



How to Publish in a Top Journal (I wish that I knew!)

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Top Journals

- What is a “top journal?” A “decent journal?”
 - Top 3 general?
 - Top 5 general (but are they general)?
- What about specialized journals?
 - Hierarchies in sub-fields:
 - Labor economics
 - Public economics
 - Monetary economics
- What about the Stengos et al recent-citation based rating system?
- The difficulty of getting published in Top, or even Decent journals
 - Acceptance rates at top general journals
 - Acceptance rates at top field journals
- Conclusion: Life is tough!

| | | |
|----|--|------|
| 1 | American Economic Review | 1,00 |
| 2 | Econometrica | 1,00 |
| 3 | Journal of Finance | 1,00 |
| 4 | Journal of Financial Economics | 1,00 |
| 5 | Journal of Monetary Economics | 1,00 |
| 6 | Journal of Political Economy | 1,00 |
| 7 | Nature | 1,00 |
| 8 | Quarterly Journal of Economics | 1,00 |
| 9 | Review of Economic Studies | 1,00 |
| 10 | Science | 1,00 |
| 11 | American Political Science Review | 0,60 |
| 12 | Annals of Statistics | 0,60 |
| 13 | Economic Journal | 0,60 |
| 14 | European Economic Review | 0,60 |
| 15 | Games and Economic Behavior | 0,60 |
| 16 | International Economic Review | 0,60 |
| 17 | International Organization | 0,60 |
| 18 | Journal of Accounting and Economics | 0,60 |
| 19 | Journal of Business | 0,60 |
| 20 | Journal of Business and Economic Statistics | 0,60 |
| 21 | Journal of Econometrics | 0,60 |
| 22 | Journal of Economic Theory | 0,60 |
| 23 | Journal of Health Economics | 0,60 |
| 24 | Journal of International Economics | 0,60 |
| 25 | Journal of Labor Economics | 0,60 |
| 26 | Journal of Public Economics | 0,60 |
| 27 | Journal of the American Statistical Association | 0,60 |
| 28 | Journal of the European Economic Association | 0,60 |
| 29 | Journal of the Royal Statistical Society. Series B Statistical Methodology | 0,60 |
| 30 | Management Science | 0,60 |

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|----|---|------|
| 31 | Nature: Letter | 0,60 |
| 32 | RAND Journal of Economics (formerly: Bell Journal of Economics) | 0,60 |
| 33 | Review of Economics and Statistics | 0,60 |
| 34 | Review of Financial Studies | 0,60 |
| 35 | Science: Report | 0,60 |
| 36 | Statistical Science | 0,60 |
| 37 | Accounting Review | 0,30 |
| 38 | American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings | 0,30 |
| 39 | American Journal of Agricultural Economics | 0,30 |
| 40 | Annals of Applied Probability | 0,30 |
| 41 | Annals of Applied Statistics | 0,30 |
| 42 | Bernoulli | 0,30 |
| 43 | Biometrika | 0,30 |
| 44 | Demography | 0,30 |
| 45 | Econometric Theory | 0,30 |
| 46 | Economic Theory | 0,30 |
| 47 | Economics Letters | 0,30 |
| 48 | Finance and Stochastics | 0,30 |
| 49 | Health Economics | 0,30 |
| 50 | Health Services Research | 0,30 |
| 51 | Industrial and Labor Relations Review | 0,30 |
| 52 | International Journal of Industrial Organization | 0,30 |
| 53 | Journal of Accounting Research | 0,30 |
| 54 | Journal of Applied Econometrics | 0,30 |
| 55 | Journal of Banking and Finance | 0,30 |
| 56 | Journal of Conflict Resolution | 0,30 |
| 57 | Journal of Consumer Research | 0,30 |
| 58 | Journal of Development Economics | 0,30 |
| 59 | Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization | 0,30 |
| 60 | Journal of Economic Dynamics and Control | 0,30 |

