

Democratizing the economics debate

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SAPIENZA
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An old debate?



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Gove: Britons "Have Had Enough of Experts" - YouTube



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGgiGtJk7MA> ▼

Jun 22, 2016 - Uploaded by rpmackey

In an interview with Faisal Islam of Sky News on June 3, 2016, Michael Gove, the UK's ... Gove: Britons "Have ...

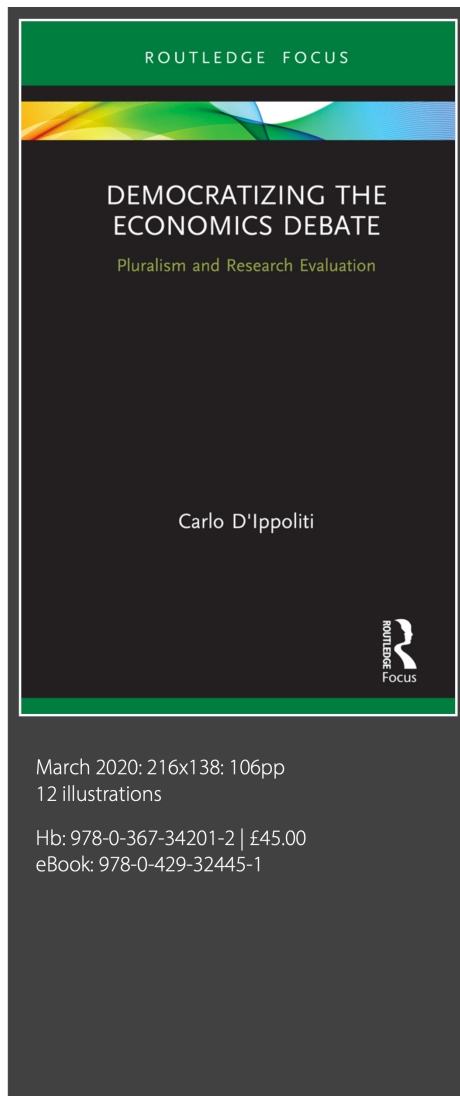
Michael Gove: "People in this country have had enough of experts ...



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qw276pOBgSU>

Jun 3, 2016 - Uploaded by David Adamson

Michael Gove: "**People** in this country **have had enough of experts**". David Adamson. Loading... Unsubscribe ...



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Democratizing the Economics Debate

Pluralism and Research Evaluation

Carlo D'Ippoliti, Sapienza, Università di Roma, Italy

Series: Young Feltrinelli Prize in the Moral Sciences

More than a decade since the global financial crisis, economics does not exhibit signs of significant change. Mainstream economists act on an idealized image of science, which includes the convergence of all perspectives into a single supposed scientific truth. *Democratizing the Economics Debate* shows that this idealized image misrepresents the recent past and current state of economics. As experts who intervene in the public debate, economists must assure society that they are working in the best possible way, which includes fostering a wide and fair scientific debate. This book will be of interest to anyone who worries for the state of the democratic debate.

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Still talking about pluralism?

“there is another risk [...]. It is the risk that, aiming at **protecting dying out sects of researchers**, we avoid all comparisons and renounce discriminating **excellent** research, which moves the frontiers of knowledge, from mediocre research.”

(Tabellini, 2006, p. 32)



Pierre Cahuc André Zylberberg

LE NÉGATIONNISME ÉCONOMIQUE

« Ce livre
est une bombe »
Challenges

« Un débat franc
et musclé »
L'Obs

« Un combat salubre »
Slate

« Explosif »
Le Monde

« Un livre-choc »
Le Point

Flammarion

Debate on pluralism in economics

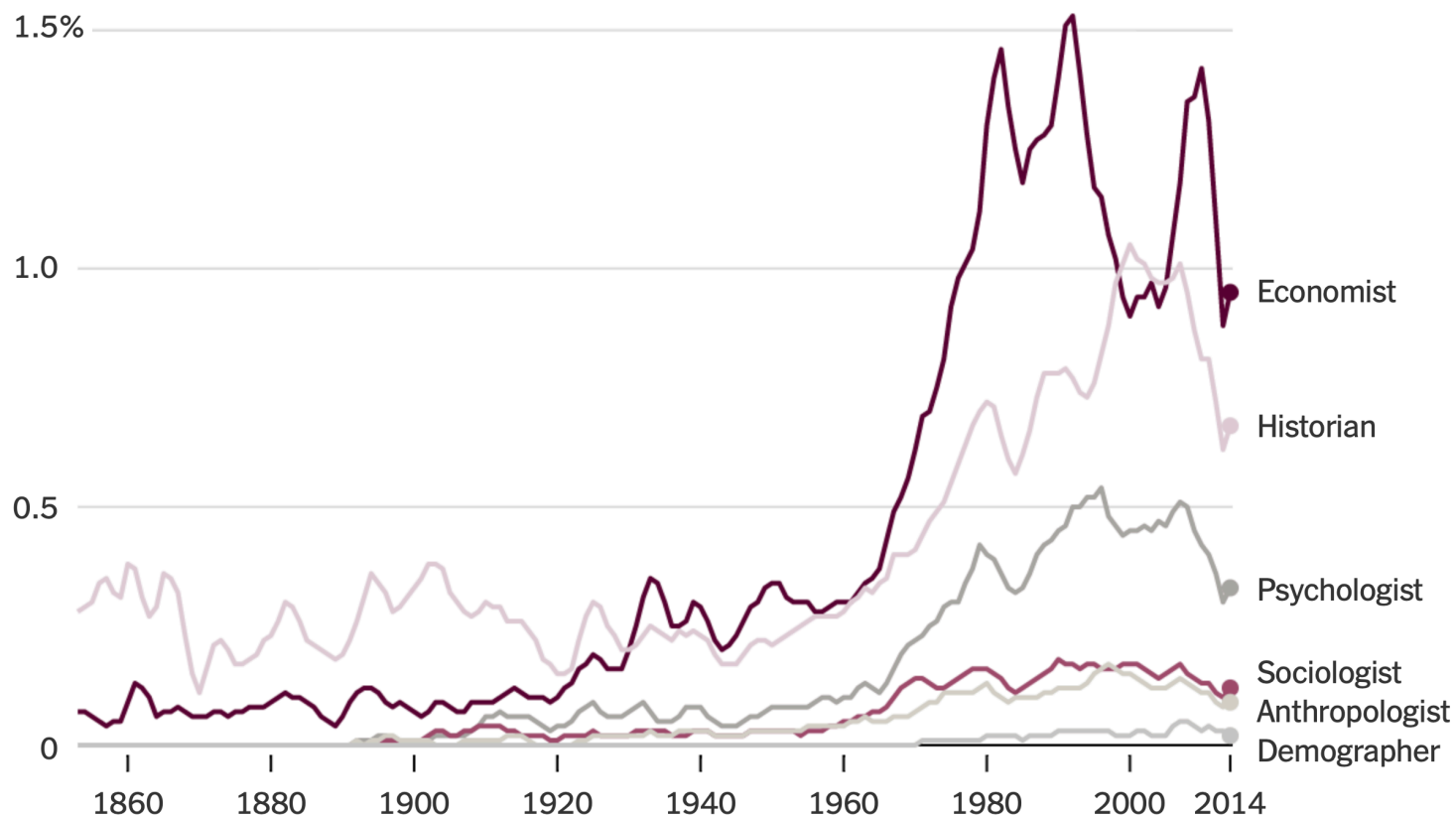
- Hands (2001): applications of biological, financial, and economic models converge on recommending *tolerance or even promotion of a plurality of competing views*
- Mäki (1997): it is a matter of degree, *how much* plurality should be admitted.
- Rodrik (2016, p. 199): “*pluralism with respect to conclusions is one thing; pluralism with respect to methods is something else*. No academic discipline is permissive of approaches that diverge too much from prevailing practices.”
- Dow (2004): the Kuhnian interpretation of the scientific debate applies less well to the social sciences. Here, *the coexistence of competing paradigms is not characteristic of transitory revolutionary phases*, it is the norm.
- Gräbner and Strunk (2018): pluralism is not the same as saying that any perspective whatsoever should be accepted just because it is one addition to pluralism

The economics debate is important

“Economics ... has always been partly a vehicle for the ruling ideology of each period as well as partly a method of scientific investigation”
(Robinson, 1962, p. 2)



Mentions in *The New York Times*



Three-year average of mentions.

Source: [New York Times Chronicle Tool](#)

Authority principle



For economists, often populism = disliked school/approach

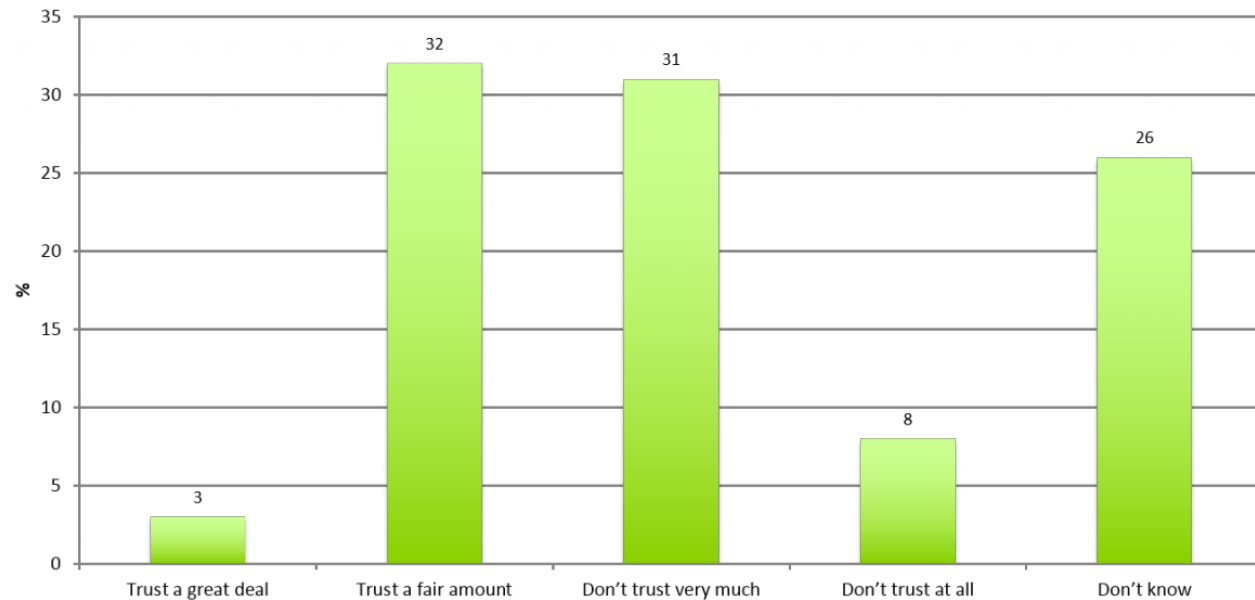
1 The Macroeconomics of Populism

Rudiger Dornbusch and Sebastian Edwards

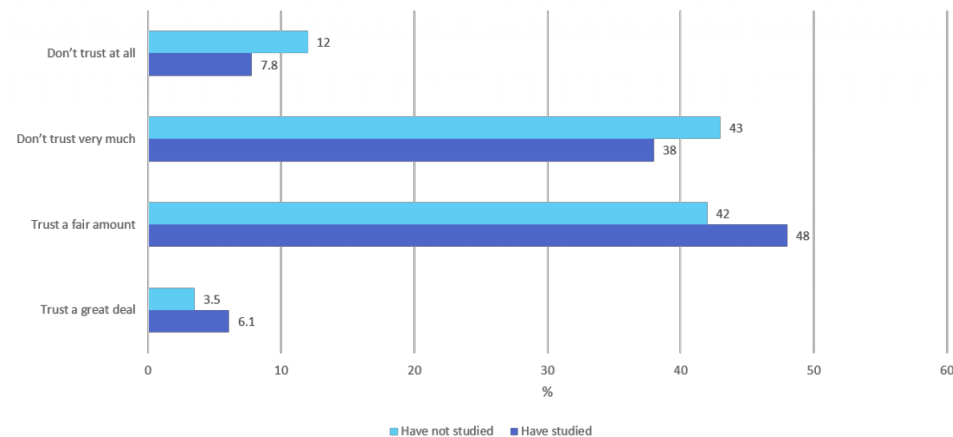
Latin America's economic history seems to repeat itself endlessly, following irregular and dramatic cycles. This sense of circularity is particularly striking with respect to the use of populist macroeconomic policies for distributive purposes. Again and again, and in country after country, policymakers have embraced economic programs that rely heavily on the use of expansive fiscal and credit policies and overvalued currency to accelerate growth and redistribute income. In implementing these policies, there has usually been no concern

... but it runs two ways

To what extent do you trust the opinions of economists on issues relating to the national and global economy?



To what extent do you trust the opinions of economists on issues relating to the national and global economy? (by economics education)



Source: ING-Economics Network *Survey of Public Understanding of Economics 2019*, <https://doi.org/10.53593/n3247a>

Scientific authority as a source of power

SECTIONS

HOME

SEARCH

The New York Times



FEBRUARY 9, 2015

Are Economists Overrated?

INTRODUCTION



André da Loba

One in 100 articles in The New York Times over the past few years have used the term “economist,” a much greater rate than other academic professions, according to a recent [article](#) in The Upshot. Economic analysis and pronouncements are crucial to most policy decisions and debates.

But given the profession’s poor track record in forecasting and planning, and the continued struggles of many Americans, have we given economists too much authority?

DEBATERS



The Pie on the Table, Not in the Sky

DIANE COYLE, UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER, ENGLAND

Government decisions balance costs and benefits, winners and losers. It is best to do this explicitly, which is what



Don't Rely on Pseudo-Science

ORLANDO PATTERSON AND ETHAN FOSSE, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

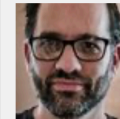
Implementation of mainstream economic ideas has led to massive failures after



Analyze and Explain, Don't Prognosticate

PETER BLAIR HENRY, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Economics succeeds when used as a forensic tool, employing history and data, not creating unrealistic expectations.



Exceptions Overwhelm Economic Rules

PHILIP N. COHEN, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Exploitation, dishonesty, violence, ignorance and demagoguery set vast areas of social life apart outside of



An Ambivalent Authority

MARION FOURCADE, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

Much of economic science is esoteric and preoccupied with internal struggles. Ideological divisions, exploited by



Failures Shouldn't Obscure Widespread Success

CHARLES R. PLOTT, CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Economic science is the foundation of sound policies and techniques in business and government.



Science and trust

Executive summary and recommendations

To reinforce trust in science, we recommend more comprehensive education about the scientific method; an improved dissemination of science to the public; communication modes that do not minimize doubts or exaggerate promises; a requirement for rigor and integrity from scientists; improvements in science assessment emphasizing quality and relevance; and better dialogue between scientists, social groups, and decision makers to inform choices about the major issues facing society.

The increasing pace of technological change, and the need for science and innovation contributions to solve local and global challenges requires societal trust in science. It is essential that we find ways to maintain and increase confidence in science. It is the responsibility of everyone, scientists, educators, the media and politicians to establish or maintain a relationship of informed trust between science and society.

Policy makers should encourage and scientists should commit to:

- Promote science education and an understanding of how research is conducted from elementary school onwards, to ensure that all students, both girls and boys, acquire a sufficient background to understand the world around them and the benefits of science.
- Cultivate dialogue, mutual trust and confidence between public, politicians and scientists to ensure that scientific input is considered in decision-making especially on topics of high scientific content.
- Ensure that the fundamental principles of ethics, integrity and responsibility are a major component of science education, to increase awareness of scientific responsibility and of the structures and policies that support it, including peer review and research ethics boards and transparency about potential conflicts of interest. Breaches of ethics and research integrity should be treated with full transparency and rigor to ensure that the misconduct of a few does not discredit the whole scientific endeavor.
- Ensure that the evaluation of science is based on criteria of quality, reproducibility, originality and relevance rather than on counts of publications, citations, or impact factors to avoid the race for publication that downgrades the value of scientific research and can lead to breaches in scientific integrity.

