**Studying economy makes you a more selfish person?**

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SUMMARY. Based on a survey made to students of different majors in the University of Tel Aviv, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Harvard University, and to readers of the Israeli journal *Globes*, Rubinstein (2006) argues that studiying economics makes individuals more selfish. In this paper we replicate a treatment of Rubinstein’s survey with students of the University of Montevideo. The results ….

1. INTRODUCTION

Rubinstein (2006) tests the hypothesis that studying economics makes students more selfish by asking under-graduate students of different majors of the University of Tel Aviv, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Harvard Univertsity, and readers of the Israeli journal *Globes*. In the survey students are faced witha hypothetical situation in which the vice-president of a company has to make a decision that involves a trade-off between profits and the number of employees fired. The survey includes two questions. One that refers to the recommendation the student would give to the vice-president faced with that situation. The second refers to what they *think* real vice-president would do in a similar situation. The survey includes two different formats of the questionnaire. In the first format, the students were given a table with seven alternative pairs of profits and number of employees left in the company, and they had to choose one of this pairs. In the second format, the student were given with just a mathematical function mapping number ef employees to profits. The students surveyed by Rubinstein include undergraduates majoring in Economics,, Law, Mathematics, Philosophy and MBA students of the University of Tel Aviv, and students of Economics at the Hebrew University, MIT and Harvard University. His results show systematic differences between the answers of those who study Economics and the rest. In fact, when students have to decide between the seven different combinations of profits and (the number of) layoffs, economists tend to choose the option that maximizes profits and they are the ones who recommend the largest number of layoffs. When the same situation is represented only by a profit function, the answers of the Economics, MBA and Mathematics students do not differ substantially among them and are significantly higher than the answers given when the problem is presented as a seven discrete choice alternatives. This may indicate, as argued by Rubinstein, that not only studying economics, but also the way economics is taught (using mathematical functions to represent real world situations) may induce to think selfishly.

When taking into consideration the question about the decision a real vice-president would make, all¿¿¿¿????? the students responded that real vice-presidents would fire a higher number of employees than those they recommend. Moreover, when comparing the answers individually, Rubinstein (2006) shows that Economics and MBA students are those who have larger oincidence between their recommendations and what they a real-vice – president would do, whereas the students of Law, Mathematics and Philosophy are the ones who have the least.