

Letter from the Editor

For over 30 years, *Economía Teoría y Práctica* (ETYP) has welcomed authors submitting their work for publication. These submissions are first reviewed by the editorial committee, after which they undergo a double-blind peer review by experts in the topics covered by the document in question. Due to the response times of the reviewers and the delivery of the final documents, including readers' comments and suggestions, this process can sometimes be lengthy.

Over time, ETYP has established itself as a forum for the analysis and discussion of cutting-edge issues related to technological innovation, growth and economic development in the global economy, with a particular focus on emerging countries. The journal has published original theoretical and/or applied articles on phenomena associated with technological change, the links between technological and social innovation, financial markets, growth and sustainable economic development, the role of institutions and regulation, and the analysis of sectoral and regional economic convergence, as well as convergence between countries and economic policies (fiscal, monetary and industrial). *Economía Teoría y Práctica* has also opened its pages to scientific articles on novel topics in economics. Despite the lack of academic and institutional support for funding the journal, we are extremely pleased to publish each issue. Despite these barriers, driven by our commitment to continuing the legacy of our founding colleagues, the journal continues with renewed vigor. We are calling for greater collaboration from all those involved in this editorial project. I would like to acknowledge the growing participation of younger generations of economists. Dear readers, I am pleased to share with you issue 61, which corresponds to July–December 2024.

There is a growing body of literature on fiscal policies and the evaluation of proposals for, and implementation of, so-called sin or health taxes, especially as various countries have focused on promoting the reduction of tobacco, calorie-dense food and drink, and alcohol consumption, given their significant impact on population health (Miracolo *et al.*, 2021; Aguilar *et al.*, 2021).¹ The World Health Organi-

¹ Miracolo A., M. Sophiea, M. Mills and P. Kanavos (2021), "Sin taxes and their effect on consumption, revenue generation and health improvement: a systematic literature review in Latin America", *Health Policy and Planning*, 36, pp. 790-810, doi: 10.1093/heapol/czaa16. Aguilar A., E. Gutierrez and E. Seira (2021), "The effectiveness of sin food taxes: Evidence from Mexico", *J Health Econ*, May, 77 102455, doi: 10.1016/j.jhealeco.2021.102455, Epub 2021 April 2, PMID 33894643.

zation (WHO, 2018) has found, for example, that heavy alcohol consumption affects more than 200 health conditions, including various types of cancer, cardiovascular disease, cirrhosis, diabetes, epilepsy, and deaths resulting from traffic accidents, violence, vandalism and crime (Miracolo, 2021). In Mexico, the OECD (2021)² predicts that life expectancy will decrease by one year over the next 30 years, given that women consume more than one alcoholic beverage per day and men consume more than one and a half.

In this context, the issue begins with an article addressing a sensitive topic in the alcoholic beverage industry: the debate surrounding fiscal policies that influence the regulation of alcohol consumption due to its potential adverse health effects, while also generating increased tax revenue. “Taxes on the Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages: The Ineffectiveness of the Alcohol Tax in Mexico. New Evidence”. The article references new findings by Anel Rodríguez Quinto, PhD student at Texas A&M University, Joaquín Sánchez Gómez of the Rockefeller Institute of Government, and Luis Foncerrada Pascal of Texas A&M University, who are extending their previous work published in ETYP (2019) and other publications mentioned in the article. After presenting the theoretical foundations of their analysis, the authors argue that Mexico’s current ad valorem system is ineffective because it taxes alcoholic beverages based on their price rather than their alcohol content. This does not discourage consumption of the beverages that are most harmful to human health and social well-being. They therefore propose the use of the ad-quantum system, which taxes beverages progressively according to their alcohol content. Their findings highlight the circumstances in which policies can be ineffective or effective in achieving health objectives, improving citizens’ incomes, increasing tax revenue and reducing illegal trade. This article is highly useful for legislators, contributors to social welfare, academics and citizens.