Jumping to conclusions



- Lack of trust in economics is *justified*
- We can and must rely on scientific debate, but only in so far as it is wide and honest, i.e. *plural* and *fair*
- Economics is a *diverse* discipline, both within and outside of the mainstream
- Partisan (corporations and state-led) attempts to influence the economic debate are huge *challenges*

Scientific authority as a source of power

- **Input legitimacy:** selection and promotion of personnel in the political system (e.g. through fair elections).
 - Decisions are made in a way that involves those being governed: “*government by the people*”
- **Output legitimacy:** performance of a given political system
 - do the adopted policy solutions effectively address the needs and desires of those being governed? “*government for the people*”
- **Throughput legitimacy:** *governance* and the political processes that shape how decisions are made (Schmidt, 2013)

Output legitimacy





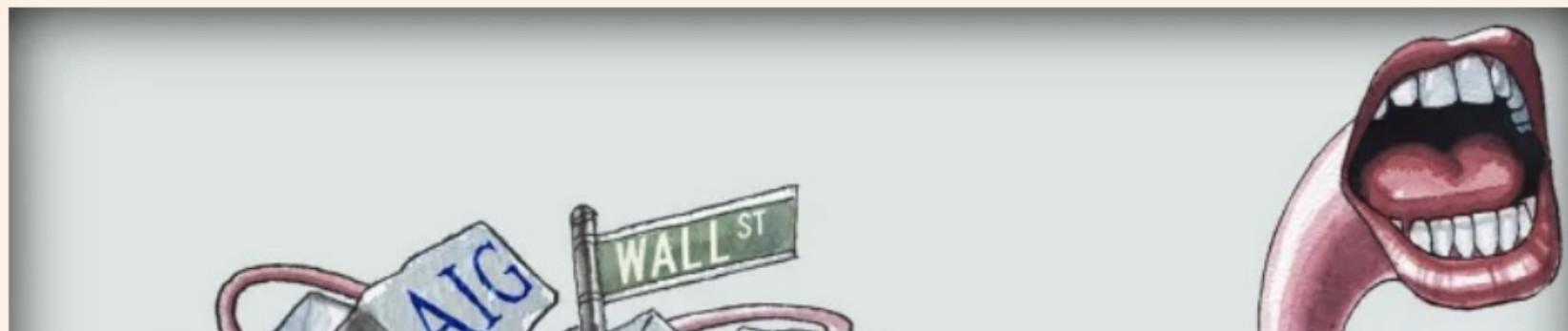
Opinion **Populism**

The economic origins of the populist surge

Inequality and joblessness will fuel and sustain the wave of voters' anger

MARTIN WOLF

+ Add to myFT



Alesina & Ardagna (2010): neoliberalism is back

Expansionary Fiscal Stimuli

Canada	2001				
Finland	1978	1987			
Greece	2001				
Ireland	1974	1975	1978	2001	2007
Italy	1972				
Japan	1975				
Netherlands	1995				
Norway	1974	1991	2007		
Portugal	1978	1985			
United Kingdom	2001	2002	2003		

Expansionary Fiscal Adjustments

Finland	1973	1996	1998	2000	
Greece	1976	2005	2006		
Ireland	1976	1987	1988	1989	2000
Netherlands	1996				
New Zealand	1993	1994	2000		
Norway	1979	1980	1983	1996	
Portugal	1986	1988	1995		
Spain	1986	1987			
Sweden	2004				



Konczal (2015): austerity in the post-Alesina era

Austerity 2009-2011	Real GDP Growth, 2008-2010	Real GDP Growth, 2011-2014	Debt/GDP Increase 2010-2014	Had Austerity 2009-2011?	Grew Faster Afterwards?	Reduced Debt/GDP?
Czech Republic	-0.006816938	0.177343192	10.76549531	Yes	Yes	No
Estonia	-5.863214118	4.848149772	2.325278017	Yes	Yes	No
Greece	-3.378380558	-6.48776816	55.40217374	Yes	No	No
Hungary	-1.648458079	0.558623291	13.26986341	Yes	Yes	No
Iceland	-2.35532672	2.423716116	-5.384523914	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ireland	-3.121448416	0.89443002	32.71249953	Yes	Yes	No
Italy	-1.629797238	-1.272826842	32.41835221	Yes	Yes	No
Netherlands	-0.081036621	-0.179603757	14.11449487	Yes	No	No
Poland	3.417800304	2.750447597	4.786626981	Yes	No	No
Portugal	-0.293379906	-2.486629729	46.34513214	Yes	No	No
Slovenia	-1.091822239	-1.008351317	51.02057426	Yes	Yes	No
Spain	-0.814684532	-1.312117406	49.10060915	Yes	No	No
United Kingdom	-0.910447124	1.32301383	24.06905052	Yes	Yes	No

ROOSEVELT
INSTITUTE

Olli Rehn, then EU Commissioner for Economic Affairs

“public debt in Europe is expected to stabilise only by 2014 and to do so at above 90% of GDP. Serious empirical research has shown that at such high levels, public debt acts as a permanent drag on growth.”
(address to the ILO, April 9, 2013)



Reinhart and Rogoff (2010)



TABLE 1—REAL GDP GROWTH AS THE LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT DEBT VARIES:
SELECTED ADVANCED ECONOMIES, 1790–2009
(*annual percent change*)

Country	Period	Central (federal) government debt/GDP			
		Below 30 percent	30 to 60 percent	60 to 90 percent	90 percent and above
Australia	1902–2009	3.1	4.1	2.3	4.6
Austria	1880–2009	4.3	3.0	2.3	n.a.
Belgium	1835–2009	3.0	2.6	2.1	3.3
Canada	1925–2009	2.0	4.5	3.0	2.2
Denmark	1880–2009	3.1	1.7	2.4	n.a.
Finland	1913–2009	3.2	3.0	4.3	1.9
France	1880–2009	4.9	2.7	2.8	2.3
Germany	1880–2009	3.6	0.9	n.a.	n.a.
Greece	1884–2009	4.0	0.3	4.8	2.5
Ireland	1949–2009	4.4	4.5	4.0	2.4
Italy	1880–2009	5.4	4.9	1.9	0.7
Japan	1885–2009	4.9	3.7	3.9	0.7
Netherlands	1880–2009	4.0	2.8	2.4	2.0
New Zealand	1932–2009	2.5	2.9	3.9	3.6
Norway	1880–2009	2.9	4.4	n.a.	n.a.
Portugal	1851–2009	4.8	2.5	1.4	n.a.
Spain	1850–2009	1.6	3.3	1.3	2.2
Sweden	1880–2009	2.9	2.9	2.7	n.a.
United Kingdom	1830–2009	2.5	2.2	2.1	1.8
United States	1790–2009	4.0	3.4	3.3	–1.8
Average		3.7	3.0	3.4	1.7
Median		3.9	3.1	2.8	1.9
Observations =	2,317	866	654	445	352

Herndon, Ash e Pollin (2014)

Table 5. *HAP recalculated GDP growth rates with RR calculated figures (percentages) for 1946–2009 time period*

	Public debt/GDP category			
	≤30%	30–60%	60–90%	>90%
Recalculated results				
All data with country-year weighting	4.2	3.1	3.2	2.2
Replication elements				
<i>Separate effects of RR calculations</i>				
Spreadsheet error only	4.2	3.0	3.2	1.9
Selective years exclusion only	4.2	3.1	3.2	1.9
Country weights only	4.0	3.0	3.0	1.9
<i>Interactive effects of RR calculations</i>				
Spreadsheet error + selective years exclusion	4.2	3.0	3.2	1.7
Spreadsheet error + country weights	4.1	2.9	3.4	1.4
Selective years exclusion + country weights	4.0	3.0	3.0	0.3
Spreadsheet error + selective years exclusion + country weights	4.1	2.9	3.4	0.0
Spreadsheet error + selective years exclusion + country weights + transcription error	4.1	2.9	3.4	−0.1
<i>RR published results</i>				
RR (2010A, 2010B, Figure 2) (approximated)	3.8	2.9	3.4	−0.1
RR (2010B, Appendix Table 1)	4.1	2.8	2.8	−0.1

Note: Values from bar chart in [RR \(2010A, Figure 2\)](#) are approximate.

Sources: Authors' calculations from working spreadsheet provided by [RR \(2010A, 2010B\)](#).



“In the four decades between 1969 and 2008, economists played a leading role in slashing taxation of the wealthy and in curbing public investment. They supervised the deregulation of major sectors. . . . They lionized big business, defending the concentration of corporate power, even as they demonized trade unions and opposed worker protections like minimum wage laws. Economists even persuaded policymakers to assign a dollar value to human life – around \$10 million in 2019 – to assess whether regulations were worthwhile.”



By Binyamin Appelbaum

Mr. Appelbaum is a member of The New York Times Editorial Board and the author of the forthcoming “The Economists’ Hour: False Prophets, Free Markets and the Fracture of Society.”



Paul Krugman ✓ @paulkrugman · 4h

Thread. The rush to austerity in 2010 was NOT policymakers responding to the best available analysis. Standard macroeconomics said that it was a terrible idea; people like Simon and, yes, me tried desperately to head it off 1/



simon wren-lewis @sjwrenlewis · 4h

Mixed emotions about the FT mea culpa. [ft.com/content/7b6242...](https://www.ft.com/content/7b6242...) "That consensus can be wrong was on display after the 2008 financial crisis, when many organisations – including this newspaper...

[Show this thread](#)

24

289

878

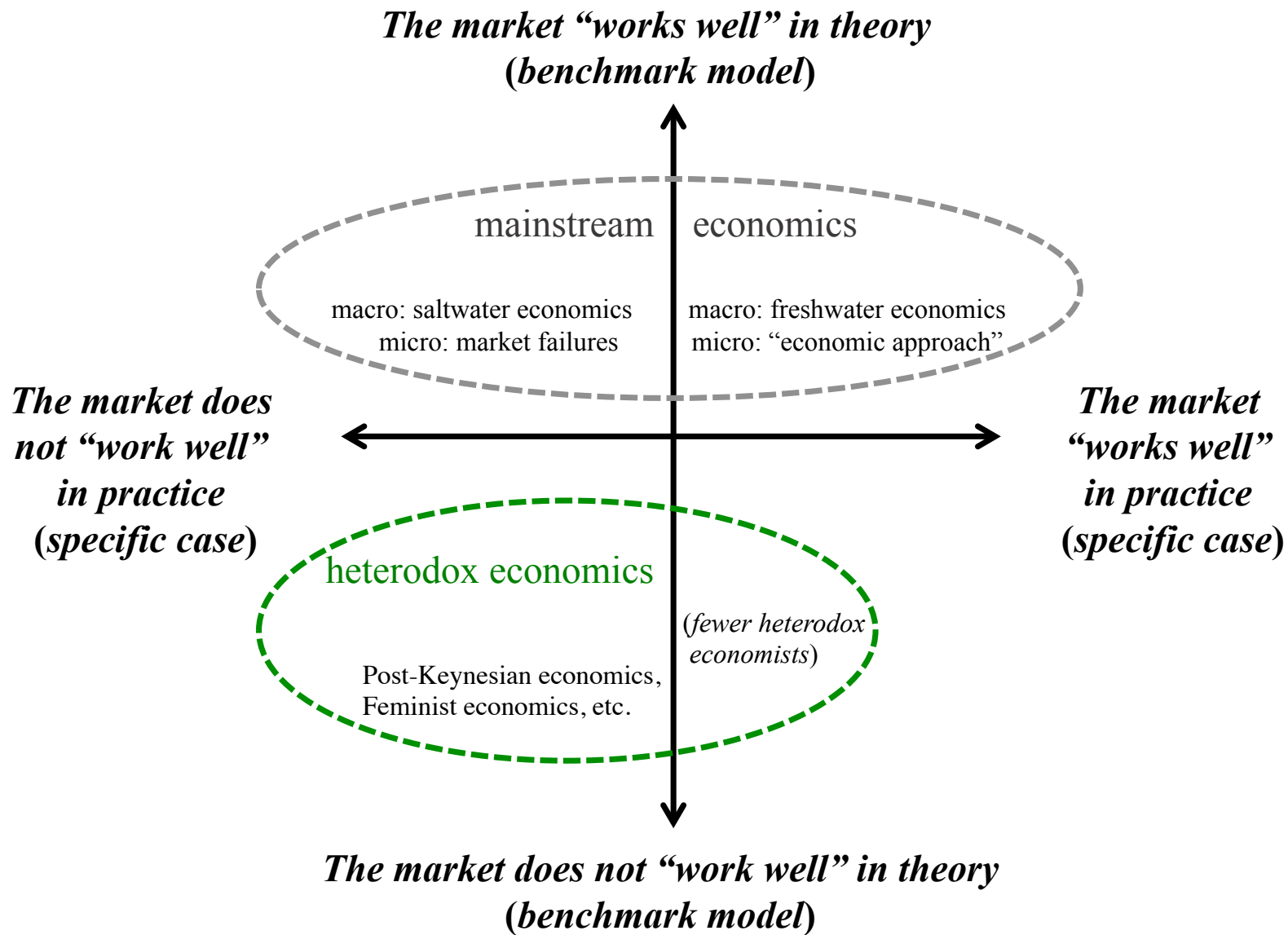


Paul Krugman ✓

@paulkrugman

To the extent that the Very Serious People relied on economists at all, they cited ideas about expansionary austerity and red lines for debt that were actually heterodox – and have since been discredited 2/

1:12 PM · 16 Jan 21 · [Twitter Web App](#)



Input legitimacy

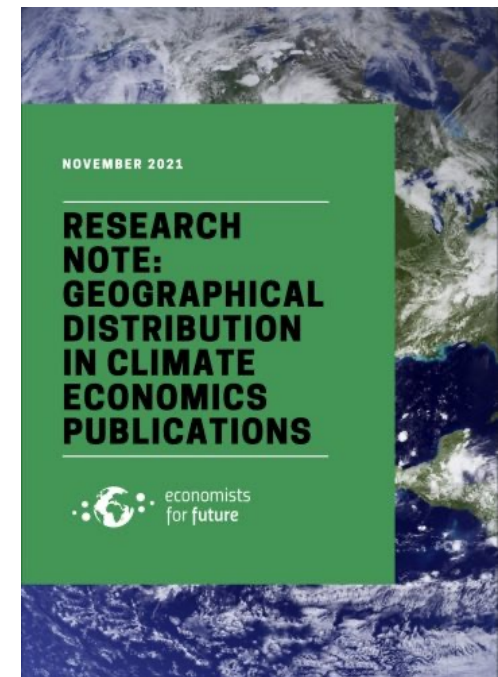
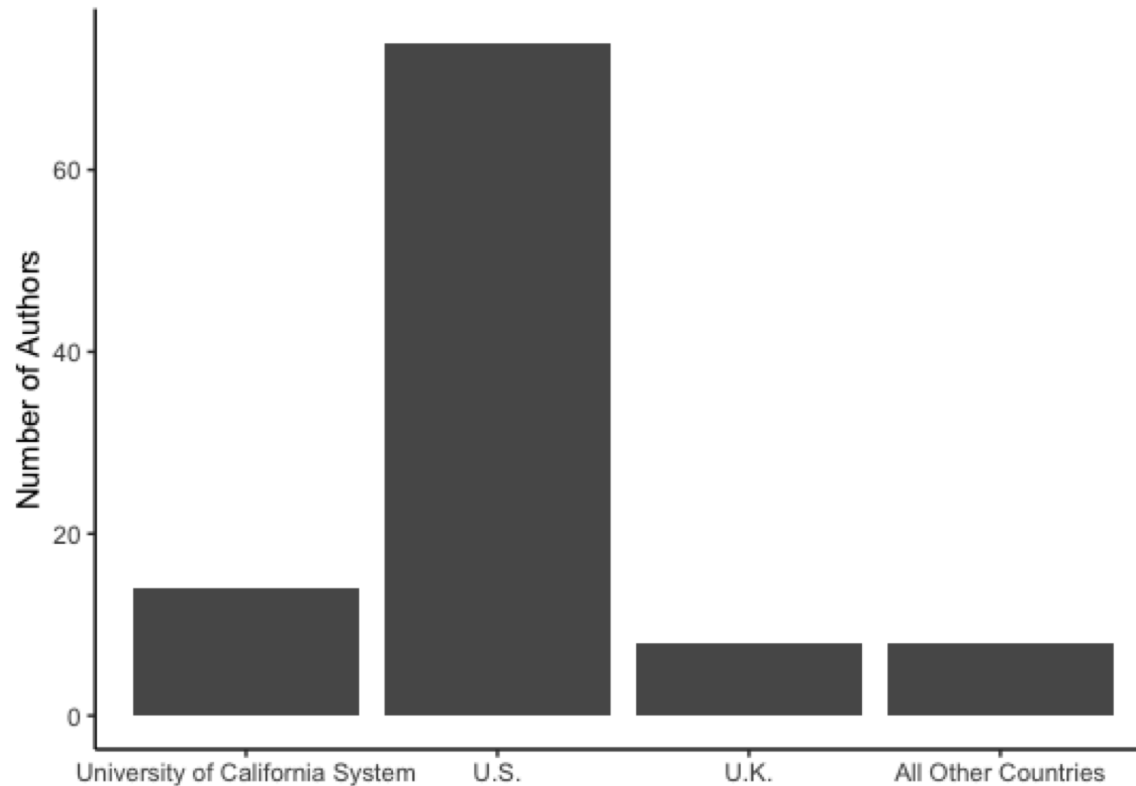


Uneasiness with and among the economists

- After the 2007-8 Great Crisis there has been a wide discussion about the failures of economics
 - e.g. Krugman (2009), Solow (2010), Blanchard (2016), Rodrik (2016), Romer (2016), Rubinstein (2017), Akerlof (2019)
- AEA survey (2019): 30% of women feel they have been discriminated against; 21% of the sample agrees that “My ideas and opinions are often ignored within the field of economics”
- Structure and organization of the economics profession denounced among the problems (Fourcade et al., 2015; Colussi, 2018; Heckman and Moktan, 2019). The field has been found to be:
 - Very hierarchical;
 - Not inclusive;
 - Lacking diversity;
 - Narrowly focused on the “top”
 - ...

Number of Authors in 50 Most Cited Articles

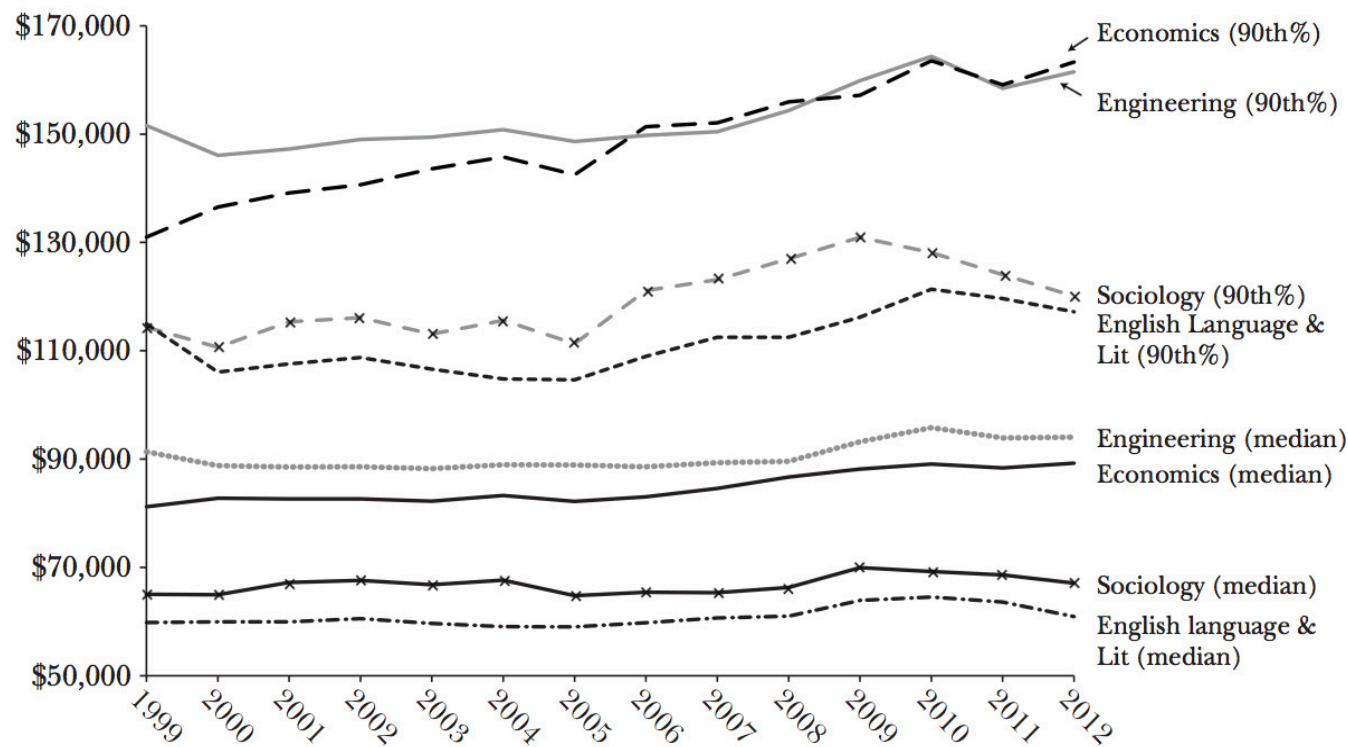
University of California Hosts More Authors Than All Countries Outside U.S. & U.K.



