

Statement by the editors of *Theoretical Economics* regarding the length of submissions

Recently, the editors of *Econometrica*, *Theoretical Economics* (TE) and *Quantitative Economics* posted a [joint statement](#) that expresses concern about the tendency toward longer papers in economics and commits to take actions in an attempt to reverse this trend, at least as far as publications in these journals are concerned.

We, the editors of TE, share both the concern and the commitment. We believe that longer papers make it harder for authors to convey their main message to readers and maintain a consistently high quality of writing. Consequently, they also complicate referees' task of evaluating the papers and slow down the reviewing process.

While the trend toward longer papers covers all fields of economics, in submissions to TE it tends to manifest itself in:

- Long introductions that walk the readers through all the results
- Proliferation of extensions and robustness checks (especially when the paper is submitted to TE after being reviewed by other journals)
- Repetitions and duplication of material
- Long proofs caused by the author's striving for general results

When handling submissions, we will try to address these symptoms and others, in an effort to reduce the length of papers. We do not believe that imposing an official length limit is efficient, but length will be a criterion in our editorial decisions. We will continue the practice of returning ultra-long submissions to authors and requesting them to resubmit substantially shorter versions. We will also continue to minimize the use of supplementary appendices because we do not think they are typically a good solution to ultra-long papers.

We hope that authors, referees and associate editors will join us in this effort.

Specifically, we request that reviewers:

- Incorporate length as a criterion in their assessment of papers and make specific recommendations for cuts when they think those are needed.
- Exercise restraint in requests for extensions and robustness checks.
- Refrain from suggesting the transfer of proofs or extensions to supplementary appendices.
- Have in mind the trade-off between strength/generality of results and length/elegance of their proofs. It would sometimes make sense to propose that the author switches to a *weaker* result if this is expected to make the proof significantly shorter and more elegant or insightful.

We also refer authors and reviewers to our [editorial standards page](#) and our [guidelines for referees](#).

We do not have any illusions that an individual journal could unilaterally change the current equilibrium in our profession. However, we believe it can be effective as part of a broader and more forceful movement toward shorter papers.

Ran Spiegler, Editor

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