We will now turn to a highly relevant topic: the evaluation of social programmes implemented in Mexico between 2016 and 2022. Although there were two different six-year terms, a significant transformation for social welfare is claimed in the second. In his article “Impact and progressiveness of redistributive social programmes in Mexico”, Marco Antonio Pérez Méndez from the UAM-Iztapalapa discusses it. This is an analysis by a federal entity from 2016 to 2022, and is a methodical study based on microsimulation that seeks to assess the scope of social programmes in the context of a possible paradigm shift in reducing poverty and inequality among the population. The article emphasizes the importance of academia, international organizations and society as a whole having the right to evaluate

² OECD (2021), “Preventing Harmful Alcohol Use: Key findings in Mexico”, in *Preventing Harmful Alcohol Use*, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, <https://doi.org/10.1787/6e4b4ffb-en>.

public policies implemented by governments, i.e. to assess their capacity to undertake redistributive policies and their ability to achieve the desired results with the minimum possible resources.

In his theoretical exposition and empirical development, the author considers the limited government priorities and resources and highlights several questions. What are the most pressing social problems facing the nation? What public policies have been formulated to address them? How are redistributive transfer programmes configured? Are the programmes targeted or universal? What impact do such policies have on resolving social problems? Were direct transfer policies between 2016 and 2022 progressive, and did they effectively reduce poverty and inequality levels in Mexico?

Using rigorous methodology, Marco Antonio Pérez evaluates the social programmes that currently form the core of social policy, finding results that invite reflection on government policies that could truly overcome the poverty and social disparities impacting large segments of the Mexican population.

The systematic study of theories that seek to explain the causes of high crime rates is a topic of great interest not only to the community of economists, but also to the scientific community and society in general. This topic is addressed by Adrián Isaías Tun González and Rene Leticia Lozano Cortés from the Autonomous University of the State of Quintana Roo. Their article “The partial equilibrium model of economic crime theory: effects of inequality on crime rates”, aptly presents the theories and empirical evidence that contribute to our understanding of this increasingly prevalent phenomenon in Mexico and other parts of the world. The article focuses on a systematic exposition of the economic theory of crime from the perspective of a partial equilibrium model of the crime market, in which inequality plays a significant role in the decision to commit a crime.

However, despite the influence of psychological and emotional factors on crimes that appear to be outside of economic logic, the authors argue that institutional and structural causes, as well as economic factors, cannot be overlooked. After analyzing the rationality of different theories on high crime rates, their differences and how they complement each other, Tun and Lozano seek to discern the foundations of the causal relationship between inequality and crime incidence in accordance with the partial equilibrium theoretical model.

It is clear that equal opportunities in income distribution are a key aspect of the questions raised in the specialized literature. What factors favor crime incidence from the perspective of the economics of crime? What economic incentives favor crime? What are the probabilities of not being apprehended and punished? The findings undoubtedly contribute to our understanding of this phenomenon and to policy proposals that promote crime reduction. As readers, we should ask ourselves: what lessons can we learn from this article?

Rubén Oliver Espinoza from Centro de Investigaciones Económicas, Administrativas y Sociales (Ciecás) at the National Polytechnic Institute aims to identify the most relevant technological areas of inventive activity within a Mexican automotive company with a global reach. He will do this by using network centrality indicators (degree, eigenvalue centrality and intermediation) derived from international patent classification data. As the title suggests “Identification of Technological Capabilities Based on Patents: The Case of Nemark”, the author seeks to characterize the codified knowledge reflected in patents and their classification, which showcases the company’s technological and inventive capabilities, technological trajectory, and knowledge and collaboration networks. In short, he highlights the dynamic and cumulative evolution of knowledge through which Nemark, a company with origins in the strategic alliance between Ford and Grupo Alfa, builds its innovation capabilities.

Considering that this type of study is still scarce in Mexico, the author’s contribution is significant as he identifies the technological areas in which Nemark has built and accumulated its capabilities by focusing on the classification of the Mexican automotive company’s patents. From these findings, it is worth asking: What is the importance and scope of the company’s technological innovations in the global automotive sector, given the new paradigms shaping the frontier of international competition in this sector? The author addresses this issue by examining whether the company contributes to global competitiveness and how global progress impacts its competitiveness. Another issue to be explored is whether knowledge spills over to local companies, which is essential for understanding the extent to which new technological contributions are spreading to the national industry.