The “superiority of economists”

Annual Median and 90th Percentile Wages in Selected Disciplines, 1999–2012

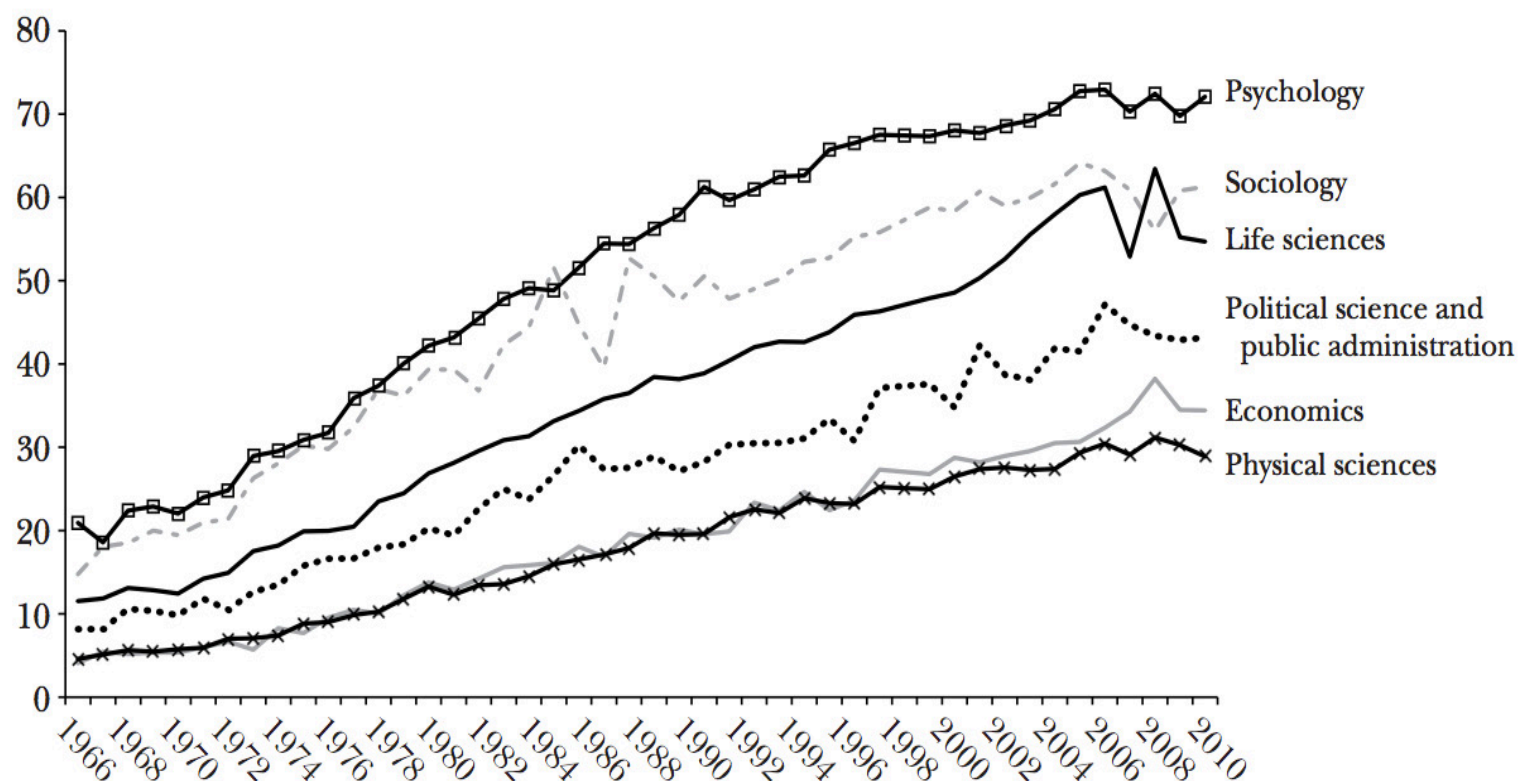
(2012 constant dollars)



Source: Fourcade et al. (JEP, 2015)

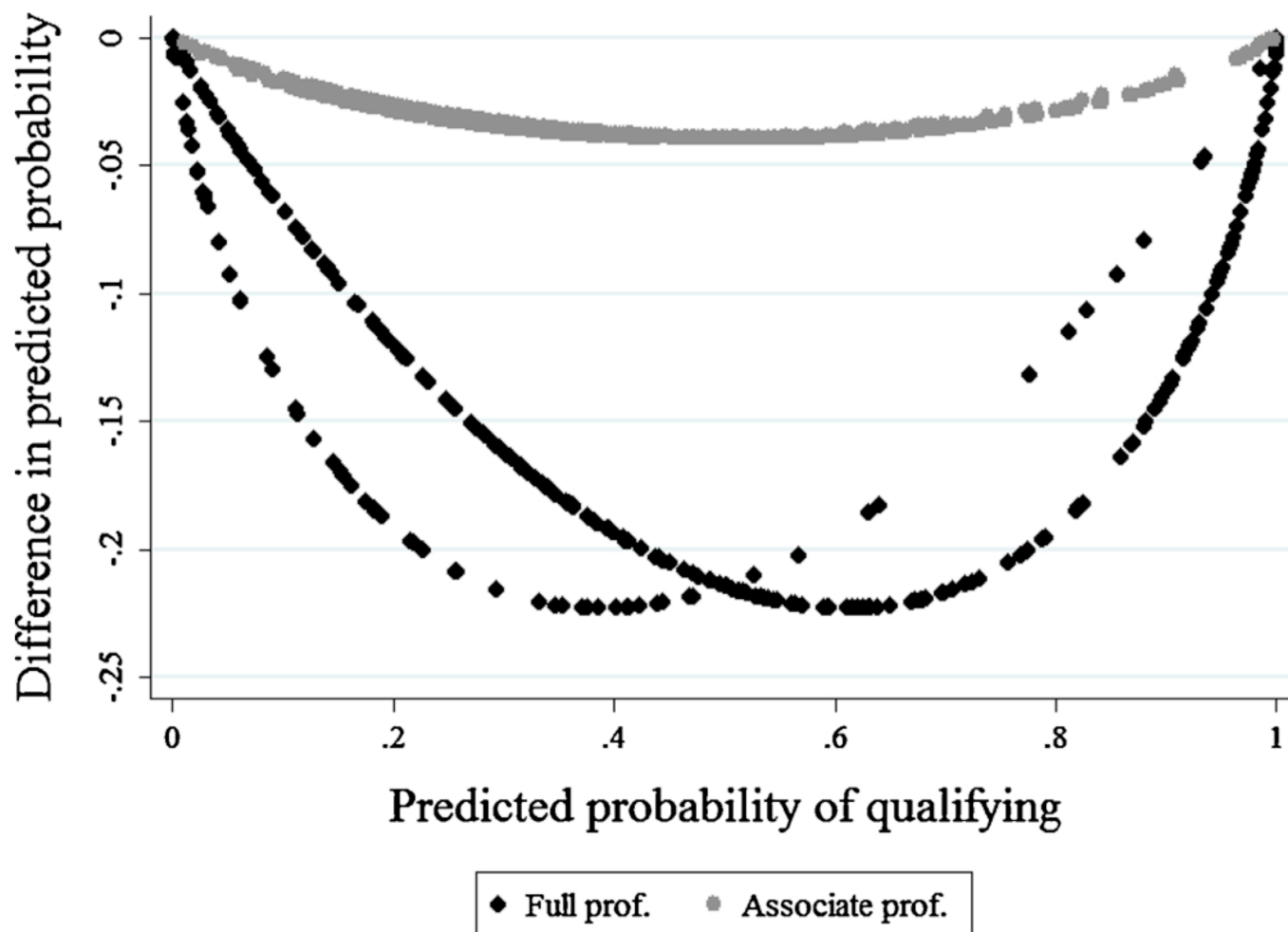
The “superiority of economists”

Percentage of Doctorates Awarded to Women in Selected Disciplines, 1966–2011



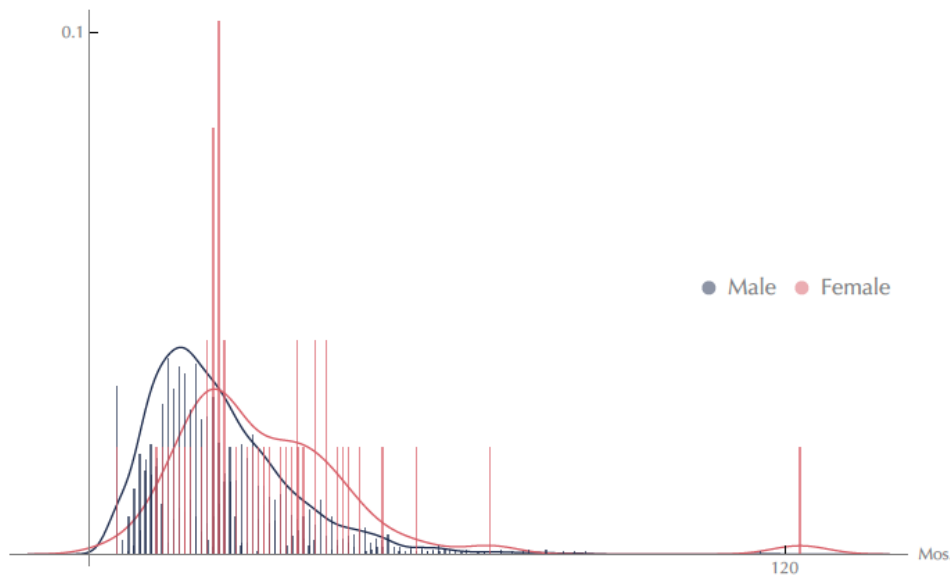
Source: Fourcade et al. (JEP, 2015)

Gender discrimination in access to the profession: the Italian case

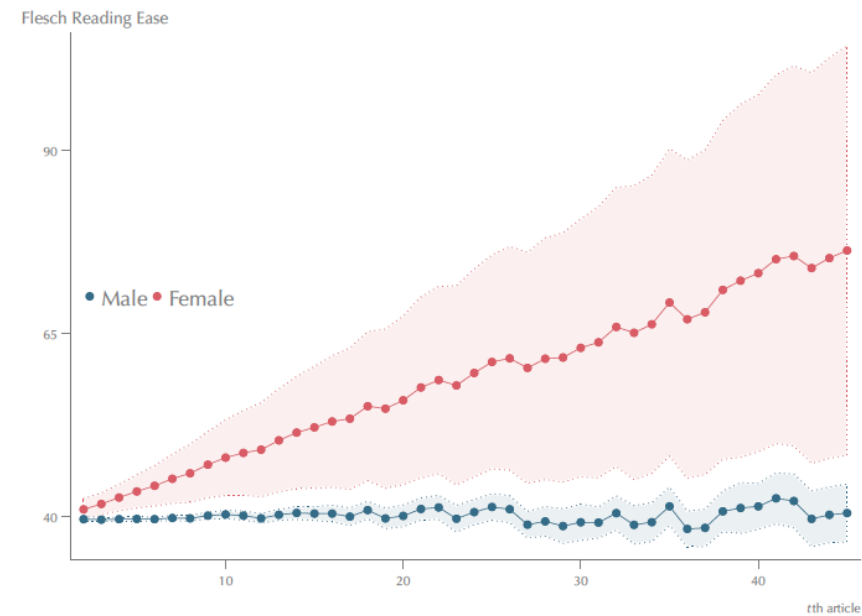


Hengel (2022): are women held to higher standards?

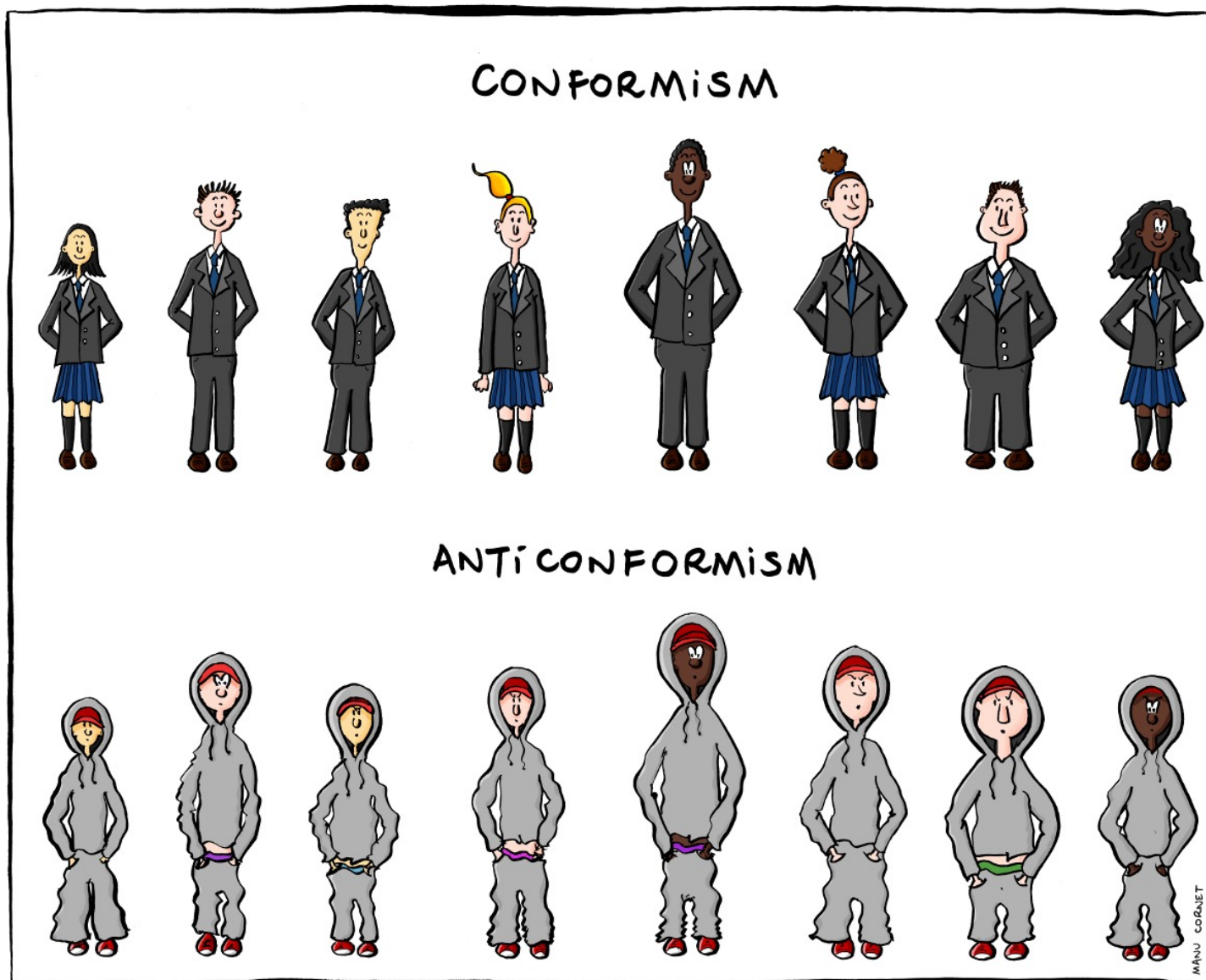
Distribution of review times at *Econometrica*



Readability of authors' t -th publication

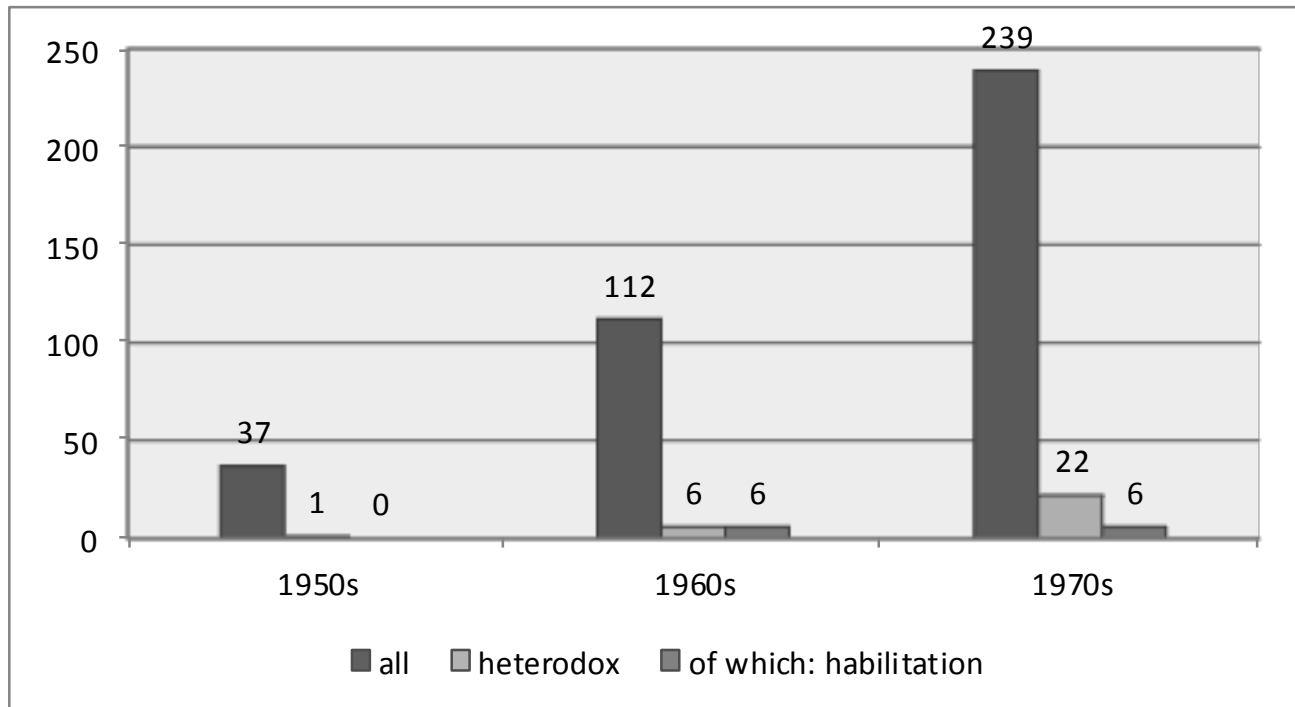


“Mainstream”? “Heterodox”?



