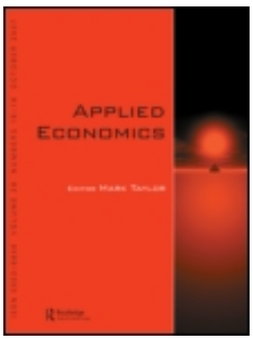

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Assessing editorial preferences towards Industrial Organization articles

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In order to evaluate the relative importance of articles on *Industrial Organization* published in major generalist or specialized scientific journals, this empirical study has used the new 1991 *JEL* classification system, by regrouping contributions according to the type of article: theoretical analysis, industrial policy or industry studies. A rate of multiple reference index has been introduced to examine the degree of relation between these three categories and used as a proxy for editorial preferences towards the type of treatment of the subject usually expected by the journal. The article contents of nine generalist and five specialized journals are analysed for the two periods 1991–1995 and 1996–2000.

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, many articles analysing journal contents have been published in a spread of journals, Lovell (1973), Colander (1989), Heck and Zaleski (1991), Strathman (1992), Figlio (1994), Laband and Piette (1994), Goode (1997), Aiginger *et al.* (1998), Laband and Wells (1998), Samuels (1998), Baltagi (1999), Hodgson and Rothman (1999), Meyer (1999), Swartz (1999), Feenstra and Rose (2000), Freedman (2000), Rey and Anselin (2000), Benson (2001), Dirkmaat (2001), Mirucki (2001), among others.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate for the 1991–2000 period, using the AEA EconLit database, the general editorial practices in major journals towards a specific field of specialization, namely *Industrial Organization*. To do so, a rate of multiple reference index (RMR) has been used to determine the effective orientation of the editorial policy, as reflected by the relative frequency of the type of article more likely to be published in each of the surveyed journals, as well as the possible variations between the two groups of generalist and specialized publications.

II. VISIBILITY OF *INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION* CONTRIBUTIONS IN ECONLIT

In this study, the visibility of contributions in *Industrial Organization* refers, to the bibliographic references accepted in the EconLit database. The 1986–2001/9 version includes, for the 1991–2000 period, in addition to 184 980 journal articles, a total of 149 481 other types of documents such as books, doctoral dissertations, collective works and working papers.

The new 1991 classification system of subject descriptors has influenced the choice of the period of observation, since only complete annual series for all journals were retained, thereby extending the range from 1991 to 2000. While the descriptive codes for *Industrial Organization* vary from L000 to L990, only the categories identified by the second position of the code were considered, i.e. L0(00) to L9(90).

The descriptive codes of the group 'L' have been divided into three main categories to indicate the nature of the article, in order to compare the editorial orientation and preferences of different journals, as well as to observe the overall trends between generalist and specialized type of journals:

L1*: theoretical analysis (L100–L390)
L4*: industrial policy (L400–L590)
L6*: industry studies (L600–L990)

Since the remaining category L000 accounted for a very small percentage of articles, most of them not relevant to the selected journals, it was not meaningful to include it in the analysis.

Given that authors may attribute more than one descriptive code to each contribution, the following reservations

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are to be kept in mind. When multiple references apply also to at least another field of specialization other than 'L', no single coded information could allow us to recognize, by rule or by practice, the main orientation of the contribution and, therefore, to claim its major specialization in *Industrial Organization*. Furthermore, since multiple references are possible between and/or within categories of the 'L' group, the sub-totals of the categories usually exceed the number of distinct articles included in the category. Likewise, the total number of codes for the entire 'L' group is normally an overestimation of the number of real contributions in *Industrial Organization* present in EconLit.

In fact, since a publication in that group may belong to one or several categories in *Industrial Organization*, a RMR index will be used to reflect the various links, within a same article, between the different aspects of the work: theoretical analysis, industrial policy, industry studies. It is calculated by taking the ratio of the number of descriptive codes, computed at a given level, and the effective number of articles, the values being usually greater than unity.

Publications in *Industrial Organization*, such as shown in Table 1, indicate the number of journal articles (L Articles) and the number of other contributions (Other L) such as books, articles in collective works, thesis and working papers. The relative share, given as a percentage, refers respectively to the total number of journal articles and to the total number of other contributions in all fields of specialization. In both cases, there is a clear progression between the two periods for the journal articles (12.1% to 14.8%) and the other contributions specialized in 'L' (12.8% to 16.0%), underlining a recognized position of *Industrial Organization* in recent scientific publications. Contrasting with the net progression of the number of journal articles (8308 to 13 944), due in part to the addition of new journals, the slight progression of the group of other contributions in 'L' (from 9170 to 9496), is a direct consequence of the temporary exclusion from the EconLit database, during the second period, of some types of publication, specifically contributions to collective works and working papers. The positive trend in the relative share straightly supports this argument.

