve on the Research Experts Panel for the Philippine Central Bank for whom I serve as a lecturer and consultant on research development. I made presentations to the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, Binghamton University in New York, the International Economics Olympiad Committee, as well as several presentations to the Philippine Central Bank and other government agencies in the RP.

This earlier essay appeared in print in the summer of 2020: "The Limits of the Commune: A Review of The Mystery of the Kibbutz," (2020) *Journal of Economic Literature* <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jel.20191523>.



Jonathan Schulz

Dr. Schulz continues to study the role of kin networks for human psychology, political institutions, and economic prosperity. Together with Joe Henrich, he was able to secure a large Templeton grant that will allow him to deepen and broaden this research agenda.

Dr. Schulz was invited to present his work on *Kin networks and Institutional Development* at seminars at NYU, University of York, the Institute for Advanced Study in Toulouse, University of Texas, University of Economics in Prague, the University of Hamburg, and the University of Utrecht.



## Focus on Faculty

In May 2021, Dr. Schulz co-organized two interdisciplinary workshop. One focused on *Kinship in Medieval Europe* which brought together leading historians, economic historians, and psychologists to shed light on historical kinship systems. The other workshop focused on *Networks and Long-Term Cultural Change* and drew an interdisciplinary crowd consisting of political scientists, economists, network scientists, psychologists, and cultural evolutionists.

Dr. Schulz and his collaborators got two further research proposals that will allow them to study cross-societal variation in corruption, dishonesty, and the formation of groups. He has submitted several articles for peer-review at academic journals. The articles focus on overconfidence as a social signal, the role of beliefs and attitudes to explain cross-societal variation in cooperation, and the role of selection into economic laboratory experiments.



Thomas Stratmann

During 2020-21, Dr. Thomas Stratmann's papers were accepted in the *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics*, the *International Review of Law and Economics*, *Socio-Economic Planning Sciences*, and the *Southern Economic Journal*.

Currently, Dr. Stratmann is working in the field of laboratory Experimental Public Choice. Here, he examines the effect of various types of hierarchies in committees on whether the outcome of the committee collective choice is moral or not. In this context, morality means whether the

committee collective choice sends a truthful message to the receiver, such as a legislature, or a deceptive message.

Dr. Stratmann further pursues an active research agenda in the intersection of Public Choice Theory and the field of Law and Economics. In one project, he analyzes Certificate of Need laws. These state laws, on the books in over 35 states, intentionally limit competition in the health care sector. His research analyzes who benefits and loses from Certificate of Need laws, as well as the impact of these laws on health outcomes. His work identifies incumbent hospitals as the main beneficiaries of Certificate of Need laws. Losers are would-be-competitors who are denied providing improved access and innovative care. Losers importantly include patients, who, when residing in states with these laws, experience less access to health care, more costly care, lower quality of health services, and less innovative medical care.





Alex Tabarrok

Early in the pandemic, Nobel Prize winner Michael Kremer and I spoke to the U.S. Council of the Economic Advisors and the Domestic Policy Council of the White House about accelerating vaccines using incentives. That led to the creation of the Kremer team which subsequently came to write reports for multiple governments as well as advise the World Bank and other organizations on COVID policy.

Research from this collaboration has led to several papers including a paper in *Science*. I spoke with several governments and advisory groups around the world on

vaccine policy, including the G20's High Level Independent Panel (HLIP). In April of 2021, I testified to Congress on vaccine policy.

On other fronts, my long-term work on 'dominant assurance contracts' also known as 'crowdfunding with refund bonuses' led to a productive collaboration with Tim Cason and Robertas Zubrickas and an experimental economics paper showing that the mechanism works extremely well! We are pursuing field research

I was also very pleased to publish a paper in the *Journal of Urban Economics* which shows that building in India is slowed down and increased in cost by lawsuits, many of which are generated by India's Public Interest Litigation law.

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—. 2021. "America's Pharmacies Can Do a Lot More Vaccinations," February 17, 2021. <https://www.bloombergquint.com/gadfly/pharmacies-are-crucial-to-covid-19-vaccination-success>.

