

# BLOGWATCH

by Paul Walker ([paul.walker@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:paul.walker@canterbury.ac.nz))

A current controversy in the blogosphere revolves around the claim that Bruno Frey, along with co-authors Benno Torgler and David Savage, have published the same work several times in different journals, each time without mentioning their other papers on the same topic. Clearly such "self plagiarism" violates the code of conduct of academic journals. Most (all?) economics journals require that papers submitted to them have not been published previously or are not concurrently submitted for publication elsewhere. The first economics blog to pick up on this seems to have been the "Economic Logic" <http://economiclogic.blogspot.com/> blog. In a posting "On the ethics of research cloning" <http://economiclogic.blogspot.com/2011/04/on-ethics-of-research-cloning.html> the Economic Logician writes,

"All this is very fishy. It really looks like the authors are playing games here, trying to get multiple publications out of the same work. They do not mention the other work to fool editors and referees into thinking these are original contributions, as required for any submission to those journals. They tweak the results and rewrite the text so that they cannot be accused of blatant self-plagiarism. This is unethical behavior, but it is not unheard of in the profession."

Olaf Storbeck at "Economics Intelligence" <http://olafstorbeck.com/> follows up by asking "Is Bruno Frey sailing on the Titanic? On cloned papers and missing citations" <http://olafstorbeck.com/2011/07/04/is-bruno-frey-sailing-on-the-titanic-on-cloned-papers-and-missing-citations/> Storbeck notes that there are four papers involved

- (1) "Noblesse Oblige? Determinants of Survival in a Life and Death Situation" (Journal of Economic Behaviour and Organisation [JEBO], 2010)
- (2) "Interaction of natural survival instincts and internalized social norms exploring the Titanic and Lusitania disasters" (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences [PNAS], 2010)
- (3) "Who perished on the Titanic? The importance of social norms" (Rationality and Society", 2011)
- (4) "Behavior under Extreme Conditions: The Titanic Disaster", Journal of Economic Perspectives [JEP], 2011"

and he writes

"Apparently, the editor of one of the journals involved - the "Journal of Economic Behaviour and Organisation" - has black-listed Frey, Torgler and Savage (see comment by Barkley Rosser) <http://economiclogic.blogspot.com/2011/04/on-ethics-of-research-cloning.html> and has informed them that he will never again accept any paper written by them. From my point of view, that's quite a decision. Unfortunately it looks like it is perfectly justified."

Storbeck has a second posting on the same subject, for which the title says it all, ""Journal of Economic Perspectives" rebukes Bruno Frey - plus: replies by Torgler and Frey"

<http://olafstorbeck.com/2011/07/04/journal-of-economic-perspectives-rebukes-bruno-frey-plus-replies-by-torgler-and-frey/>.

On the local front, Eric Crampton at "Offsetting Behaviour" <http://offsettingbehaviour.blogspot.com/> has been thinking about minimum wages. Crampton writes on "Youth unemployment and evidence-based policy" <http://offsettingbehaviour.blogspot.com/2011/05/youth-unemployment-and-evidence-based.html>. Crampton says,

"To update things for the current quarter, add in another line for March 2011, quarter number 101, with an adult unemployment rate of 5.63% (rate for all persons aged 20 and up), a youth unemployment rate of 27.5%, and a labour force population of 150.9 (thousands) for the group aged 15-19.

The model expects, given the current adult unemployment rate, that the youth unemployment rate would be 19.3% if the youth unemployment outcomes were no worse (relative to adult outcomes) than in the worst quarter from 1986 to 2008. As the actual youth unemployment rate is 27.5%, the rate is 8.2 percentage points higher than would have been expected under the prior trend. That translates to 12,350 kids who don't have work who we would have expected to be in work had the prior relationship between youth and adult unemployment rates continued."

Crampton has another piece, "Minimum wages - addressing the more sensible critiques" <http://offsettingbehaviour.blogspot.com/2011/05/minimum-wages-addressing-more-sensible.html> in which he argues that at low levels minimum wages are unlikely to be binding and that the relative strength of the labour market will also matter. When labour demand is high the effects of a minimum wage increase will be less. This second point is relevant to the Hyslop and Stillman study of minimum wages in NZ.