| | | |
|----|---|------|
| 61 | Journal of Economic Growth | 0,30 |
| 62 | Journal of Environmental Economics and Management | 0,30 |
| 63 | Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis | 0,30 |
| 64 | Journal of Human Resources | 0,30 |
| 65 | Journal of Industrial Economics | 0,30 |
| 66 | Journal of International Money and Finance | 0,30 |
| 67 | Journal of Law and Economics | 0,30 |
| 68 | Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization | 0,30 |
| 69 | Journal of Marketing | 0,30 |
| 70 | Journal of Marketing Research | 0,30 |
| 71 | Journal of Money, Credit and Banking | 0,30 |
| 72 | Journal of the Royal Statistical Society. Series A: Statistics in Society | 0,30 |
| 73 | Journal of Urban Economics | 0,30 |
| 74 | Marketing Science | 0,30 |
| 75 | Mathematical Finance | 0,30 |
| 76 | Population and Development Review | 0,30 |
| 77 | Research Policy | 0,30 |
| 78 | Review of Economic Dynamics | 0,30 |
| 79 | Scandinavian Journal of Statistics | 0,30 |
| 80 | Transportation Research Part B: Methodological | 0,30 |
| 81 | Water Resources Research | 0,30 |
| 82 | World Development | 0,30 |
| 83 | Advances in Applied Probability | 0,20 |
| 84 | American Economic Journal: Applied Economics | 0,20 |
| 85 | American Economic Journal: Economic Policy | 0,20 |
| 86 | American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics | 0,20 |
| 87 | American Economic Journal: Microeconomics | 0,20 |
| 88 | California Management Review | 0,20 |
| 89 | Canadian Journal of Economics | 0,20 |
| 90 | China Quarterly | 0,20 |

| | | |
|-----|--|------|
| 91 | Contemporary Accounting Research/Recherche Comptable Contemporaine | 0,20 |
| 92 | Ecological Economics | 0,20 |
| 93 | Econometric Reviews | 0,20 |
| 94 | Economic Development and Cultural Change | 0,20 |
| 95 | Economic Inquiry (formerly: Western Economic Journal) | 0,20 |
| 96 | Economica | 0,20 |
| 97 | Economics of Education Review | 0,20 |
| 98 | Economy and Society | 0,20 |
| 99 | Electronic Journal of Statistics | 0,20 |
| 100 | Environment and Planning / A | 0,20 |

Acceptance Rates at Various Journals Year 2008 or Shortly Before

| Journal | Acceptance Rate |
|---|-----------------|
| <i>American Economic Review</i> * | 0.07 |
| <i>Econometrica</i> * | 0.09 |
| <i>Journal of Political Economy</i> | 0.05 |
| <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i> | 0.04 |
| <i>BEJ Applied Economics (All 4 Levels)</i> * | 0.51 |
| <i>Canadian Journal of Economics</i> | 0.18 |
| <i>Economica</i> | 0.11 |
| <i>Economics Letters</i> | 0.17 |
| <i>European Economic Review</i> | 0.09 |
| <i>Industrial and Labor Relations Review</i> | 0.18 |
| <i>Journal of Human Resources</i> | 0.10 |
| <i>Journal of Labor Economics</i> | 0.08 |
| <i>Journal of Monetary Economics</i> | 0.20 |
| <i>Journal of Population Economics</i> | 0.21 |
| <i>Journal of Public Economics</i> | 0.10 |
| <i>Labour Economics</i> * | 0.15 |
| <i>RAND Journal of Economics</i> | 0.11 |
| <i>Review of Economics and Statistics</i> | 0.12 |
| <i>American Political Science Review</i> | 0.08 |
| <i>American Sociological Review</i> | 0.08 |

*Based on email exchanges with Editors, except where *, which is from a report printed in the journal or displayed on its website.



Topics to Work On

- What is source of ideas?
 - Athena from the head of Zeus? Danger of being removed from mainstream
 - A neat bit of data?
 - Reflection on the literature?
 - Reflection/comment on one paper?
 - More generally—don't write comments—or things that can be viewed as comments
- Best topic: Whatever interests you
 - But keep the profession in mind
 - Think about how it fits in some literature



Should You Coauthor?

- Pro
 - Economies of scope
 - Fun
 - Mentoring—a two-way street
- Con
 - No extra rewards



How to Write It Up

- What is *THE* Question?
 - Can you describe (to yourself) what you have done that is new in ≤ 2 sentences?
 - NOT: Joe did this, Al did that, and I'm doing this variation?
 - Novelty upon a base.