Germany: Heise (2016)

Figure 3: Professorial appointments of economists 1950 - 1979



Source: Heise et al. 2015

Australia

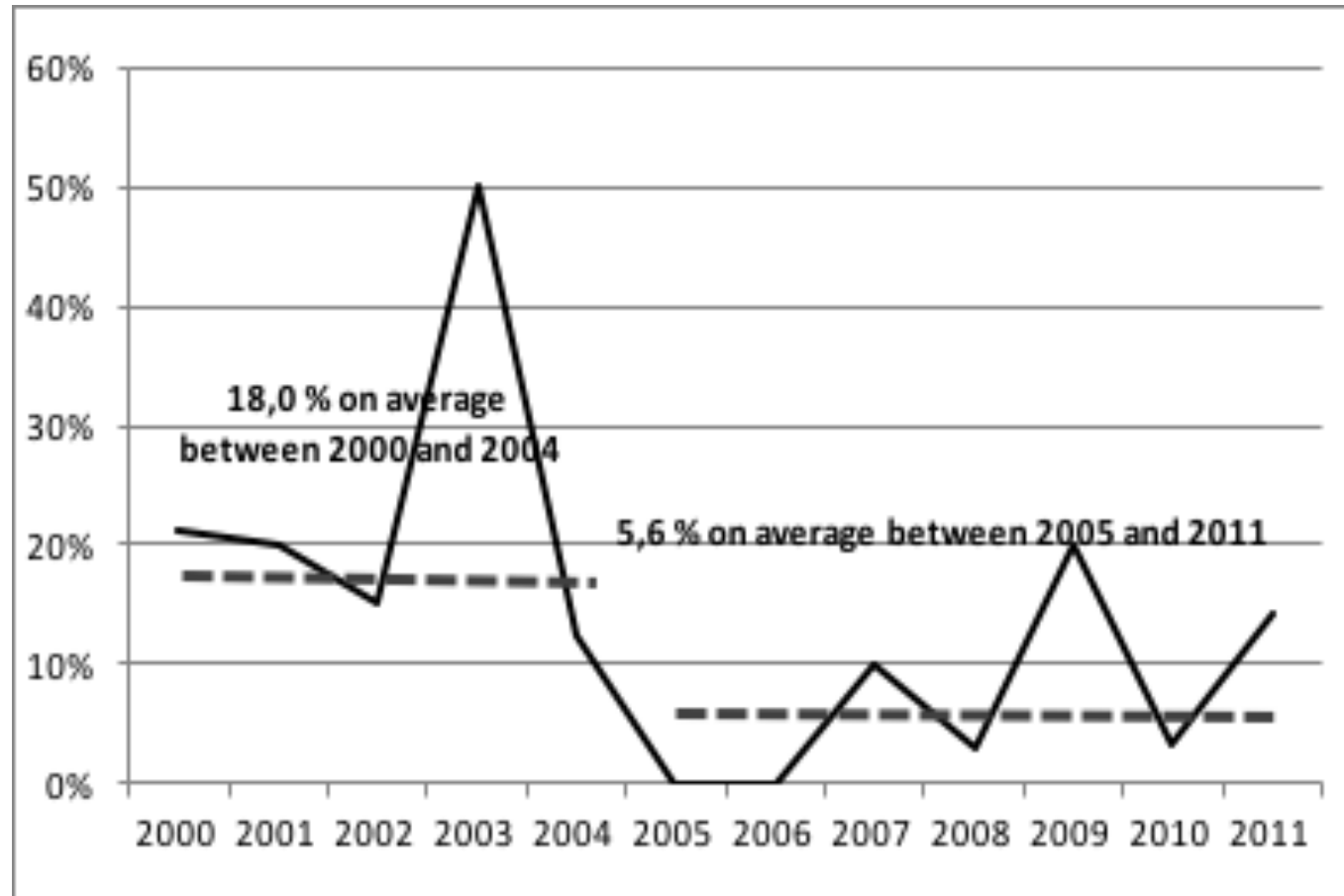
Economics Units Taught	1980		2011	
	No. of units	%	No. of units	%
Mainstream economics	626	66.5	1257	80.3
Heterodox economics	289	30.7	219	14.0
Other economics	27	2.9	90	5.7
	942		1566	

Source: Thornton (2013)

Italy: Corsi, D'Ippoliti & Zacchia (2018)

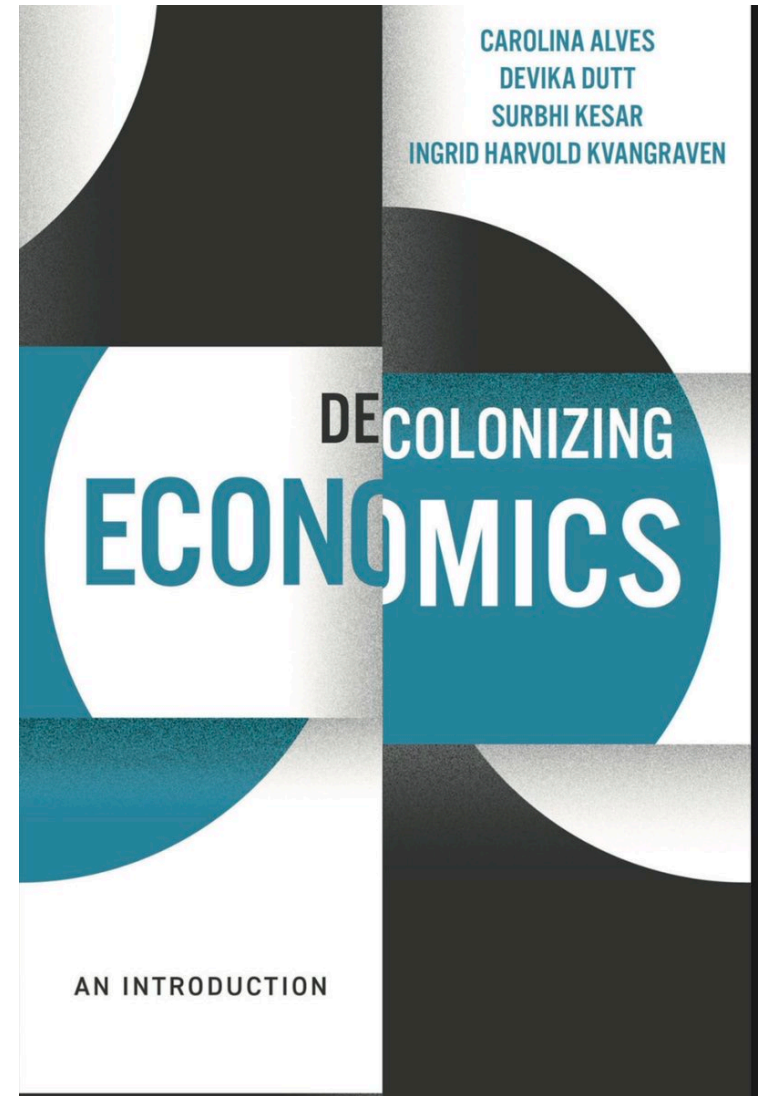
	Candidates for full professorship		Candidates for associate professorship		Tenured professors	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Qualified</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Qualified</i>	<i>Candidates for promotion</i>	<i>Not candidates</i>
<i>Total</i>	385	174 (45%)	571	272 (48%)	715	396
<i>Heterodox</i>	68 (18%)	12 (7%)	57 (10%)	32 (56%)	88 (12%)	57 (14%)
<i>Women</i>	84 (22%)	26 (31%)	193 (34%)	79 (41%)	229 (32%)	89 (22%)

France: % of heterodox prof (Chavance & Labrousse 2018)





A
Herstory
of
Economics
Edith
Kuiper



Throughput legitimacy



We can only trust debate

“Now every form bestowed on created things by God has power for a determined act[uality ...]. And thus **the human understanding** has a form, viz. intelligible light, which of itself **is sufficient for knowing certain intelligible things**, viz. those we can come to know through the senses” (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I–II, Q109a1”

“The objectivity of science arises, not because the individual is impartial, but because many individuals are continuously testing each other’s theories” (Robinson, 1962, p. 2)



Publishing and Promotion in Economics: The Tyranny of the Top Five[†]

JAMES J. HECKMAN AND SIDHARTH MOKTAN^{*}

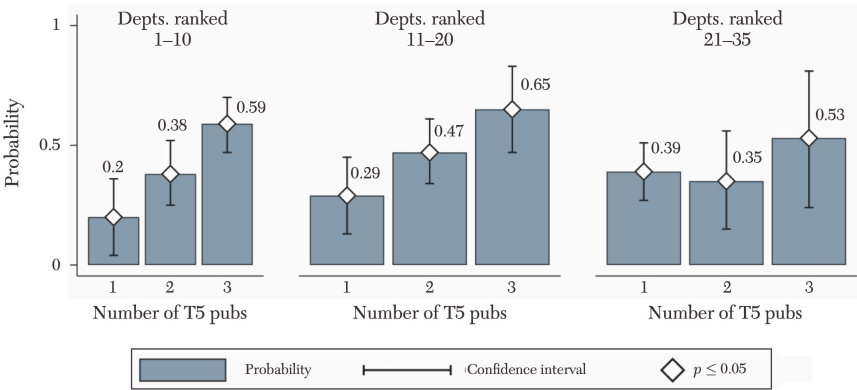
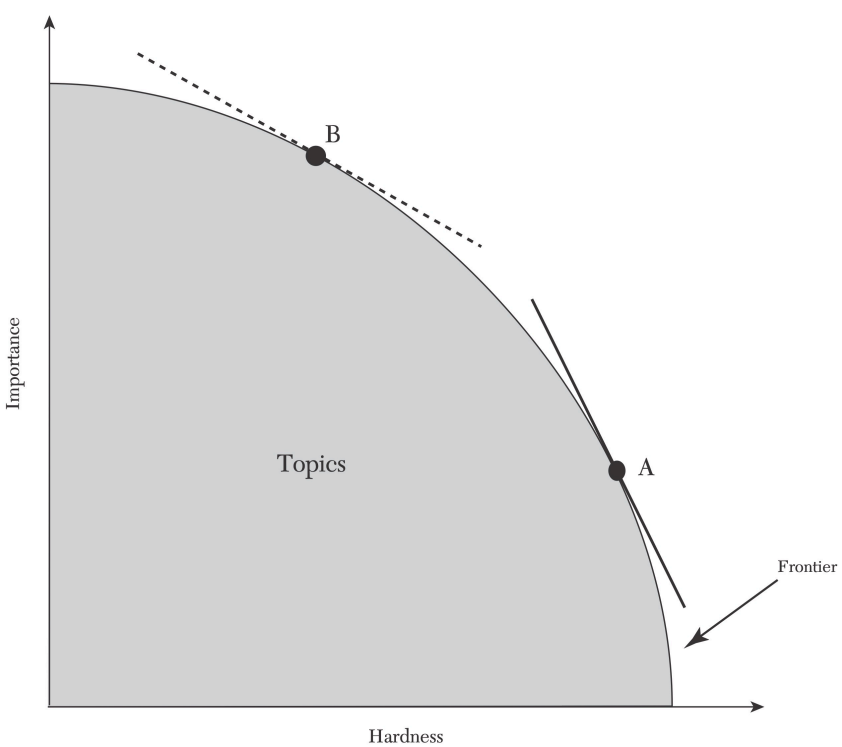


Figure 4. Predicted Probabilities for Tenure Receipt in the First Spell of Tenure-Track Employment, by Department Rank (Logit)

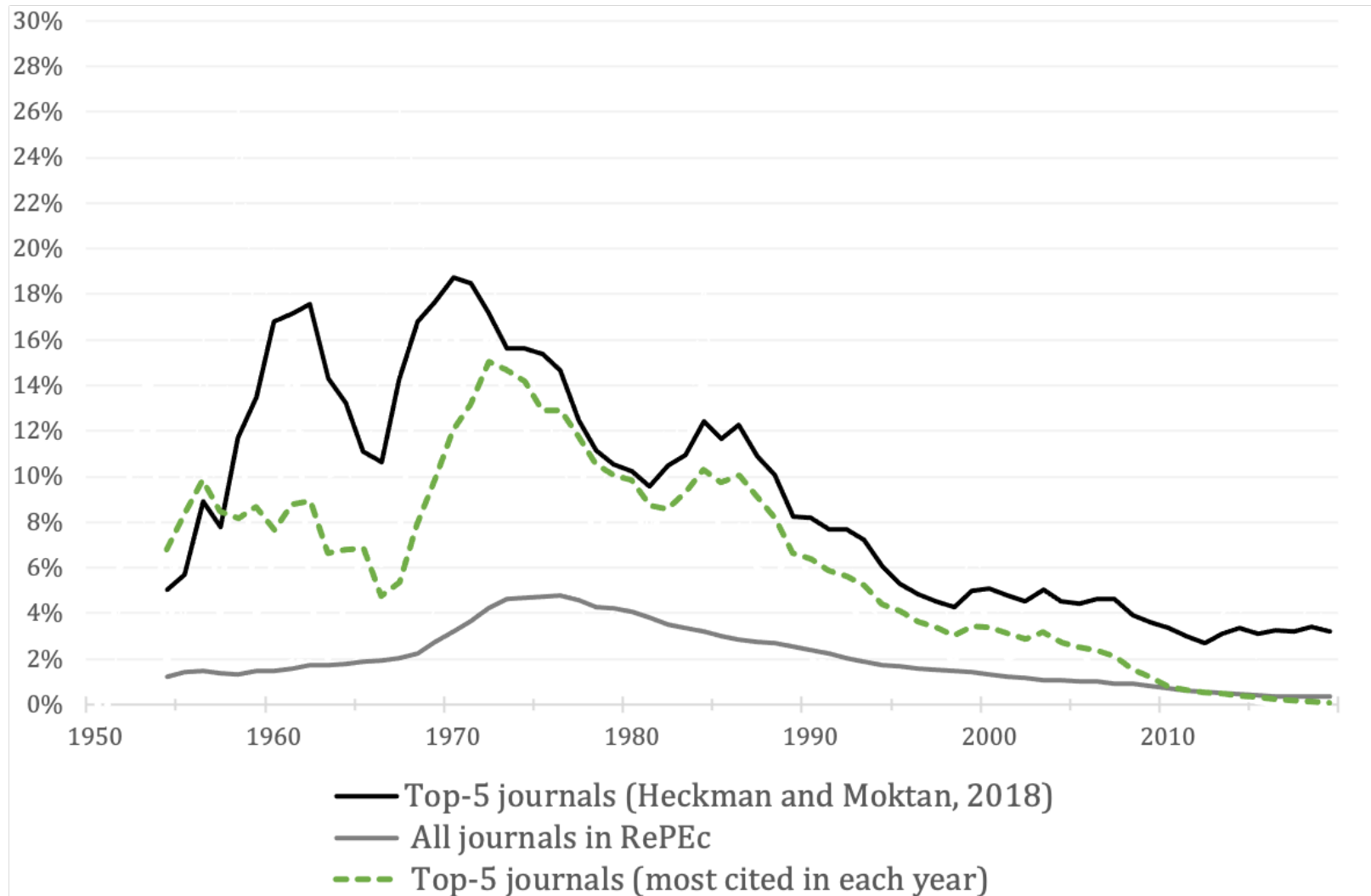
Sins of Omission and the Practice of Economics[†]

GEORGE A. AKERLOF^{*}



... and (fair and open) debate is what we lack

Share of comments and replies on all published articles



Science 2012: editors coercing authors to cite their journal

Journal Title	Number of Coercive Observations
<i>Journal of Business Research</i>	49
<i>Journal of Retailing</i>	43
<i>Marketing Science</i>	29
<i>Journal of Banking and Finance</i>	24
<i>Information and Management</i>	19
<i>Applied Economics</i>	18
<i>Academy of Management Journal</i>	14
<i>Group and Organization Management</i>	13
<i>Journal of Consumer Psychology</i>	9
<i>Psychology and Marketing</i>	8
<i>Journal of Accounting and Public Policy</i>	7
<i>Journal of Financial Economics</i>	7
<i>Academy of Management Review</i>	6
<i>British Journal of Management</i>	6
<i>Financial Management</i>	6
<i>Journal of Management Information Systems</i>	6
<i>Journal of Management Studies</i>	6
<i>Organization Science</i>	6
<i>Production and Operations Management</i>	6
<i>Strategic Management Journal</i>	6
<i>Asia Pacific Journal of Management</i>	5
<i>Decision Support Systems</i>	5
<i>European Journal of Political Economy</i>	5
<i>Industrial Management and Data Systems</i>	5
<i>Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science</i>	5
<i>Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes</i>	5

Editors of top journals favour their colleagues

Table 3: Social ties and publication outcomes

	Pooled	Same faculty	PhD advisor	Same PhD	Co-authors	Same field
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A: Articles						
InCharge	0.2419*	0.2670**	0.1456*	-0.0570	0.0463	0.0704
	(0.1373)	(0.1046)	(0.0777)	(0.0776)	(0.0575)	(0.0922)
Panel B: Pages						
InCharge	10.9883**	10.2054***	6.0008**	-1.3440	2.7016	4.6627
	(4.4484)	(3.4194)	(2.7478)	(2.4186)	(1.9209)	(2.9171)
Panel C: Lead articles						
InCharge	0.0714	0.0921**	-0.0098	-0.0075	0.0315	-0.0199
	(0.0505)	(0.0377)	(0.0290)	(0.0234)	(0.0219)	(0.0331)

Source: Colussi (RES, 2018)

Evidence of malpractice: Necker (2014)

Economists' admitted own research behavior.