III. SELECTION OF MAJOR GENERALIST AND SPECIALIZED JOURNALS

The selection of generalist journals was based on some studies published in recent years, with the intent to limit the group to a relatively smaller number, easily comparable with the specialized group: Bairam (1994); Laband and Piette (1994); Scott and Mitias (1996); Elliott, Greenaway and Sapsford (1998); Kalaitzidakis, Mamuneas and Stengos (1999); Kocher and Sutter (2001).

Following the general practice, the list was restricted to journals applying the rules of blind refereeing, thereby eliminating well known publications such as *Journal of Economic Literature* and *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. The generalist nature of the group required the elimination of some major journals devoted to other areas of specialization: *Econometrica, Journal of Econometrics, Journal of Finance, Journal of Law and Economics, National Tax Journal*, just to name a few.

The nine titles retained were mostly US based, except for three European publications identified by (*): *American Economic Review (AER); Economic Journal* (EJ)*; *European Economic Review* (EER)*; *International Economic Review (IER); Journal of Economic Theory (JET); Journal of Political Economy (JPE); Quarterly Journal of Economics (QJE); Review of Economic Studies* (RESD); Review of Economics and Statistics (REST)*.

The selection of the specialized journals required particular attention. Using EconLit to observe the relative frequency of contributions in *Industrial Organization* of all other journals, it became possible to identify the following

Table 1. *Contributions in Industrial Organization by type of document and by period*

Type of document	1991–1995	1996–2000	1991–2000	Progression
a) Journal articles:				
—Articles L	8308	13 944	22 252	1.68
—Other articles	68 592	94 136	162 728	1.37
% {Articles 'L'/Other articles}	(12.1)	(14.8)	(13.7)	(1.22)
b) Other contributions in L:	9170	9496	18 667	1.03
—Book	885	1018	1903	1.04
—Collective volume article	6491	6594	13 085	1.15
—Dissertation	496	545	1041	1.02
—Working paper	1298	1339	2637	1.10
c) Other contributions (excluding L)	71 573	59 241	130 814	0.83
% {(b)/(c)}	(12.8)	(16.0)	(14.3)	(1.25)

titles: *Antitrust Bulletin (AB); International Journal of Industrial Organization (IJIO); Journal of Industrial Economics (JIE); Rand Journal of Economics (RJE); Review of Industrial Organization (RIO).*

IV. *INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION* CONTRIBUTIONS IN MAJOR GENERALIST JOURNALS

Even though the number of 'L' articles has declined in the second period (445 to 410), the relative share of specialization has remained stable (11.8% and 11.7%), and represents nearly one article out of eight, as shown in Table 2.

In order to provide useful information to practitioners and other interested readers, the analysis should examine the trend of the relative share of 'L' articles in each period, but also take into account the actual number of such articles. Effectively, while AER, EER and REST represent together more than half of the total articles, AER indicates one of the lowest relative share (9.6% and 10%) but with the highest number of articles (88 and 83). During the second period, QJE has shown the most severe drop (41 to 23 articles) while EER has progressed from 59 to 85 articles. The high relative share of REST (19.5%) is in full contrast with JET (5.4%).

Theoretical articles (52%) and industry studies (38%) clearly indicate the preferences of the editorial boards in the generalist journals, industrial policy articles (10%) getting only very little attention, with no particular exception at the journal level.

Five journals show a predominant relative share of theoretical articles: JET (89%), RESD (75%), IER (71%), EER (61%) and AER (54%). Industry studies are favoured by the four remaining journals, with no important differences between them: REST (57%), EJ (55%), QJE (55%) and JPE (47%). In fact, when taking into account both the relative share and the effective number of articles, it appears that AER and EER get the largest number of theoretical publications and, to a lesser degree, REST and JET. Both AER and EER lead again for articles on industrial policy, but at a much lower level. For industry studies, the lead is taken clearly by REST followed by AER and EJ, while IER, REST and JET trail in the lowest part of that group.