The Title:

I. Good Things:

- A. Differentiate your product
- B. Summarize main points
- C. Grab the reader's attention
- D. Triplets
- E. Short description of a phenomenon
- F. Unusual but appropriate words
- G. Question

II. Bad Things

- A. “:: The Case of ...”
- B. “The ... in Country X”
- C. “A Note on...”
- D. Being boring

III. Some Positive Examples

- A. “The Economic Organisation of a P.O.W. Camp,” R. Radford, *Economica*, 1945.
- B. “Jumping the Gun” A. Roth, *AER* 1994.
- C. “Stressed Out on Four Continents: Time Crunch or Yuppie Kvetch,” D. Hamermesh and J. Lee, *REStat* 2007.
- D. “The Peculiar Economics of Organized Sports,” W. Neal, *QJE* 1964.
- E. “Gender Differences in Mate Selection: Evidence from a Speed-Dating Experiment,” R. Fisman et al, *QJE* 2006.
- F. “The Church vs. the Mall: What Happens When Religion Faces Increased Secular Competition?” J. Gruber and D. Hungerman, *QJE* 2008.



The Typical Outline for an Empirical Paper

- Typical outline:
 - Introduction
 - Theory—or theoretical basis
 - Data
 - Results
 - Tests and/or implications of results
 - Conclusions/implications
- “Introduction”
 - Not a literature review. It may cite things that motivate, but should never review them. Shouldn’t be a lit review at all, anywhere in paper. Cited papers fit in to illustrate only.
 - Is a statement of the problem, its background and importance.
- “Theory”
 - To show something new, not to show you can repeat others.
 - To derive or motivate your empirical work
 - To clarify your idea in readers’ minds



- Data
 - Lengthier if novel; shorter if data are well known (e.g., lengthy descriptions of PSID, NLSY)
 - Descriptive statistics—often can make main point here.
- Results
 - Shouldn't be a “breathless romp through the data”
 - Unlike sex, foreplay shouldn't be most of the duration—the results must be discussed at length
 - Stress/discuss the original; spend no time on standard results.
 - Results must be linked to theoretical derivation—and vice-versa.
- Tests and implications
 - Various tests for robustness of results—but only major ones. Minor checks go in footnotes.
 - Uses of the results—explicit applications to problems—e.g., simulating policy responses; analyzing implications for interesting phenomena.

TABLE 3

PARAMETER ESTIMATES, SLEEP AND NAPS EQUATIONS, 1975-76 TIME USE STUDY

| | All Respondents | Men | Women |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Work time | -.199 (.02) | -.219 (.03) | -.169 (.03) |
| Married | 16.04 (57.27) | -43.15 (82.71) | 92.50 (82.20) |
| Years married | -2.59 (2.31) | 2.43 (3.13) | -7.62 (3.49) |
| Age | 1.86 (12.80) | 24.52 (16.20) | -24.81 (21.17) |
| Age squared | .02 (.15) | -.26 (.19) | .35 (.25) |
| Years of schooling | -14.30 (6.71) | -18.28 (8.55) | -9.09 (10.83) |
| Male | 99.42 (39.07) | ... | ... |
| Excellent or good health | -94.16 (59.16) | -123.79 (80.75) | -59.66 (89.05) |
| Children < 3 years old | -35.42 (56.44) | 39.03 (67.72) | -153.00 (102.60) |
| Protestant | 86.15 (37.45) | 90.87 (47.99) | 93.97 (60.04) |
| Black | -69.17 (80.62) | -110.65 (114.41) | -43.95 (115.63) |
| \bar{R}^2 | .141 | .176 | .108 |

ALLOCATION OF TIME

929

TABLE 4

PARAMETER ESTIMATES, OTHER SLEEP MEASURES AND WORK
TIME, 1975-76

| | DEPENDENT VARIABLE | |
|-----------------|--------------------|--|
| | Sleep | Sleep, Naps, and Personal Activities |
| All respondents | -.164 (.018) | -.214 (.021) |
| \bar{R}^2 | .116 | .147 |
| Men | -.184 (.025) | -.239 (.028) |
| \bar{R}^2 | .146 | .190 |
| Women | -.134 (.028) | -.179 (.033) |
| \bar{R}^2 | .082 | .101 |

NOTE.—Includes all the variables listed in table 3.