Tabarrok, Alex. 2020. "Spend Billions More on Vaccines and Testing." *Los Angeles Times*, May 31, 2020, sec. Opinion. <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2020-05-31/coronavirus-unemployment-economic-recovery>.

## Focus on Faculty

The Accelerating Health Technologies Group. 2020. "Purchasing COVID-19 Vaccines at Risk: Costs and Benefits for Latin America and the Caribbean." Inter-American Development Bank. <https://doi.org/10.18235/0002700>.



Yong Yoon

**Yong Yoon** drafted a new course on brewery economics: "The Economics of Beer." Beer is a splendid commodity to learn economics from. The course will touch on the science of beer making and public choice questions: the sin tax, the prohibition, and hops that made globalization possible. The course also will mention the current issue of diversity in the draft beer industry.

Yong is continuing his book project: *The Perils of Korea: Limits of Recklessness*. This project attempts to understand, from a public choice perspective, the ideological drift in the Korean peninsula. I have a working paper on "elections and statistics."

Book project: *The Perils of Korea: Limits of Recklessness*.

Course project: The Economics of Beer

Working Paper: Elections and Statistics

## Center Staff

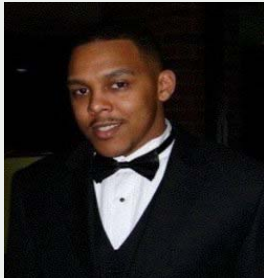


*Lisa Hill-Corley*

**Lisa Hill-Corley** supports of the main resident faculty at Carow Hall with administrative, visitor and office manager tasks. She also manages the main budget and grants for Center, the Wednesday Seminar and the Center-based grants which provide support to outstanding Public Choice scholars.

Lisa, along with Kashiff Thompson, managed Carow Hall through the usual 2020-2021 academic year. She helped to manage Covid-19 protocols and worked over the summer of 2021 to return Carow to a higher capacity after many restrictions were lifted.

She is grateful for the support of the faculty, Kashiff Thompson and Julie Roberts in these unusual times. Here's to a great 2021-2022!



*Kashiff A. Thompson*

**Kashiff A. Thompson** assists with providing administrative support to resident Carow Hall faculty. Kashiff also serves as co-coordinator of the weekly Public Choice Seminar.

**The Public Choice Center  
would like to thank the following contributors:**

Lynn Abbott

Chris Rufer

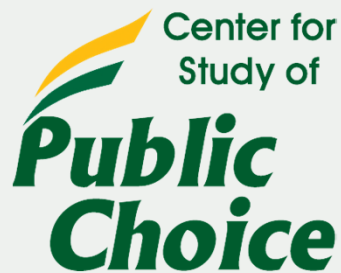
The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation

James C. Miller III

Sarah Scaife Foundation

***Thank you for your support  
of the center!***

## About the Center



The Center for Study of Public Choice is a unique research institution at George Mason University. It provides a single location where eminent scholars conduct innovative research, publish their findings and conclusions in a variety of print and electronic media, and teach the science of public choice. The Center builds on the groundbreaking economic and political science theories for which James Buchanan was awarded the Nobel Prize in economics. The Center draws both visiting and resident scholars and students from all over the world. Its faculty and researchers lecture and conduct seminars locally, across the United States, and abroad.

The Center serves as the institutional home for the Public Choice Research Program, which has developed and matured over the past half-century. Created in 1957 at the University of Virginia, the Center was initially called the Thomas Jefferson Center for Studies in Political Economy. In 1969, the Center was reconstituted at Virginia Tech under its present name. In 1983, the Center shifted its operations to George Mason University. The Center's alumni includes doctoral students from George Mason, Virginia Tech, and the University of Virginia. From its historical association with three of Virginia's major universities, the Center's academic footprint is often dubbed the "Virginia School of Political Economy."

Public Choice scholarship has profoundly influenced thinking in the scientific community and the formation of public attitudes. Economics traditionally focuses on the behavior of firms and consumers and how individuals interact in market settings. As a research program, public choice extends the tools of economics to analyze the behavior of voters, candidates, legislators, bureaucrats, judges, and expert economists themselves. Research by scholars at the Center also focuses on other non-market institutions such as religion, the family, clubs, and culture.

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