Low values of the RMR index for JET (1.00) and IER (1.06) reflect very specific orientations of the published articles in those journals, while a greater openness to link theory with policy and/or applications is identified with the remaining journals, particularly with EJ, REST and JPE.

V. *INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION* CONTRIBUTIONS IN MAJOR SPECIALIZED JOURNALS

Normally, one would expect that the specialized journals would publish only *Industrial Organization* articles. In practice, broader issues may be analysed and the subjects

Table 2. *Contributions of 'L' articles to generalist journals by type of article and by period*

	1991–1995		1996–2000		1991–2000			
Journal	Article 'L' %L/Total	RMR	Article L %L/Total	RMR	% L1*/L	% L4*/L	% L6*/L	RMR
American Economic Review	88 9.6	1.16	83 10.0	1.20	54	12	34	1.18
Economic Journal	48 10.2	1.19	39 8.6	1.23	32	13	55	1.21
European Economic Review	59 10.8	1.10	85 17.0	1.19	61	14	25	1.15
International Economic Review	39 13.8	1.05	33 13.5	1.06	71	11	18	1.06
Journal of Economic Theory	21 5.4	1.00	32 6.5	1.00	89	9	2	1.00
Journal of Political Economy	35 13.1	1.31	35 13.6	1.34	43	10	47	1.33
Quarterly Journal of Economics	41 16.6	1.12	23 11.2	1.22	38	7	55	1.16
Review of Economic Studies	25 11.5	1.12	23 13.1	1.17	75	5	20	1.15
Review of Economics and Statistics	89 19.5	1.24	57 16.1	1.28	36	7	57	1.25
Total:	445 11.8	1.16	410 11.7	1.20	52	10	38	1.18

Table 3. *Contributions of 'L' articles to specialized journals by type of article and by period*

Journal	1991–1995 Article ' L' %L/Total	RMR	1996–2000 Article 'L' %L/Total	RMR	1991–2000 % L1*/L	% L4*/L	% L6*/L	RMR
Antitrust Bulletin	127 81.9	1.24	143 91.7	1.48	16	64	20	1.37
International Journal of Industrial Organization	126 76.8	1.21	207 84.8	1.27	70	8	21	1.25
Journal of Industrial Economics	124 82.1	1.23	109 87.9	1.42	63	9	28	1.32
Rand Journal of Economics	118 59.9	1.21	111 55.5	1.31	59	15	27	1.26
Review of Industrial Organization	168 84.8	1.24	222 90.2	1.50	44	24	33	1.39
Total:	663 76.6	1.23	792 81.6	1.40	49	25	26	1.32

could refer or extend to related topics not identified within the 'L' category, but still remain relevant to the overall concern of the general theme.

Obviously, the level of specialization of this group, as indicated in Table 3, is now very high (76.6% and 81.6%). All the five journals combine both a high level of specialization (55.5% to 91.7%) with a large number of articles (111 to 222). The trend is upwards, with a net increase of 'L' articles (663 to 792), mainly due to the significant progression of specialization of the two leaders, namely RIO (168 to 222 articles) and IJIO (126 to 207 articles).

Taking again into account both the relative share and the actual number of 'L' articles, IJIO publishes the largest number of theoretical papers, followed by RIO, all that in full contrast with AB. The highest relative share of articles on industrial policy goes to AB, with RIO as a distant second. Industry studies are found in a reasonable number in each journal, with an undisputed predominance in RIO.

During the 1991–1995 period, the RMR index (1.23) was stable and high enough to suggest a preference of the editorial boards of all five specialized journals to publish articles with a broader view to encompass theoretical analysis with industrial policy formulation and/or application in industry studies. It has dramatically increased during the second period (1.23 to 1.40) for each journal, and most particularly in RIO (1.24 to 1.50) and AB (1.24 to 1.48).

VI. CONCLUSION

The results for individually surveyed journals shown in Tables 2 and 3 are, in fact, the basis of the investigation. They may provide some useful indications on the editorial practices of individual journals, but also at their group level.

While there is a significant increase of publications in *Industrial Organization* included in EconLit during the second period compared to all other fields of specialization, the trend remains stable for the nine selected generalist journals, but definitively higher for the five specialized journals. Overall, these practices suggest that specialized journals would prefer articles with a broader approach to the treatment of *Industrial Organization* problems, giving a priority, like generalist journals, to theoretical content, but valuing equally industrial policy and applications to industry studies as a second-rank concern.

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