Table 4. Probit Estimates of the Determinants of Time Stress, German Couples, 2002, (Dependent variable is whether stressed always or often)^a

| Variable: | ONE OR TWO WORKERS | | TWO WORKERS | |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | MEN | WOMEN | MEN | WOMEN |
| Weekly Work Hours | .0107 (.0011) | .0090 (.0010) | .0106 (.0014) | .0099 (.0013) |
| Days Worked | -.0340 (.0114) | -.0088 (.0074) | -.0278 (.0279) | -.0417 (.0150) |
| Weekly Shopping, Eating, Cleaning Hours | -.00029 (.00113) | .00091 (.00075) | -.00175 (.00166) | .00183 (.00115) |
| Weekly Dependent Care Hours | -.00106 (.00119) | .00157 (.00035) | -.00046 (.00156) | .00176 (.00063) |
| At Least Good Health | -.1342 (.0304) | -.1459 (.0287) | -.1247 (.0416) | -.1272 (.0414) |
| Household Gross Annual Pay (€1000) | .00064 (.00023) | .00058 (.00021) | .00053 (.00027) | .00057 (.00025) |
| Pseudo R ² | .0790 | .0797 | .0512 | .0620 |
| N | 3006 | | 1754 | |

^aThe equations also include indicators of residence in the former East Germany, location in a city with population above 100,000, whether a worker is self-employed, married versus partnered, whether the youngest child is under 6, and a continuous measure of the number of children. Also included are measures of the spouse/partner's health status, weekly hours and days of market work, dependent care and errands/housework.



- Conclusions/implications
 - NOT just a rehash of what you did. That should be ≤ 2 paragraphs of a conclusion that is at least 3 paragraphs.
 - Should put in context of literature—what you have added.
 - Should say something about where one might go—but should be general; shouldn't be modifications of yours.
 - Policy implications **ONLY** if they are novel, relevant. Too often these are forced.

THE ABSTRACT

- I. Write this *AFTER* the paper is drafted.
- II. Should **NOT** be a paragraph from intro or conclusion
- III. Should summarize what you did, both theoretical (if any), and empirical (including data used). Should entice the reader.
- IV. Stick to any space limitations.



Alternatives to the Standard Outline

- Data and results can come before Theory to motivate new theoretical insights.
- Is a Theory section really necessary? At least a theoretical discussion is; better than a phony theory.
- Again, **NO LIT REVIEW**



Writing English Properly

- Read D. McCloskey—but that is fairly high level.
- Why this matters?
 - Readers' time is scarce
 - Readers infer substantive sloppiness from written sloppiness
- English is easy at one level, very difficult at another; and it can be bad at several levels
 - Lowest level—so bad that reader cannot infer what you are doing. Reader infers you do not know either.
 - Next level—repeated subject-verb disagreements, incorrect pluralization and possessives, etc.
 - Next level
 - Left-out articles—a common problem for Asian-language speakers, Russians.
 - Incorrect prepositions.
 - Incorrect gerunds and participial phrases

In addition to EPL, there are clearly other factors, related to the characteristics of both employers and employees, which affect dismissal probability and the relationship between job turnover and establishment size.⁹ In order to identify the true effect of EPL, we compare the dismissal rates for workers covered (permanent workers) and not covered (temporary workers) by the legislation in establishments below and above the thresholds, from the estimation of the following difference of conditional means:

$$E[l_{ijt} = 1 | X_{ijt}, Z_{jt}, \tau_t, Perm_{it} = 1] - E[l_{ijt} = 1 | X_{ijt}, Z_{jt}, Perm_{it} = 0]$$

where $l_{ijt} = 1$ if worker i in firm j at time t is dismissed, τ_t is a time effect, X_{it} is a set of individual characteristics, Z_{it} is a set of firm characteristics, $Perm_{it} = 1$ for permanent workers and $Perm_{it} = 0$ for temporary workers. This estimation is in the spirit of a difference-in-differences strategy in which the "treatment" is coverage by EPL and the "control group" is not covered by EPL (temporary workers). Since the treatment differs by establishment size, we perform this estimation for alternative samples of workers belonging to establishments of different sizes, that is, above and below the EPL threshold. We expect dismissal rates to differ by less in establishments below the EPL threshold.

