ECONOMICS IN PRACTICE: FOLLOW UP

The Curtailment of Critical Commentary in Australian Economics

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ABSTRACT


In Dollery, Byrnes and Akimova (2007), we employed their method for all Australian economics journals from 1962 to 2005. Figure 1 shows the results we obtained.

We concluded that “from the mid-1970s through to around the early to mid-1980s our sample of Australian economic journals was relatively more amenable to publishing ‘critical comment’ pertaining to the articles previously published in those journals (measured as either a proportion of total articles or as a percentage of total pages).” However, “it is striking how the occurrence of critical comment
throughout the 1990s has diminished, almost to the point that it now seems to be a ‘lost art.’” We observed that “this finding concurs closely with the results obtained by Coelho, De Worken-Eley and McClure (2005) for their more limited sample of five top-ranked economics journals” (Dollery, Byrnes and Akimova 2007, 301-302).

Figure 1. Percentage of Critical Commentary Articles as Proportion of Total Number of Articles in Australian Economics Journals, 1962 to 2005

Our finding for Australia suggests that the trend shown by Coelho, De Worken-Eley and McClure (2005) may also hold for economics journals generally. Is the trend the same in other disciplines?

Finally, possible reasons for the curtailment of critical commentary are explored and discussed, especially by Coelho and McClure (2006) and Whaples (2006).

REFERENCES


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