No.	Have you ever ...	Obs.	Percent "Yes"	Std. dev.	[95% CI]		Norms by behavior	
							Not admitted	Admitted
5	Copied parts from work of others without citing	422	2.13	14.46	0.75	3.52	1.05	1.67
6	Fabricated some data	348	2.59	15.90	0.91	4.26	1.14	3.22
7	Corrected data to fit the theory	348	1.15	10.67	0.02	2.27	1.21	1.21
8	Excluded part of the data (e.g., outliers) without reporting this	348	3.45	18.27	1.52	5.37	1.47	3.08
9	Used tricks to increase t -value, R^2 , or other statistics	348	7.18	25.86	4.46	9.91	1.52	2.64
10	Failed to correctly give a colleague co-authorship who has worked on the paper	423	1.42	11.84	0.29	2.55	1.82	1.50
11	Refrained from citing results or opinions that are not in line with your own analysis	422	21.09	40.84	17.18	25.00	1.83	2.67
12	Refrained from checking the contents of the works cited	422	51.90	50.02	47.11	56.68	1.62	2.48
13	Refrained from citing work in lower ranked journals, which in a ranking from A+ to C rank lower than A	421	19.95	40.01	16.12	23.79	1.94	2.94
14	Presented empirical findings selectively so that they confirm one's argument	348	32.18	46.79	27.25	37.12	1.82	2.99
15	Searched for control variables until you got the desired results	348	36.49	48.21	31.41	41.58	1.75	2.94
16	Stopped statistical analysis when you had a desired result	348	37.93	48.59	32.81	43.05	1.94	3.23
17	Copied from your own previous work without citing	423	23.64	42.54	19.58	27.71	2.18	3.37
18	Refrained from citing work from other disciplines	419	19.57	39.72	15.76	23.38	2.40	3.24

But it is not necessarily about corruption

- For example, Bagues et al. (2017) show that in Italy and Spain candidates for promotion within academia, who have personal connections with members of the judging (ASN) commission are more likely to be promoted
- However, when controlling for candidates' methods and topics of research (Corsi et al., 2019), the statistical relevance of connections with the commission members disappears

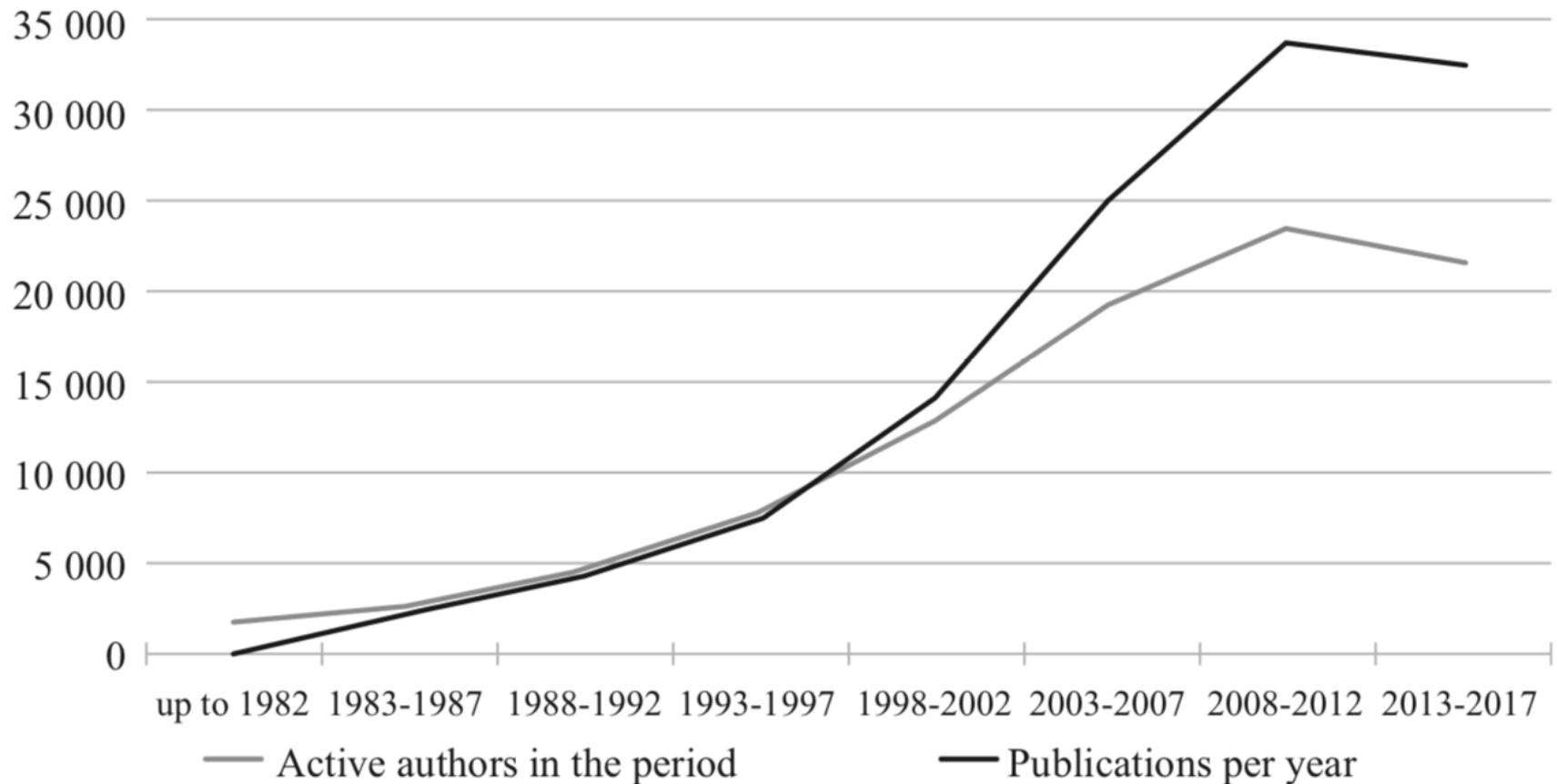
Probability to qualify as associate prof., Italy (ASN), marginal eff.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Cronyism			
Connections with the ASN commission	0.0607** (0.0276)	0.0303 (0.0275)	0.0279 (0.0272)
Diversity of ideas			
Wide interests: n. of different JEL codes		-0.433*** (0.0906)	-0.434*** (0.0901)
Heterodox economist (share of pubs)			-0.651** (0.323)
Observations	586	540	540

Malice is an unnecessary assumption!

- Among the problems of the profession, many (e.g. Ferguson and Johnson, 2018; Corsi et al., 2019) highlight **bibliometric indexes** and their use in research evaluation
 - The trend was already there (e.g. on the RAE: Oswald, 2007; Lee et al., 2010) and partly reflects growing discontent with the use of bibliometrics across disciplines
 - See e.g. the International Mathematical Union, the International Council of Industrial and Applied Mathematics, and the Institute of Mathematical Statistics (Adler et al., 2008); the San Francisco DORA; the Leiden Manifesto for research metrics (Hicks et al., 2005); or more recently the joint declaration by the Académie des Sciences, Leopoldina, and Royal Society (2018); or Science Europe (2020)
- In all disciplines, new **incentives** are introduced for both researchers and institutions. Regardless of scientific malpractice or misconduct – even the “normal” process of scientific debate is being affected

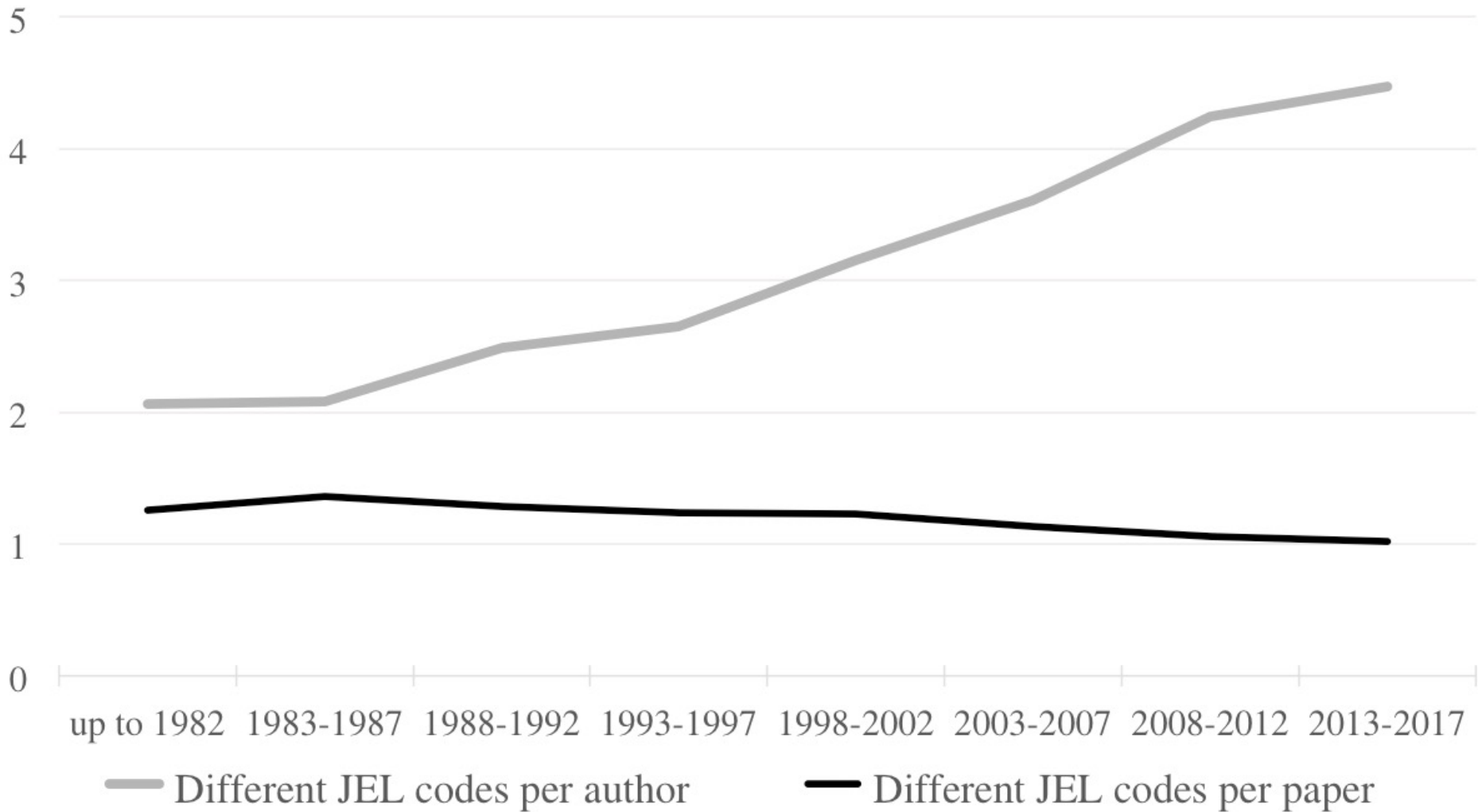
1st trend: excess supply of econ papers



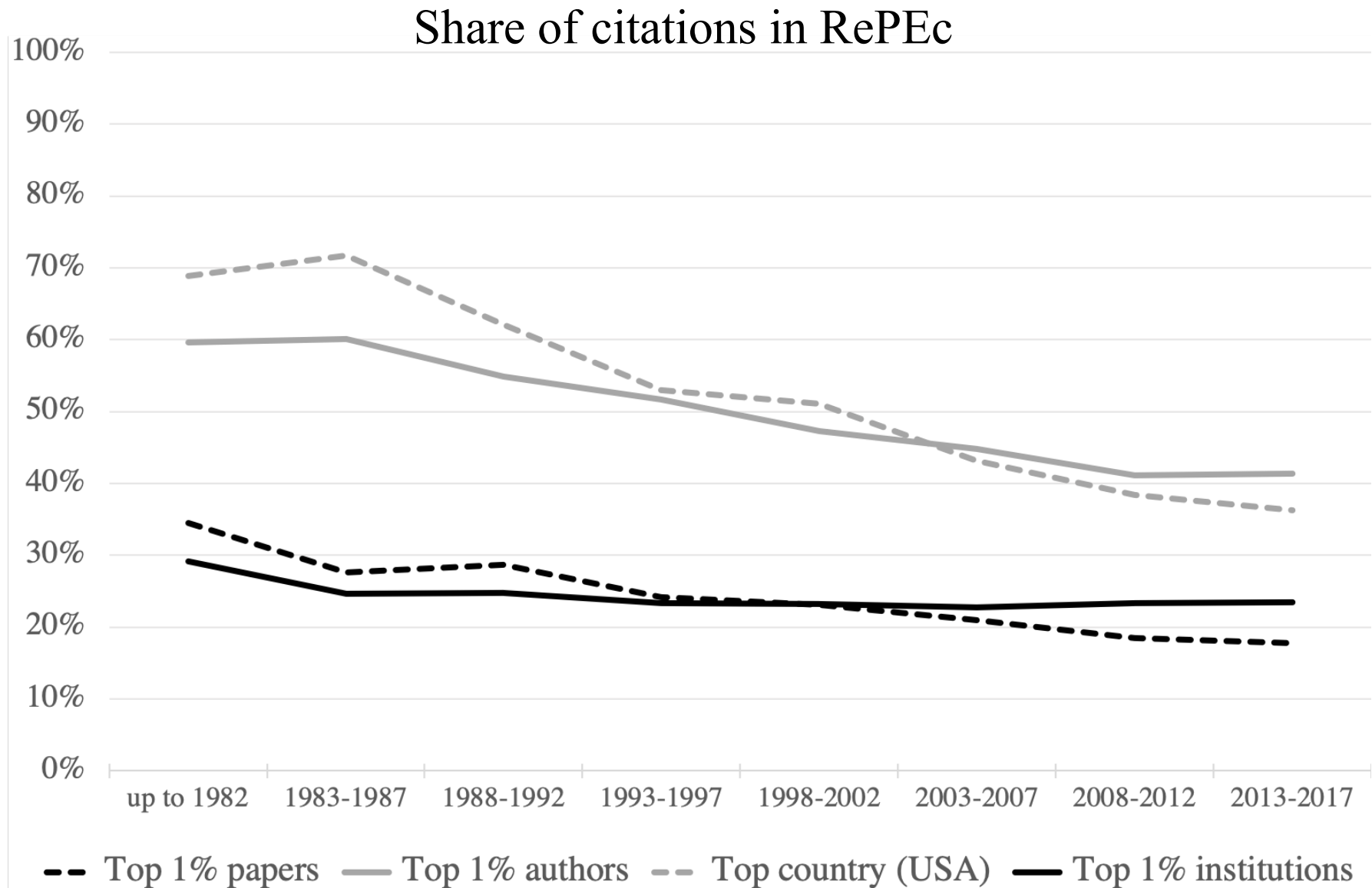
“most people do not have or care to take the time to read the articles any more!”

Eugene Garfield, Founder and Chairman emeritus of ISI (now part of Clarivate Analytics) (2005, p. 20)