Also from Offsetting Behaviour comes Seamus Hogan who argues that there is "A thesis waiting to be written" <http://offsettingbehaviour.blogspot.com/2011/06/thesis-waiting-to-be-written.html> on the student army, organised to assist after Christchurch's earthquakes.

"[...] the thing I find most fascinating about the volunteer activities was the high levels of coordination that existed with activities that originated in the bright ideas of lots of people, such as the lunchpacks made for members of the student army, prepared by volunteers in Dunedin, and driven up to Christchurch by other volunteers overnight. The student army originated as a single student's idea after the September quake, communicated to others via Facebook. Is this an example of a Hayekian spontaneous order, with social networking providing the platform for a coordinating network? Or did civil defence and other official organisations have an important role to play in the coordinating mechanism? To what extent was the scale of the volunteer activity this time possible only because the system evolved from the smaller-scale activity last year?"

When discussing "The Emergence of Capitalist Economics II" <http://adamsmithslostlegacy.blogspot.com/2011/06/emergence-of-capitalist-economics-ii.html> at the "Adam Smith's Lost Legacy" blog <http://adamsmithslostlegacy.blogspot.com/>,

Gavin Kennedy writes with regard to the neoclassical model,

"YHT also link Adam Smith to the problems with which the corn model is lined up to discuss and which the late 19th-century mathematical school went on to separate economics even further from the real world, leading to the fantasies of General Equilibrium and much of microeconomics as we know it today."

A defence of the neoclassical model <<http://antidismal.blogspot.com/2011/06/neoclassical-model.html>> is offered at the "Anti-dismal" blog <<http://antidismal.blogspot.com/>> where it is argued that the neoclassical model can be seen as either a set of conditions under which the price system alone can prevent decent into chaos, more formally conditions under which equilibrium can be achieved, or as an approximation to a large section of the economy of the time. In either case the neoclassical model makes more sense than many of its detractors would permit.

Kennedy replies in "A Serious Scholar Disagrees" <<http://adamsmithslostlegacy.blogspot.com/2011/06/serious-scholar-disagrees.html>>

Meanwhile at the "Modified Rapture" blog <<http://www.modifiedrapture.com/>>

Sarah Skwire states the obvious:

"Economics is the sexiest and most romantic of professions."

She goes on to offer "The Top Ten Lines for Hitting on an Economist"

<<http://www.modifiedrapture.com/wp/?p=210>>

## NZEP NOTICE

New Zealand Economic Papers has been published regularly since 1966. The journal is rated "B" by the Australian Business Deans' Council. NZEP publishes research in all areas of economics, both theoretical and empirical. At the same time, NZEP has a keen interest in research on important issues relevant to New Zealand, Australia and the Asia-Pacific. The journal also publishes survey articles, book reviews and welcomes articles that explore important policy initiatives affecting the region and the implications of those policies. Authors are invited to submit their manuscripts to NZEP online (<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/rnzp>).

NZEP has recently joined iFirst. This means that manuscripts that have completed the NZEP review process and have been accepted for publication will now be available online as "Forthcoming Articles" through the Taylor and Francis iFirst early-online-publication system. This will serve to reduce the time from article submission to publication. iFirst articles can be cited using their assigned DOIs, or Digital Object Identifiers, in addition to the article and journal title.

There are plans to publish three guest-edited special issues. These are on Quality of Life (guest edited by Gail Pacheco, Stephanié Rossouw and Don Webber), New Zealand's Macroeconomic Imbalances (Viv Hall, John Janssen and Christie Smith) and Innovation in Teaching Undergraduate Economics (David Colander, Michael Cameron and Mary Hedges).

Mark Holmes, Editor-in-Chief.

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and all areas of economics teaching (microeconomics, macroeconomics, quantitative, etc.) are welcome.

Please note that application to a New Zealand context is not a criterion for acceptance.

The special issue will be guest-edited by David Colander Middlebury College, Vermont

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