Continuing the study of Mexico’s automotive sector, which is recognized for its export profile but also involves a substantial flow of technology as is often the case in global industries, the following article is titled “Intellectual Property, Foreign Trade and Technology Flow in Mexico’s Automotive Sector, 1990-2022”, co-authored by Alexis Josué Vargas Ortega, Manuel Soria López and Manuel García Álvarez, all of whom are affiliated with UAM-Xochimilco. After presenting the theoretical and conceptual basis, as well as the framework within which the industrial and export activity of Mexico’s automotive sector developed following the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in the 1990s, the authors set out to validate the hypothesis on which this article is based. Vargas, Soria and García argue that NAFTA’s institutional intellectual property arrangement boosted foreign trade growth in Mexico’s automotive industry but did not lead to the effective transfer of foreign technology for domestic production.

The methodology involves dendrograms, a key tool in component clustering analysis based on export and import values, as well as the number of patents for

different vehicle parts (1990–2022). This study is important for identifying and understanding whether, like its trading partners, Mexico has achieved the expansion of trade flows in the automotive sector in open markets and technological development and innovation, as set out in the NAFTA commitments.

The reduction of the working week from 48 to 40 hours is an issue currently under debate in the Mexican legislature. The initiative to amend Article 123 of the Constitution and the Labor Law has generated significant concern among those involved: workers and employers. As with any other reform proposal, legislators must hear and properly weigh the different voices of labor and business representatives, as well as labor specialists. In this vein, Jorge Heriberto Chávez Rosales and David Castro-Lugo from the Autonomous University of Coahuila offer an article entitled “Working hours and subjective well-being in Mexico: is there a balance?”, which is highly relevant to this discussion.

Adopting a work-life balance perspective, the authors examine the relationship between working hours and subjective well-being among Mexicans, considering gender and type of employment. They aim to provide a theoretical foundation for the phenomenon, supported by evidence from various countries and authors. The literature highlights issues that contribute to the analysis. Do wage increases have an immediate positive effect on individuals’ well-being, and can this effect be sustained over time? To what extent does increase production or income at the expense of longer working hours affect workers’ mental and physical health, and even the environment? What are the differences in the formal and informal labor markets regarding income and the length of the working day?

Recognizing that the relationship between working hours and well-being in Mexico is unclear and that appropriate public policies therefore need to be designed, Chávez Rosales and Castro-Lugo pose the questions that form the basis of the hypothesis they seek to verify. Does working more or fewer hours than the legal working week of 41–48 hours negatively affect perceived well-being? If so, does the relationship between working hours and well-being differ according to sex and employment type? The results are suggestive and make a significant contribution to the topic. We invite you to read the article to find out more.

Moving on to the next article, which continues the theme of labor from a gender perspective “Women’s Telework During the Pandemic: An Analysis of the US Labor Market”, by Humberto Merritt, of the National Polytechnic Institute. The author’s concerns and the purpose of his research are summarized in the following question: To what extent did female and male teleworking differ in the US during the pandemic?

The pandemic Covid-19 undoubtedly accelerated the shift from face-to-face to remote working, intensifying the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Some of these technologies were already in use, while others spread and evolved with remarkable speed and efficiency. In countries with greater technological development, such as the United States, the impact was greater. Using the Current Population Survey (CPS) from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Merritt set out to identify differences in the evolution of teleworking between women and men in the United States during and after the pandemic. He also distinguishes between younger and older women.

What patterns and scope were observed in the configuration of teleworking among women in the United States? What advantages did remote employment offer women, both in terms of labor productivity and working from home? Was there a wage gap? Did the trend of women entering teleworking continue after the pandemic? These are some of the issues addressed in the article. However, despite the positive aspects, remote digital work introduces elements that should not be overlooked, such as clear regulations to protect the labor rights, health and safety of teleworkers, digital disconnection rights, and expense reimbursement. These interesting findings contribute to the gender perspective, and the author uses them to recommend public policies for Mexico, particularly regarding how to balance the flexibility and digital transformation offered by remote working with domestic activities, while safeguarding gender rights and equality.

Finally, I would like to share a quote from Albert Einstein. This quote highlights how important it is to keep looking for new ideas and theories. These new ideas and theories help us to understand more about the universe and the problems we face. They also help us to find solutions to these problems. ETYP's philosophy is in accordance with this, and there is a strong affirmation of the importance of the continuation of the publishing of researchers' findings.

*The mind that opens to a new idea never
returns to its original size.*

Albert Einstein

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JOURNAL EDITOR IN CHIEF