The estimated marginal effects of EPL coverage on dismissal rate, and their 95% statistical confidence bands are plotted in Figure 4.3. The covariates used for the estimation are gender, age, educational attainment, region of residence, industry, and establishment size entered both linearly and with a quadratic term. According to our results, EPL coverage reduces the dismissal rate only in establishments above 10 employees, being the estimated effect for establishments below 15 employees statistically significant but smaller than for establishments above 15 employees.¹⁰ Given the "heaping" problem commented above, we would take these results as evidence of EPL threshold effects on dismissal rates.¹¹

⁹On the relationship between firm size and turnover, see Winter-Ebmer [30] and Anderson and Meyer [3]

¹⁰The full set of results are available from the authors upon request.

¹¹Bauer et al. [4], using matched employer-employee data for Germany, do not find any effect on separations of changes in the threshold scale exempting small establishments from dismissal protection. However, their measure of separations, the total outflow of employees from an establishment, includes both dismissals and voluntary quits.

Yet the majority of the current retirement literature misses an important aspect of early retirement. Employer is absent from the retirement models. In a pure labor supply model, worker is free to choose the retirement date that is optimal for him. However, also firms may have strong incentives to encourage early retirement of their workers. When demand falls, early retirement may provide a way to reduce the workforce.

The firm induced early retirement can take different forms depending on the institutional setting. Hutchens (1999) suggests that the early retirement provisions of the US social security system can be used as a form of unemployment insurance. Since social security benefits are not experience-rated, early retirement benefits effectively subsidize workforce reductions. Even more ex-

extended unemployment benefits are clearly more likely to end up unemployed.

The most interesting results in the table are the differences in the effect of the tunnel eligibility across the years and across the firms with different output growth. The effect of the tunnel eligibility before the recession in 1990 is rather small. Workers who are eligible to the tunnel are three to five percentage points more likely to be displaced than their ineligible co-workers. In contrast, in the first years of recession, 1991-1992, the eligibility to the unemployment tunnel increases the displacement probability by approximately ten percentage points.

The collectors of the data graded each tasks difficulty on a scale from 0 to 500 with the use of Item Response Theory (IRT) scaling.⁴ The respondent's literacy ability in the three different literacy domains was then measured as a score on this scale. The score was assigned at that point on the scale where he or she has an 80% chance of successfully performing a given task. To ensure comparability of these scores across countries, an average of 9,4 percent of the tests for each country were re-graded by personnel from another country; inter-rater agreement with respect to these re-grades was 94-97 percent.⁵

the total manufacturing employment of the host country. For instance, line 2 in Table 2.3 indicates that German-owned multinationals account for 2.40% of manufacturing employment in France, while the share of U.S.-owned multinationals in France is, with 4.72%, about twice as large.

A number of considerations suggest to use caution in interpreting the results based on these numbers. First, mainly due to availability reasons, the data I use is at the aggregate, not at the industry level. While this implies losing the industry detail, it also means that these variables are employed on par with distance, which does not have an industry dimension either. Second, each set of bilateral relations is only for one year that is relatively late in or after the sample period.⁷ This could mean that simultaneity afflicts the estimation results, because, e.g., changes in productivity influence the patterns of trade just as trade leads to embodied technology diffusion. However, the bilateral

According to the so-called 59er rule, firms often laid off workers as many months before the age of sixty as the unemployment benefits would last (Antolin and Scarpetta (1998)).

In this paper we analyze early labor market exits via long-term unemployment in Finland. The Finnish unemployment benefit system provides extended unemployment benefits for the workers who lose their job after the age of fifty-five. These benefits last until the age of sixty. Thereafter the unemployed may draw unemployment pension which lasts until old-age retirement at the age of sixty-five. As the unemployment benefits and unemployment pensions are relatively generous, and the re-employment prospects are slim, a job loss after the

of exogenous variables that potentially should be included in (2) are uncorrelated with changes in skills.¹¹ It is however difficult to see which variables this might be. A bigger problem is the fact that skills are measured with test scores that, by nature, always consists of some measurement error. This will bias the estimates towards zero in the cross section estimates even if the error is random. This bias will be aggravated when fixed effect estimation is used as long as the true values of the independent variable is correlated over time (see e.g. Griliches & Hausman [1986]).