2nd trend: über-specialization

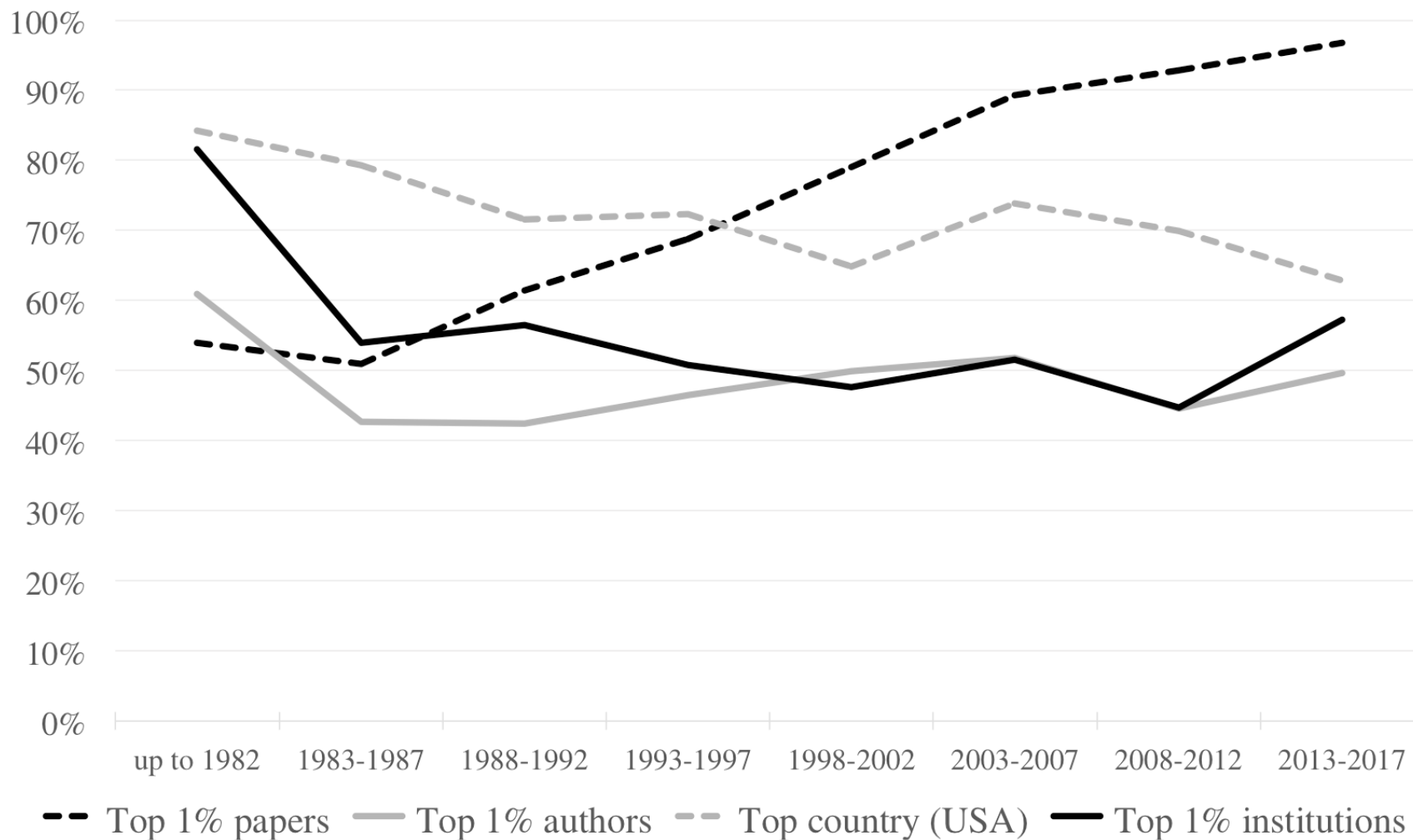


3rd trend: excessive hierarchy

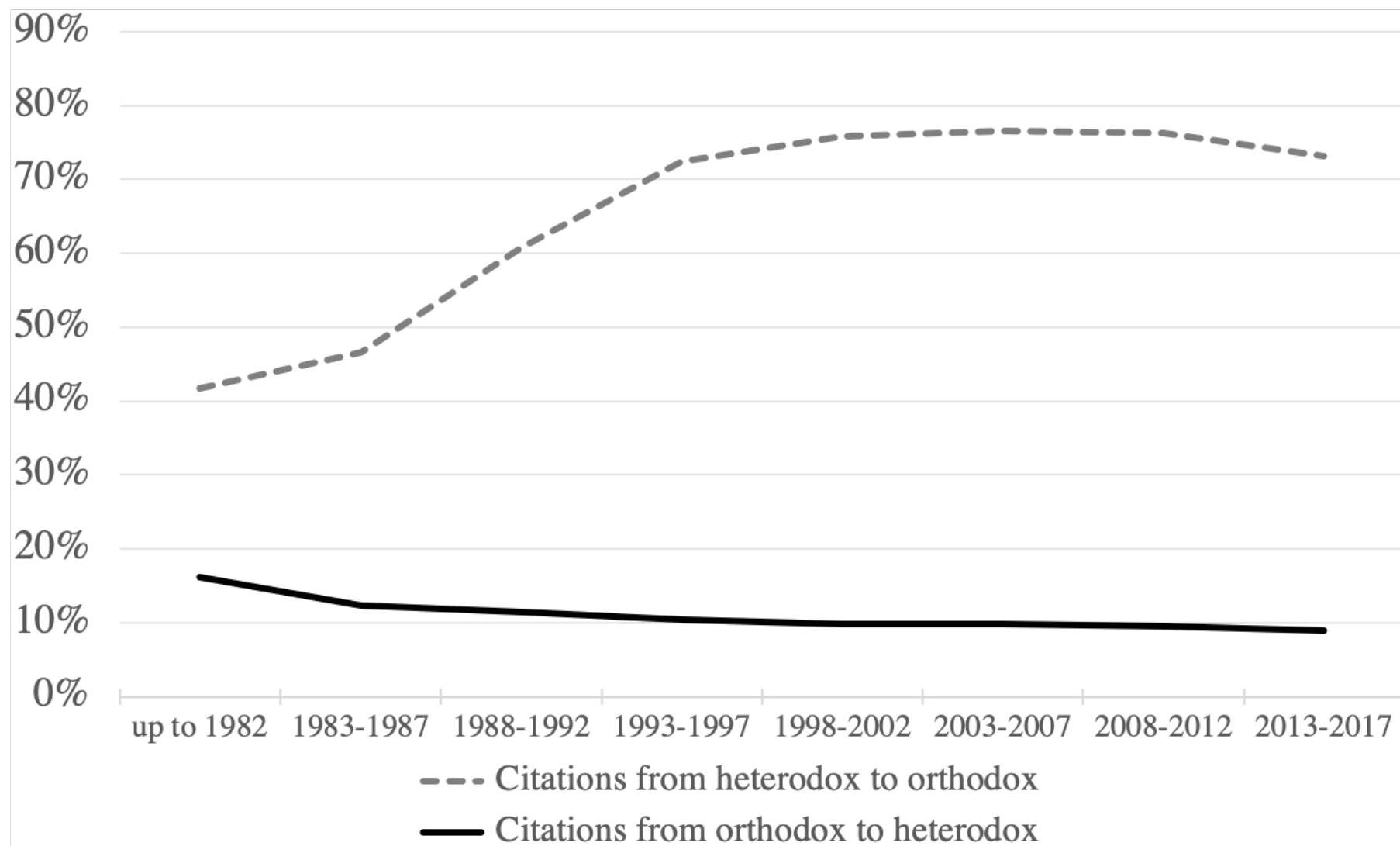


3rd trend: excessive hierarchy

Share of citations from articles published in the top-5



4th trend: mainstream-heterodox division



- I gathered information on the 30 largest countries, in which 90.3% of RePEc authors are based. [Of these, 25 have introduced a formal system of research assessment](#), to which 58.4% of economists are subject.
- This introduces new incentives for both researchers and institutions, and it affects the normal conduct of science, independently of unprofessional or illicit behaviour
- The debate has so far focused on the pros and cons of peer review vs. bibliometrics. There is a need for more research on the impact of research assessment on the scientific debate

Table 3.1 Formalized research evaluation schemes

	<i>Start year</i>	<i>Object of assessment</i>	<i>Evaluation method in economics</i>	<i>Purpose and uses</i>
Turkey	1981	Individuals: qualification as ass. or full prof.	Mixed: publications + oral/practical exam	Qualification
Mexico	1984	Individuals	Bibliometrics + quant. indicators	Rankings, individual remuneration
Mexico	1984	Universities	Bibliometrics + quant. indicators	Funding, rankings
UK	1986	Universities: RAE, since 2014: REF	Mixed: informed peer review	Funding, rankings
Netherlands	1987	Department/schools	Bibliometrics*	Rankings
South Africa	1995	Universities	Mixed: informed peer review	Funding, rankings
Germany	1998	Universities (independent NGO)	Mixed: bibliometrics + survey	Rankings (university profiles)
Finland	1998	Universities (Academy of Finland at irregular intervals)	Mixed: bibliometrics + peer review	Funding, rankings
Germany	2001	Individuals: qualification as a prof.	Peer review (decentered)	Qualification only
China	2001	Universities	Bibliometrics	Rankings, individual remuneration
Austria	2002	Universities	Quantitative indicators (no research outputs)	Funding
Austria	2002	Individuals: qualification as asst. or ass. prof.	Bibliometrics	Qualification (not mandatory)
Switzerland	2002	Individuals: qual. as a prof. (German-speaking cantons)	Peer review (decentered)	Qualification only
Netherlands	2003	Universities	Mixed: bibliometrics + site visit	Rankings
Japan	2003	Universities	Mixed: complex multi-party system**	Funding, rankings
Norway	2004	Universities	Bibliometrics	Funding, rankings
Germany	2005	Universities (government)	Peer review	Funding
Italy	2005	Universities	Mixed: informed peer review	Funding, rankings
Brazil	2006	Universities	Mixed: informed peer review	Rankings
France	2007	Individuals: qualification as asst. or full prof.	Peer review: CV + interview	Hiring, promotion
France	2007	Universities; since 2014: HCERES	Mixed: bibliometrics + site visit	Funding, rankings
Spain	2007	Individuals: qualification as asst., ass., or full prof.	Mixed: publications + interview	Qualification only***
Sweden	2009	Universities	Bibliometrics	Funding
Denmark	2009	Universities	Bibliometrics	Funding
Australia	2010	Universities	Mixed: informed peer review	Funding
Italy	2012	Individuals: qualification as asst., ass., or full prof.	Mixed: informed peer review	Qualification only
Slovakia	2013	Universities	Mixed: informed peer review	Funding
Poland	2013	Universities	Bibliometrics	Funding
Croatia	2013	Universities	Bibliometrics	Funding
Korea	2014	Universities	Mixed, but no eval. of research outputs	Funding, rankings
Portugal	2015	Universities	Peer review	Funding
Sweden	2016	Universities	Peer review	Funding
Turkey	2016	Universities	Peer review	Rankings

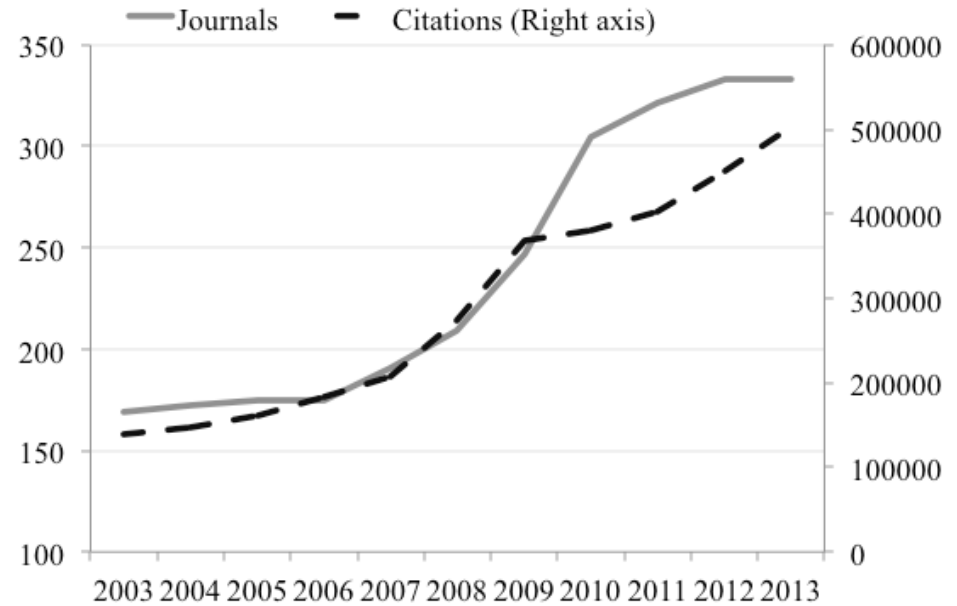
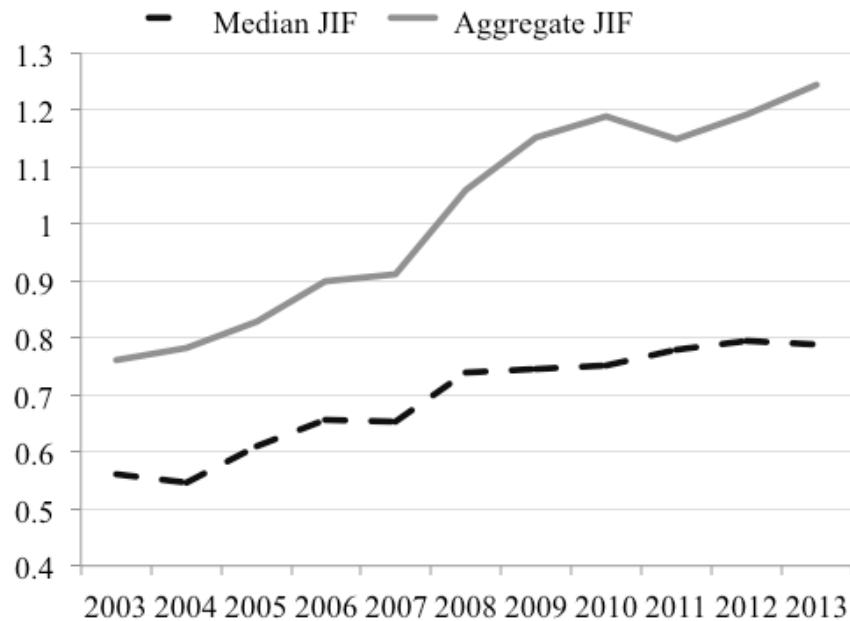
Risks of homologation

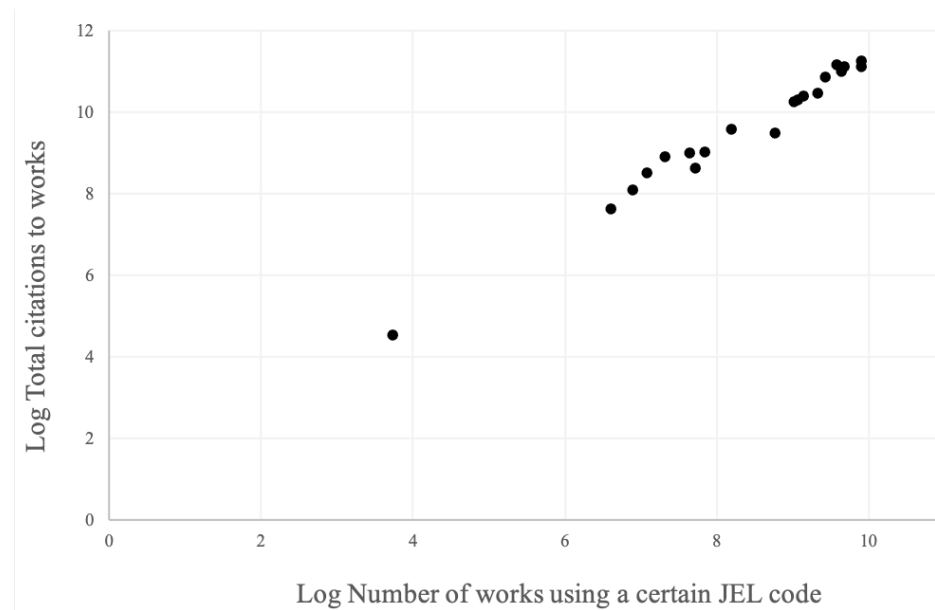
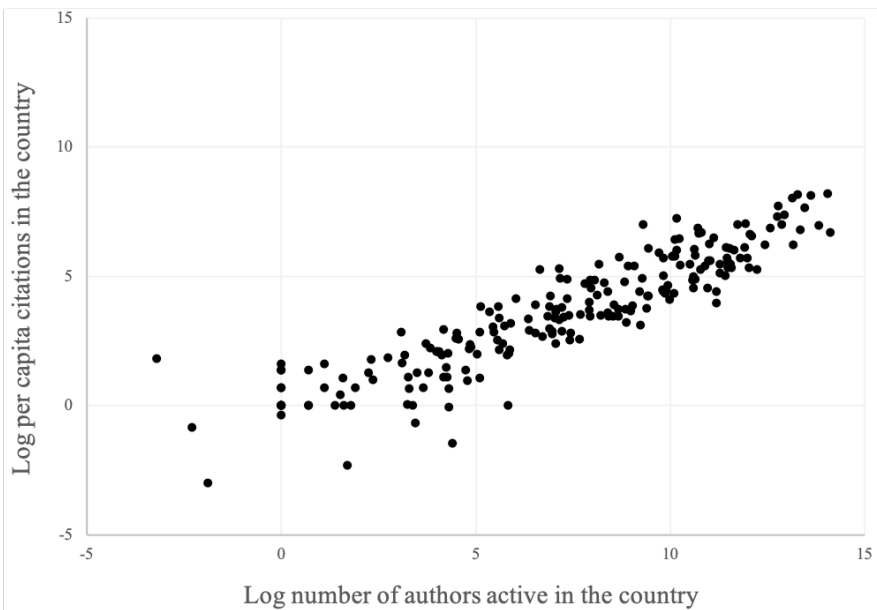
- **Peer review** advantages the more organized and larger groups; the more conventional ideas (through the selection of reviewers, their evaluations, etc.).
 - It can imply treating differently cases that broadly similar, with a risk of **direct discrimination**
- **Bibliometrics** is often founded on the mistaken idea that citations are equal to impact or quality of research; it ignores the variability and asymmetry of citations, and their social determinants.
 - It often applies uniform rules to different cases, with a risk of producing **indirect discrimination**

Economists support the use of citation counts

- “Most of the published research on citations in economics has considered them as measures of quality” (Hamermesh, 2018, p. 117)
 - Economists produced journal, department, university, and individual rankings;
 - justified their use for the sake of funding/HR (e.g. Ellison, 2013);
 - took on administrative responsibilities (Corsi et al., 2019).
- Ductor et al. (2020) assume the “value of an idea” is a unidimensional continuous variable. It determines the quality of a paper, and by aggregation of authors and journals, and can be empirically measured by citation counts.
- Ex post it has been found that peer review ratings in economics are correlated with citation indexes in the UK REF: Stockhammer et al. (2017); in Italy: Baccini and De Nicolao (2016); and in France: Chavance and Labrousse (2018)

But citation counts have their own bias!

