

I have now had a chance to read your paper and the surrounding correspondence regarding it. As you know, I have also asked for the opinions of two experts to evaluate your paper, whose reports are now posted and available to you. The first referee unambiguously recommends to me that the paper be rejected. This assessment is in part—I believe—tied to his/her final observation that theoretical underpinnings of these types of descriptive analyses are often elusive. The second referee also has strong reservations about the paper and recommends only a very weak "revise and resubmit." Having read your paper I share the concerns that are reflected in the referees' reports. In particular, the current analysis lacks some rigor and there appears to be a lack of motivation and focus in the analysis as well. Nevertheless, I do not draw the same conclusions that the referees do. Despite weaknesses in the analysis and exposition, I find your work to be original and it is clear that it has struck a chord with the wider readership. I would like to see a revised version of your work published in Economics. I therefore ask you to prepare for me a brief letter outlining how you might address the referees' concerns in a revised version of your paper. Such a proposal does not have to address all of the referees' concerns, but you should make a serious effort to provide a more formal analysis in your revision and I would like you to comment on suggestions made by the referees also (and especially) if you do not intend to modify your paper in light of specific suggestions made. If upon receiving your proposal I feel that a publishable manuscript will result from your efforts, I would appreciate receiving such a revision which I would then gladly evaluate for publication in Economics without further consultation of the expert referees.

Thanks for allowing us to evaluate your research.