The main drawback with the data when estimating (1) and (2) is that earnings are annual and not possible to correct for hours actually worked. The age interval is therefore set to 21-64 years in order to minimize the probability of including people who just entered the labor market (which means to 20-64 for the year corresponding to the wage data). However, the sample still consists of a large proportion of wages that apparently originated from part time work. One way to partly solve this is to truncate the wage variable, that is, throw away observations with a wage lower than some predetermined number.¹² Wages lower than the

We find that treated mothers have a 4.9 percentage points (or 15 percent) higher probability to get an additional child within the following three years; and a 3.9 percentage points higher probability in the following ten years.



Solving English Problems

- What to do about the writing?
 - Get a native English speaker to read it *carefully* for you.
 - Always read word-for-word before sending it off.
 - Have your spouse/partner read it—if he/she can't understand intro/concls, probably unclear.
- Publicity as an improving device
 - Use your PR office
 - This helps your University.
 - Your Dean loves it.
 - Enhances your usefulness to society
 - Provides a good check on your work—can you explain it to the press layperson?

BETWEEN WRITING AND SUBMISSION

I. PRESENT THE PAPER ANY CHANCE THAT YOU GET

- A. It's the best way to get comments
- B. It's the best way for you to find out whether YOU understand what you have done

II. WHEN TO SUBMIT???

- A. When the paper is ready!
- B. Typically at least the third draft
- C. Pro on waiting
 - 1. More comments can be received
 - 2. You can polish paper
- D. Con on waiting:
 - 1. Diminishing returns on improvement
 - 2. Striving for an unreachable perfection
 - 3. "Scoop" possibility



Off to the Journal!

- How to choose a journal—a matching problem.
 - AR forecasts of their interests; but
 - Editors get tired of a subject
 - Reintroducing stuff related to what they had done, but haven't for a while
 - Journal style—consider JPE, QJE, REStuds.
 - Importance of being familiar with editors' interests
 - Honest evaluation of your own paper. Of course start high—but not all babies can become President!



What is scarce at journals?

- Refereeing time—of good referees.
- Journal Space
- Most important—editor's time

What is being maximized?

- Journal fame/visibility
- Measured by work generated, citations given.



- Recentness of your own paper published there—so what?
- What about >1 submission at same place?
- How long—what should be in an appendix—or in unpublished appendices—or on Web?
- One-sided, normal fonts, double-spaced



Hearing from the journal

- Realistically chances are slim—but rejection doesn't get easier with experience
- Rarity of outright acceptances, ubiquity of outright rejections
- JEP 1992 explains what to do about rejections, or almost rejections

COMPLAIN ABOUT A REJECTION??

- I. My experience—twice in over 100 rejections. One up, one down
 - A. The success—perhaps because only 1 report, and it was way off target.
 - B. The failure—had two reports, seemed positive, but:

- II. Two recent negative experiences
 - A. 2 of 3 reports seemed positive (but letters to editor may not have been. Complain dead in 6 hours.
 - B. Tale of woe—3 rounds, 7 referees, then new editor. Result?

- III. General rule—very rarely is a complaint worth it—you don't know what referee(s) wrote editor, and you don't know editor's preferences.



Acceptances

- Yogi Berra—”it ain’t over ‘til it’s over!” But when it is positive:
 - Celebrate (and put on CV).
 - Don’t think about winner’s curse
- How to know when it’s dead—when to “pull the plug” :
 - When you’ve tried all reasonable places
 - When you’re down to journals that are “indecent”
 - Compare marginal gain to opportunity cost—and both differ with experience and horizon

ADVICE ON REFEREEING

I. Should you referee as a junior person?

A. PRO

1. To gain experience
2. To learn something
3. Saying yes a good habit—part of being an academic

B. CON

1. Your time is too valuable (RUBBISH)
2. You don't know enough about the topic (usually rubbish)
3. You have refereed the paper before
4. Your own paper conflicts with the paper

C. Acknowledge yes/no nearly immediately—
don't be a "loser."

II. How Long Should You Devote to a Refereeing Job?

- A. Real time depends on:
 - 1. Type/length of paper
 - 2. Your experience with refereeing and the topic
- B. Go over it once for general reaction/problems
- C. Go over it again for details, reactions, problems. Always ≥ 1 day between readings.
- D. Total time: I'm averaging 4-5 hours per paper.