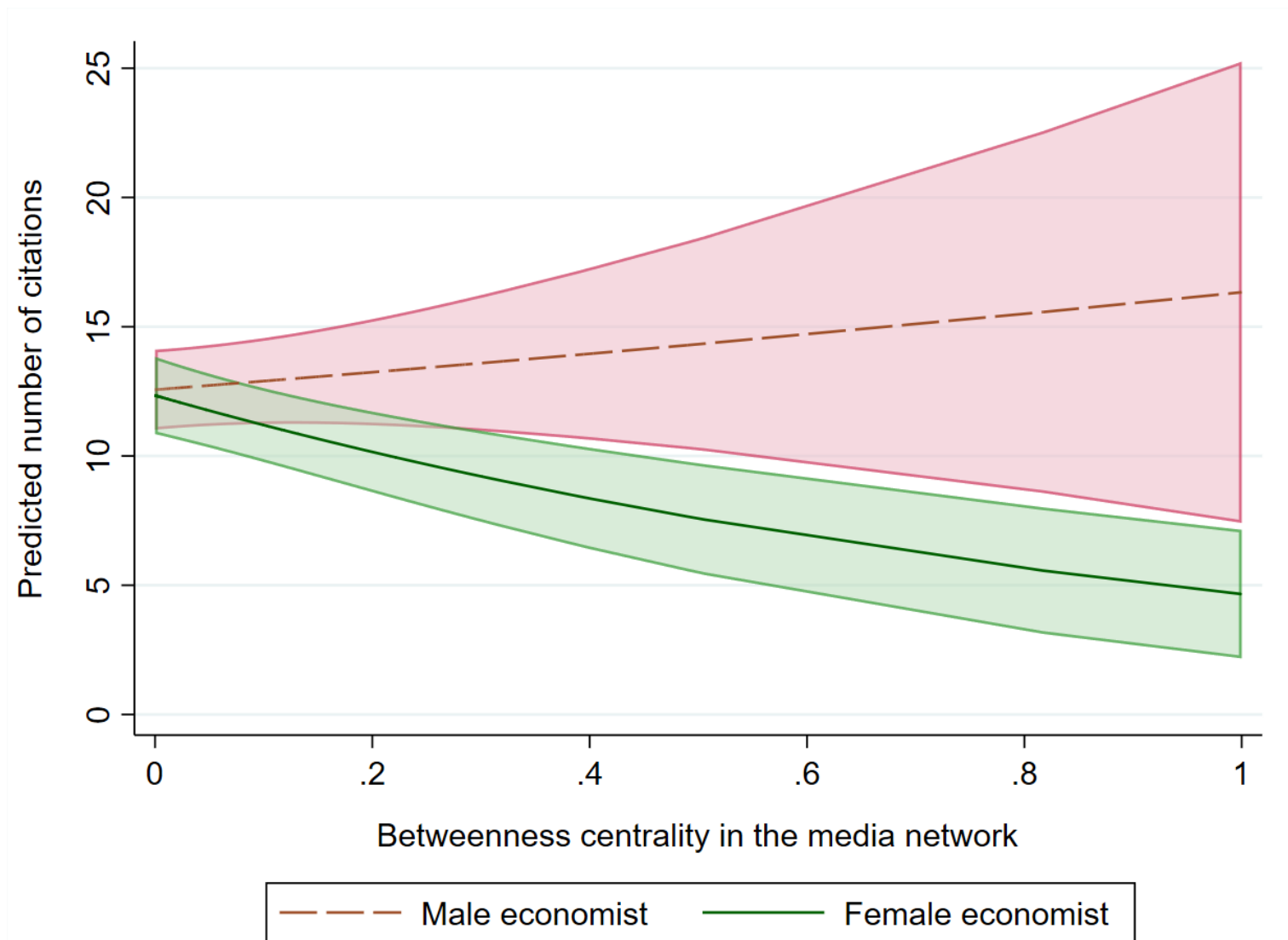




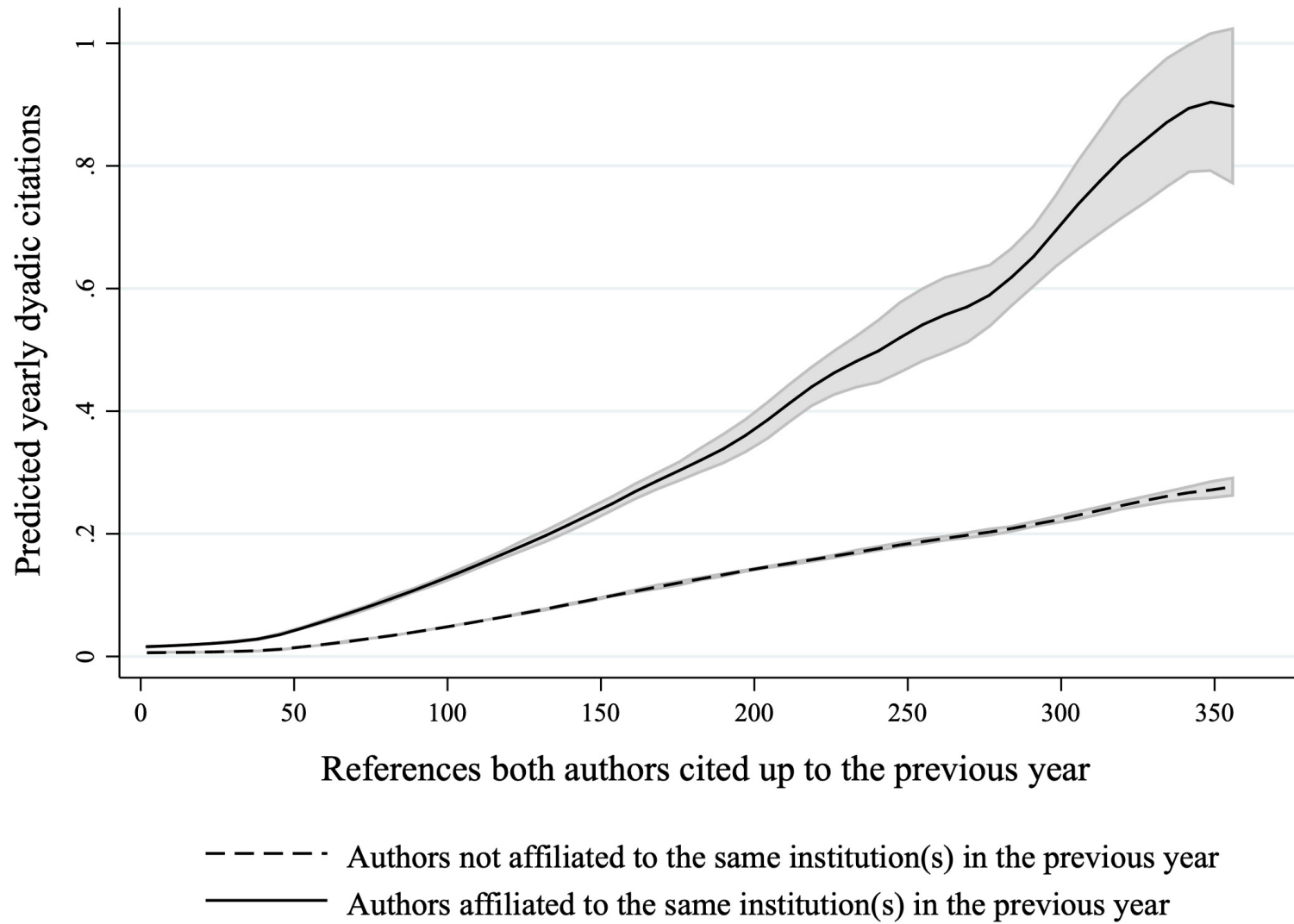
Citations: skewed, biased, and ambiguous

- citation counts correlate with (D'Ippoliti, 2020):
 - at the publication level: the number and reputation of the authors, publication age, language, the kind of publication (review articles, editorials, studies using primary data, etc.), the reputation of the journal, the number of pages, and even title length (Letchford et al., 2015) or whether the title contains a hyphen;
 - at the author level: academic age, field and degree of specialization, gender, disciplines or sub-fields (King et al., 2016).
 - Additional sources of bias: self-citations, selective and/or implicit citations, the increase in the total number of citations with time
 - several widely used bibliometric indexes, for example the h index, are not robust to even trivial changes in the papers or citation counts (Hicks and Melkers, 2012).
- Most of all, citations do not measure scientific “quality” alone

D'Ippoliti (2021): Italy's female economists should not be bipartisan



D'Ippoliti et al. (2021): pairs of UK economists



What are the consequences? (Necker 2014)

Table 1
Economists' norms.

No.	On a scale from 1 to 6...	Obs.	Ordinal variable			
			Mean	Std. dev.	[95% CI]	
<i>General research approach: agreement</i>						
1	A research topic should be chosen according to one's personal interest (in contrast to career concerns)	426	2.39	1.15	2.28	2.50
2	A research topic should be chosen with respect to publication prospect	426	3.33	1.20	3.21	3.44
3	A researcher should give credit to any published and unpublished idea by someone else (i.e., colleagues, journalists, students)	424	1.80	1.27	1.68	1.92
4	Results should be generalized if the theoretical framework or the research design for empirical analysis allows for it.	420	2.44	1.13	2.33	2.54

Baccini et al. (2019): self-citations as evidence of gaming?

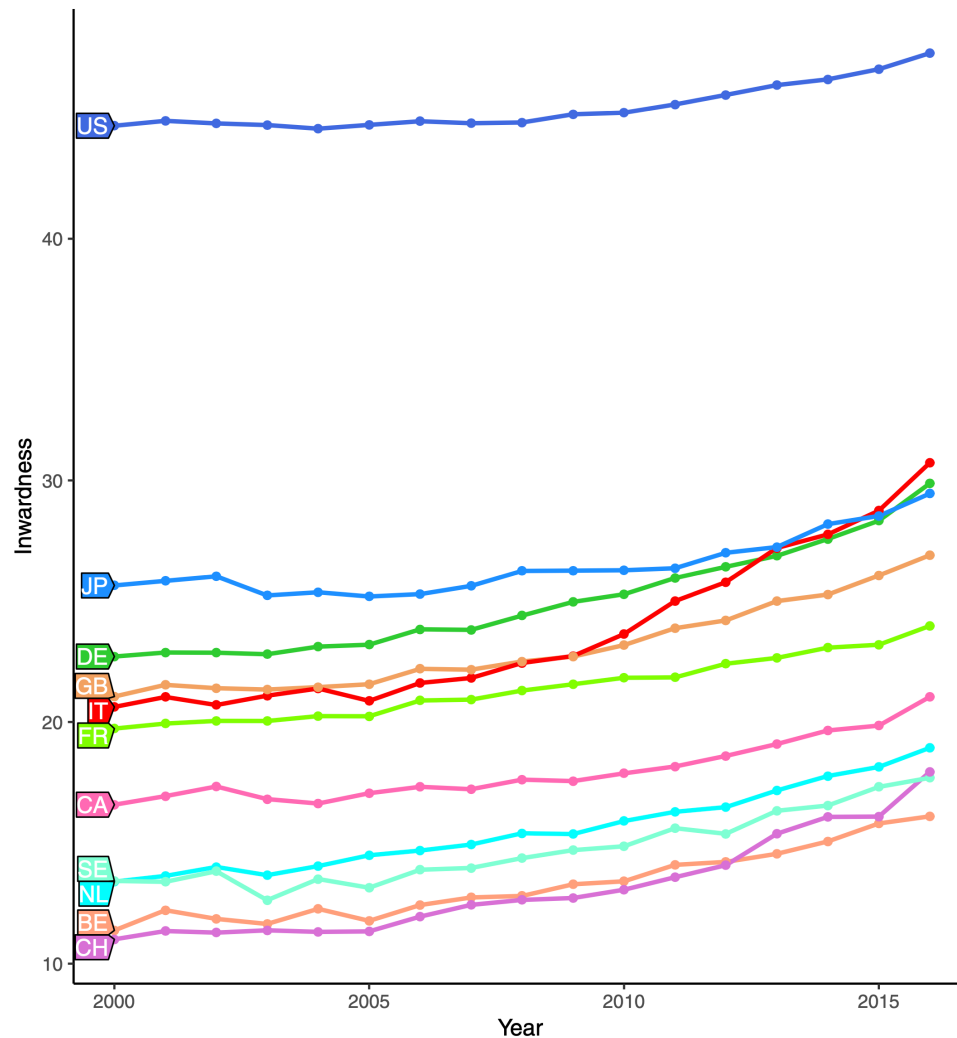
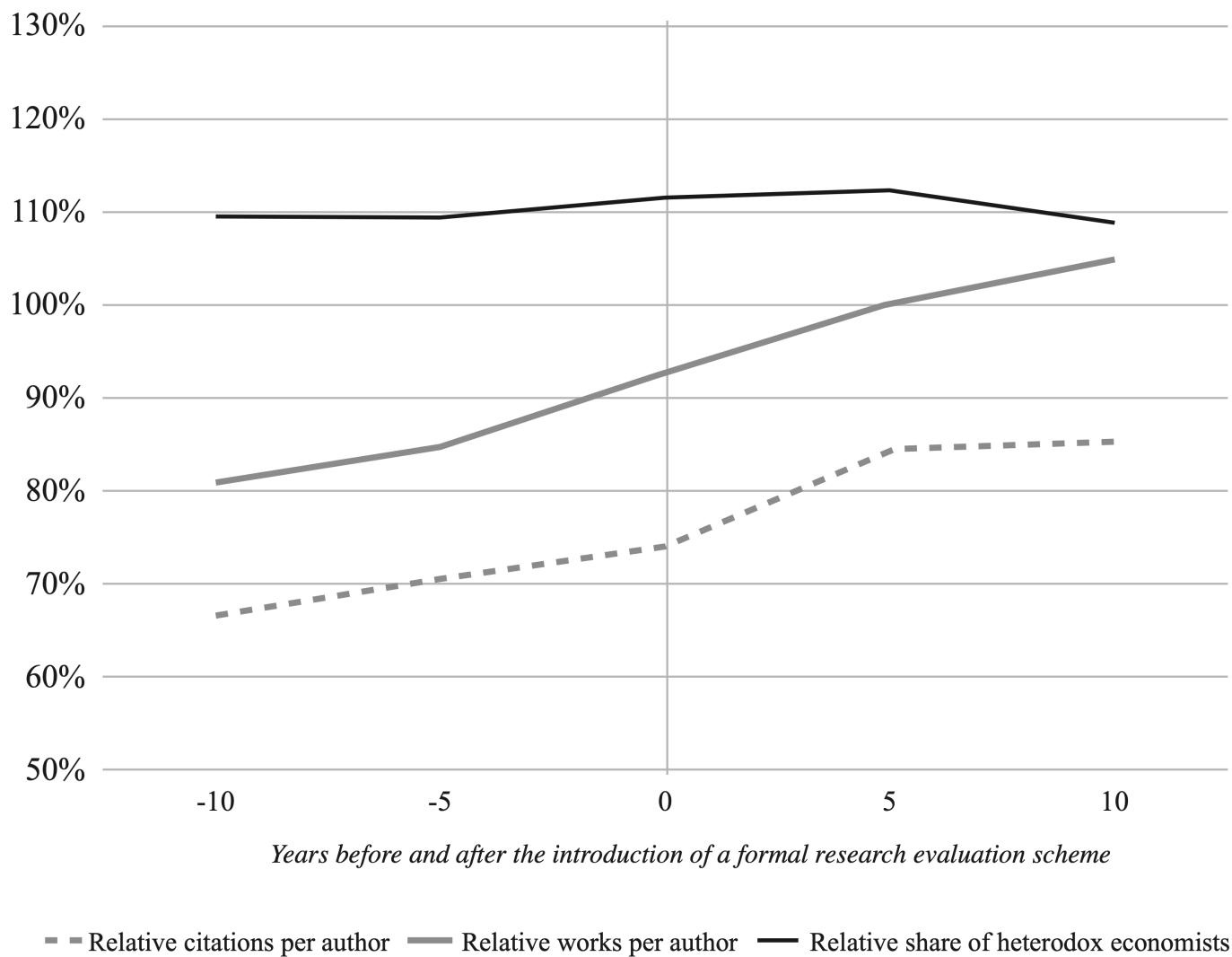


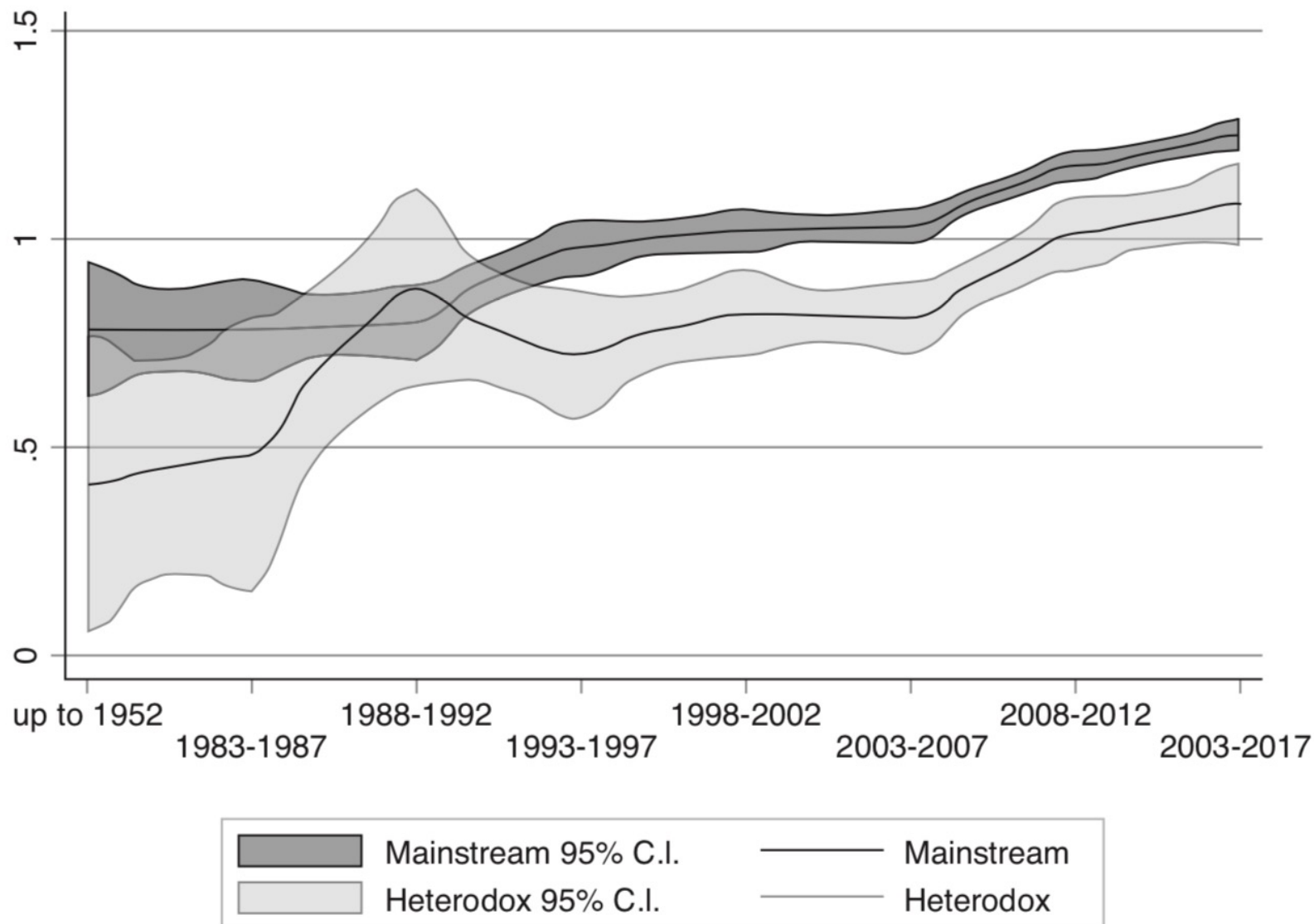
Fig 1. Inwardness for G10 countries (2000-2016). Source: elaboration on SCIVAL data.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0221212.g001>

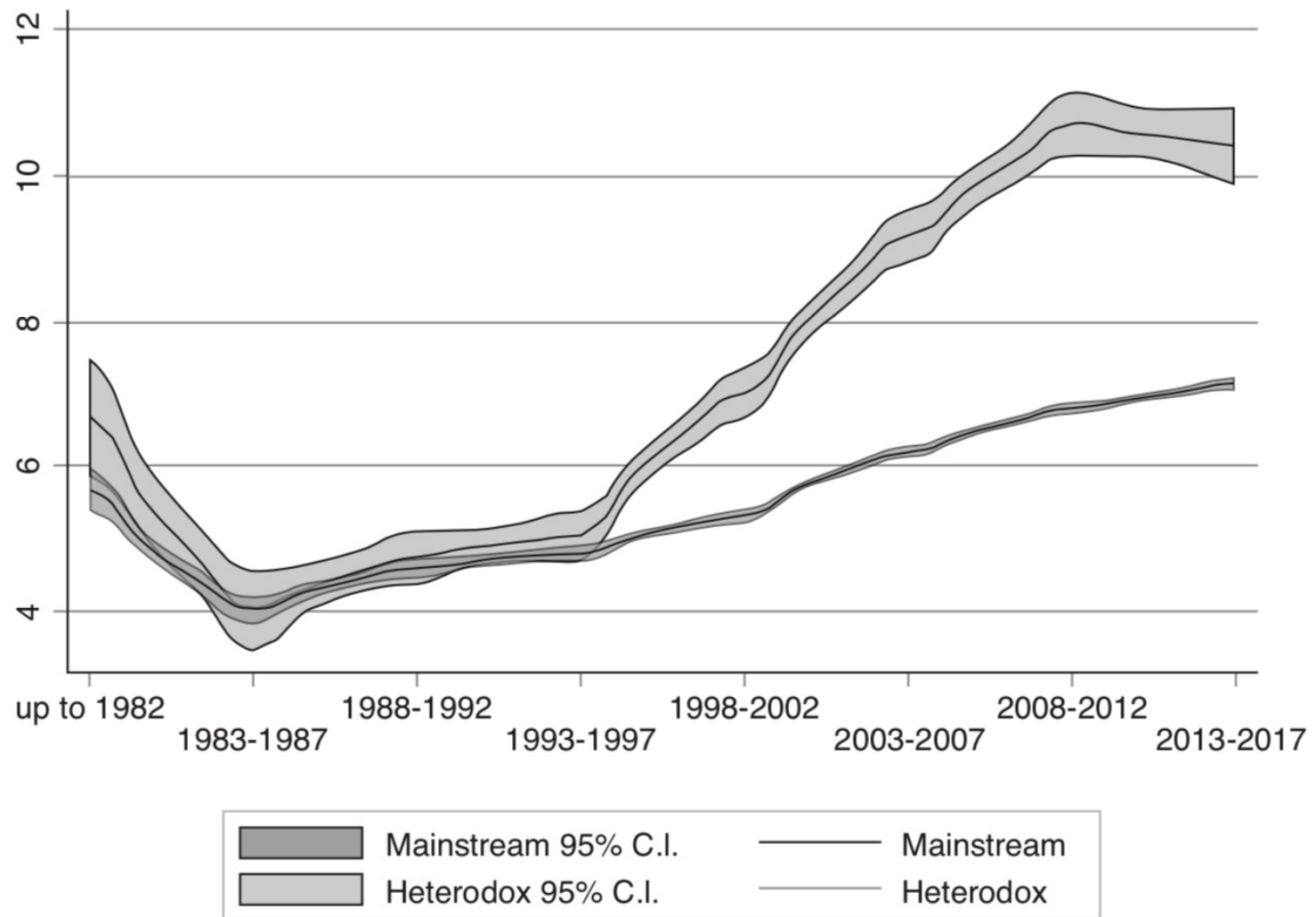
Impact of research evaluation schemes on economics