III. A Good Referee Report

A. To the Editor

1. State clearly your recommendation—and main points why
2. Do NOT repeat your report to the author
3. If the paper is not publishable anywhere, say so
4. To some extent, tailor your recommendation to the journal quality
5. Remember, many papers are correct. Editor wants your opinion beyond that—on its importance.
6. On this letter, frankness is desired

B. To the Author

1. First paragraph—summarize what was done, how done, what was concluded. Shows you understood the paper.
2. Then GENERAL section—main good things, bad things. This is center of report.
3. Then SPECIFIC section—listing by page number things that are problematic
4. Be nice in the language, but you can be critical. (*QJE* line late 1970s)

C. Don't try to guess authors' identities (until you have completed the task).

A Negative Letter to the Editor (Level 3 Journal)

This is really just a set of regressions, with a few controls, then looking at the relationship between [Y] and [X]. There is no theory used, and no use of any model to infer results from the empirical estimation.

So the question is whether the correlations tell us anything new. Answer is: A very little bit, with the only unexpected result being the positive relationship between {Z} and [M]. This would suggest that one interesting thing, aside from seeing what economics gets you, would be to disaggregate this category to see which specific activities are generating this result.

Overall this is a very weak paper. I would recommend against publication.

A Fairly Positive Letter to the Editor (Level 1 Journal)

I have somewhat mixed feelings on this paper, on which I had twice before given comments. (My suggestions to the authors may seem fewer than usual due to the extent of my previous comments.) On the one hand, it is exactly the kind of work that should be done with time-use data by economists. Rather than being the usual accounting exercise, thought is given to an economic problem, a theory is developed to motivate an accounting finding, and that theory is tested against alternatives. I would view this in many ways as the best use of time-use data by economists (including myself) that I have seen.

My reservation is that, quite frankly, this is a fairly narrow issue (although I realize that has not precluded papers from publication in the top journals, so I am perhaps applying too rigid a standard). If the authors could generalize this paper in some ways, make it clear why one should care about it beyond the narrow problem with which it deals, it would be an absolutely first-class piece. As it stands, it is a clever and beautifully executed piece that will appeal to people across sub-specialties on a personal basis, but perhaps not be of as widespread intellectual use as one might hope.

SUMMARY PARAGRAPHS FROM REPORTS TO AUTHORS

The authors take the ATUS 2003-2007 data and examine a large variety of questions related to job-search time using them. Included are time spent in search, effects of UI on search, search time and unemployment duration, issues of calibrating the Mortensen model, and others.

The authors take the ATUS and HRS, first regressing time spent on each of a number of activities on controls to focus on the relation of health status to time use, then in the HRS looking at goods consumption and health status. In the latter, the effects of health on time use are compared to those on goods consumption to infer something about goods-time substitution.

The author calculates differences in shares of employment in three broad sectors of an economy across a number of developed countries. S/he then tries to explain international differences in a model that allows for market production and, for part of the economy, the production of household substitutes. The crucial culprits in the explanation are government tax/subsidy policies on market work and toward certain preferred commodities, and the degree of substitution between home and market production. Combining the measured differences in tax/subsidy policies with the assumption of very easy substitution between home and market production generates a match between the predicted and measured differences in the sizes of the sectors across countries.

A Worthless Report to the Author

The authors have put together a large data set on academic economists to investigate the effect of quantity and quality of publications on various outcomes: academic prizes, academic affiliation, mobility, and salary.

One of their main findings is that at least for their sample of full professors, quality matters a lot and quantity not so much. Although not particularly surprising, some of the reported correlations are good to know. However, I wasn't sure what exactly to make of them, what the paper is about, or what general conclusions the authors want us to draw. For example, the authors spend a lot of time relating their paper to and talking about "reputation" and I don't even know why this is the right word here. (It is a bit semantic, but reputation seems more appropriate in the context of hard-to-observe traits, such as personality. The number and quality of publications are simply measurable abilities that are easy to observe, so it seems funny to think of them as reputation. Analogously, Toyota has good reputation for the low maintenance costs of its cars; its cars also have high miles per gallon, but this is easily measured and has nothing to do with reputation.)

I think that the paper could greatly benefit from a clearer structure, with a clearly stated research question, and (hopefully) a convincing answer. As it stands, it has a bit of a flavor of a garden variety of regressions that the authors ran on the nice data set they constructed.