Average citations per year



Number of unique works in RePEc



Reference to “peripheral” economies in journals

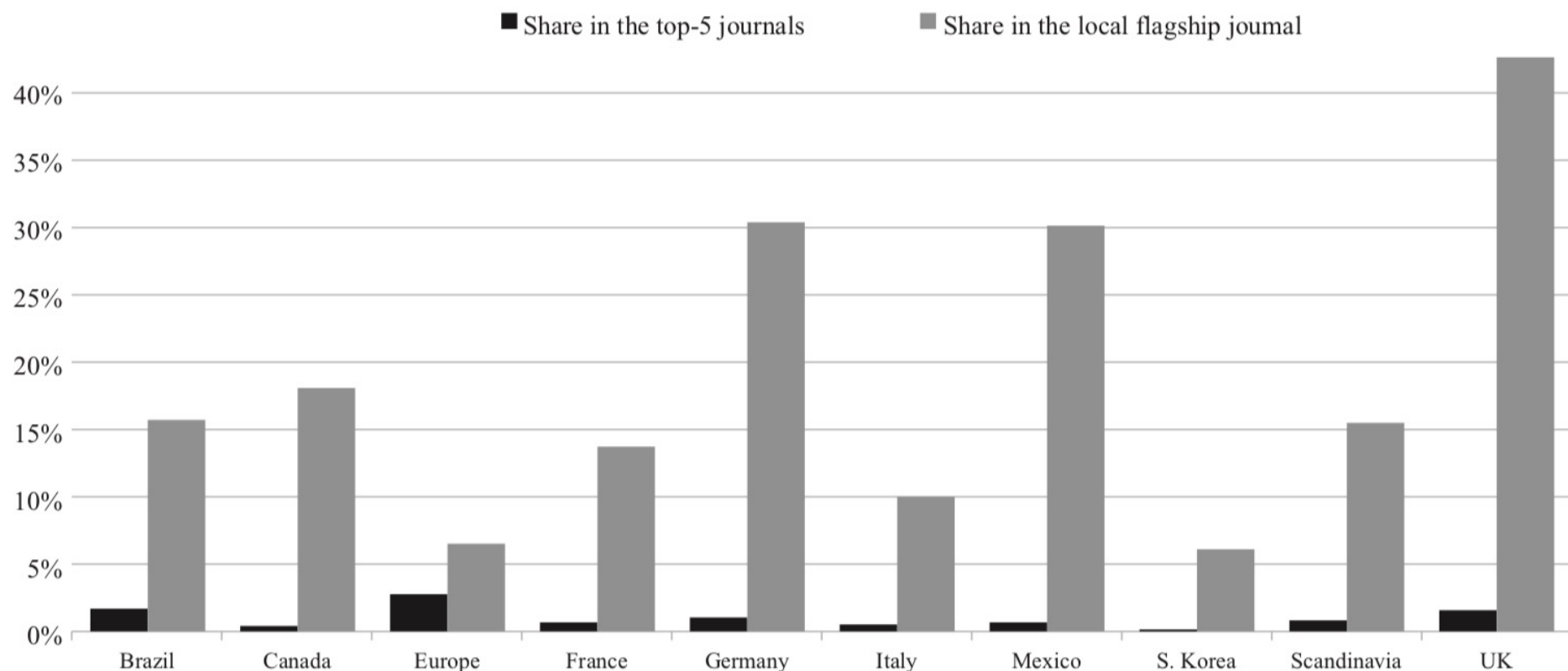


Figure 3.3 Share of articles published in the top-5 journals and in flagship national or area journals since year 2000 that contain the country name or adjective in the metadata

Notes: country names have also been considered as adjectives; for Europe, “European Union,” “EU,” “E.U.,” and “Europe” (as well as “European”) have been considered; for Scandinavia and the Nordic countries: “Sweden,” “Norway,” “Denmark,” “Finland,” “Nordic,” and “Scandinavia.” The journals considered are, respectively: *Revista Brasileira de Economia* (Brazil), *Canadian Journal of Economics* (Canada), *Journal of the European Economic Association* (Europe), *Revue d’économie politique* (France), *German Economic Review* (Germany), *PSL Quarterly Review* (Italy; until 2007 known as *BNL Quarterly Review*), *Investigación Económica* (Mexico), *Korean Economic Review* (South Korea), *Scandinavian Journal of Economics* (Nordic countries), and *The Economic Journal* (United Kingdom).

AGREEMENT ON REFORMING RESEARCH ASSESSMENT

20 July 2022



DECLARACION DE PRINCIPIOS¹

6 DE JUNIO DE 2022, 3RA. EDICIÓN

Declaración aprobada en la **XXVII Asamblea General de CLACSO**, México, 6 de junio de 2022

**UNA NUEVA EVALUACIÓN
ACADÉMICA Y CIENTÍFICA
PARA UNA CIENCIA CON
RELEVANCIA SOCIAL EN
AMÉRICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE**

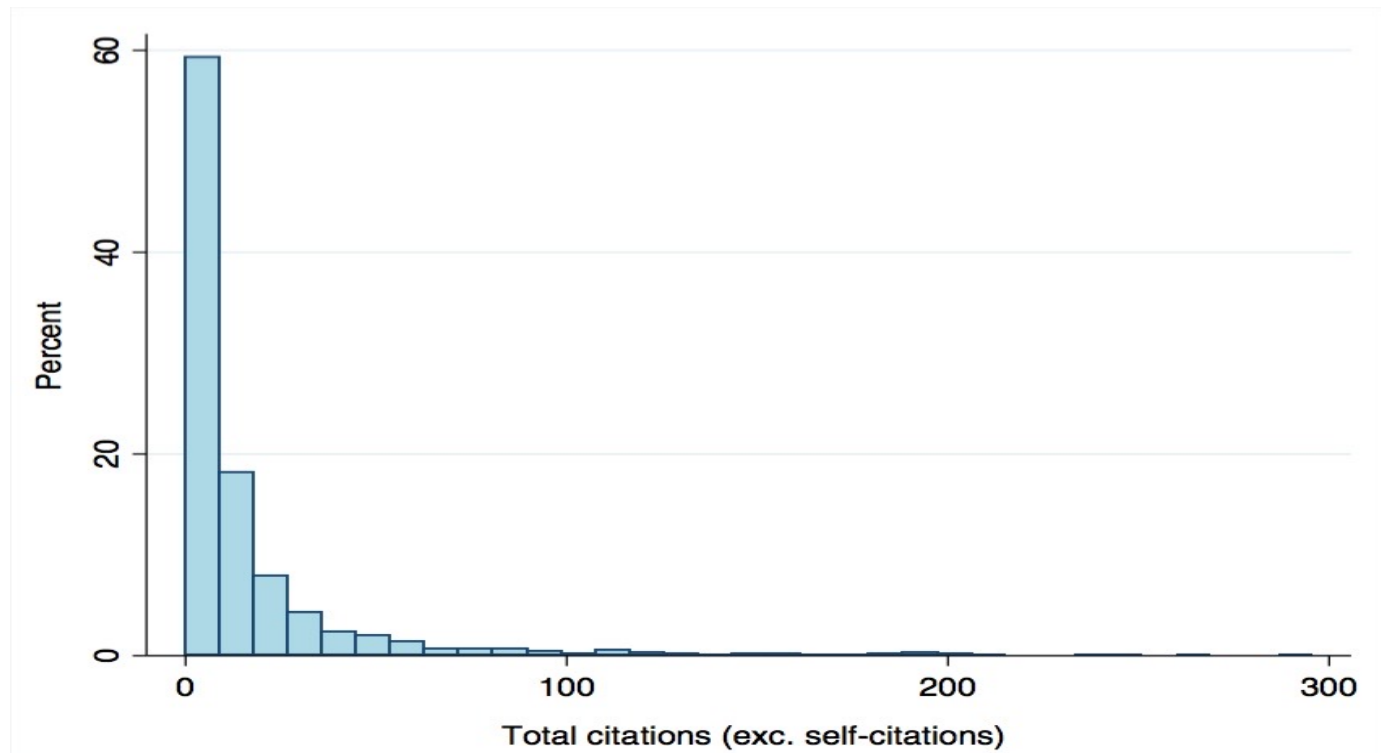
Main conclusions

- The sheer size of economics research (>35.000 new papers on RePEc every year) might inspire optimism on its expanding boundaries: more pluralism?
 - Instead, the economics debate is biased by the systematic discrimination of some topics and approaches
- Research has focused on individual deviant behaviour (coerced citations, “favours”, opportunistic behaviour), and has focused on the “top”.
 - But there is evidence of worrying trends across the board. Available evidence on research assessment systems highlight the incentives towards homologation of ideas and career trajectories
 - We need more research on the role of “normal” dynamics (institutional factors, national policies, etc.) in shaping economics research.
- **Given the lack of an open and fair debate, suspicion around economists’ social role is well founded**

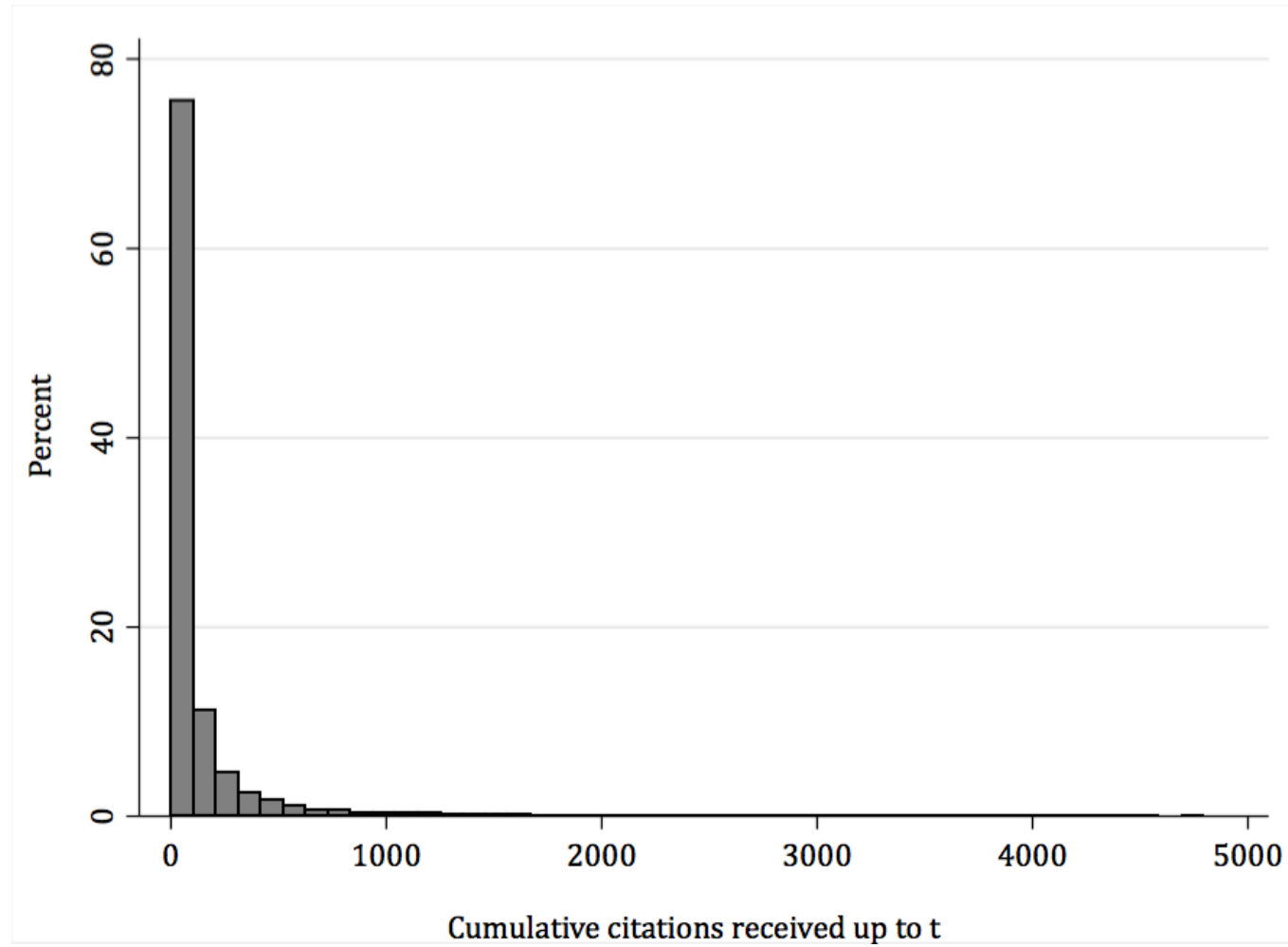
Thank you

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Citations to Italian economists in Web of Science, 2011-2016



Total citations in RePEc to UK-based authors (1980-2019)



Citations don't count: they are counted

Do Bibliometricians Cite Differently From Other Scholars?

Donald O. Case and Joseph B. Miller

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500 South Limestone, Lexington, KY 40506-0224. E-mail: dcase@uky.edu*

Why authors cite particular documents has been the subject of both speculation and empirical investigation for decades. This article provides a short history of attempts to understand citation motivations and reports a replication of earlier surveys measuring reasons for citations. Comparisons are made among various types of scholars. The present study identified six highly cited articles in the topic area of bibliometrics and surveyed all of the locatable authors who cited those works ($n = 112$). It was thought that bibliometricians, given that this is their area of expertise, might have a heightened level of awareness of their own citation practices, and hence a different pattern of responses. Several reasons indicated by the 56% of the sample who identified themselves as bibliometricians differed in statistically significant ways from nonbibliometricians, and also from earlier samples of scholars in Communication and Psychology. By far the

supportive of their own conclusions (Ziman, 1968), and written by noted authorities (Kaplan, 1965)—a “persuasive” citation strategy (Gilbert, 1977).

Over the years a variety of reasons for citation have been suggested by scholars, based on close reading, speculation, and empirical measures. Among the various typologies of citation motivations are the 15 reasons identified by Garfield (1965), 28 by Lipetz (1965), 26 by Duncan, Anderson, and McAleese (1981), and the variety of smaller (e.g., 7 to 10 types) typologies reviewed by Cronin (1984) and Cano (1989). All of these were considered in the development of the study described below.

The degree to which we can study an author's decision to cite another document has been debated for many years. Investigation motivations for citing were epistemological

Table 1 – Theoretical perspectives on the meaning of citation counts²

Author	References are	Cites measure
Garfield (1979)	Supportive, illustrative or elaborative of points in a document	Importance
Small (1978)	Elements in a symbol making process	Highly cited papers are concept symbols
Merton (1996)	Registration of intellectual property & peer recognition	Intellectual influence
Cole & Cole (1967)		Socially defined quality
Gilbert (1977)	Tools of persuasion	Authoritativeness
Cronin (1984)	A reflection of authors' personalities and professional milieu	Unclear, complex interplay of norms and personal factors
Martin & Irvine (1983)	Influence, social and political pressure, awareness	With matched groups, differences indicate differences in influence
Zuckerman (1987)	Response to Gilbert - motives and consequences analytically distinct	Proxies of more direct measures of influence
Latour (1987)/ Luukkonen (1997)	Resources authors wield to support their knowledge claims in a dynamic and hostile environment	Usefulness to subsequent authors in both social and cognitive dimensions
Cozzens (1989)	Reward, rhetoric, communication intersect in refs – rhetoric first	Recognition, persuasiveness, awareness
White (1990)	Acknowledgements of related documents	Co-cites = historical consensus of important authors and works
Van Raan (1998)	Partly particular, but in large ensembles biases cancel out	highly cited = top research
Wouters (1999)	Product of scientist	Product of indexer

Source: Hichs and Melkers (2012)

Productive and ceremonial motivations

- “we didn’t want to be told we had neglected to cite certain people. So there are people in here, for example, **X is one of these people we anticipated being a referee**” (quoted in White and Wang, 1997, p. 145)
- “[i]n economics there are all different kinds of levels of journals So, **when we picked out references, we tried to stay in that group**. It is a little bit of gamesmanship in a way, to be citing the right people” (ibid., p. 136)
- Camacho-Miñano and Núñez-Nickel (2009): a maximum number of references can be included in a paper. So first, a researcher collects all studies that may be considered as relevant; then, from this pool she picks those that she will actually cite, necessarily choosing in a discretionary way

Henk Moed (2005, p. 219):

“In any field there are leading groups active at the forefront of scientific development. Their **leading position is both cognitively and socially anchored**. Cognitively, their important contributions tend to be highlighted in a state-of-the-art of a field. But **to the extent that the science system functions well** in stimulating and warranting scientific quality, leading groups, and particularly their senior researchers, tend at the same time to acquire powerful social positions.”

“Macroeconomics [...] has succeeded: Its central problem of depression prevention has been solved, for all practical purposes, and has in fact been solved for many decades.”

Lucas R.E. (2003), “Macroeconomic Priorities”, *American Economic Review*, vol. 93 (1): 1-14.

1193 citations on Google Scholar (26/5/2018)



“[Last year] I expressed serious worries about the American economy, which strongly conditions the economies of the other countries, particularly in Europe.”

Sylos Labini P. (2003), “Prospects for the world economy”, *PSL Quarterly Review*, vol. 56 (226): 179-206.

9 citations on Google Scholar (26/5/2018)

