Diversity, Inclusion, and Economics: Three of These Things Belong Together

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Swarthmore College, Federal Reserve Board, AEA

Presentation to AEASP Faculty, Fellows, and Staff
May 19, 2020

Outline

Background on the economics profession
Key resources
How to foster diversity and inclusion in remote economics courses

Questions and comments anytime
Volunteer to monitor chat?
Background on the economics profession

Economists in context

Bayer, 2018
Gender and economic knowledge

Effects on economic knowledge and policymaking

- Diversity brings a greater range of insights and perspectives
  - (e.g., Chattopadhyay & Duflo Econometrica 2004; Kamas, Preston & Baum Feminist Economics 2008; May, McGarvey & Whaples Contemporary Economic Policy 2013; Bordo & Istrefi 2018 NBER working paper; Owen & Temesvary Journal of Banking & Finance 2018)

- Diverse groups are more innovative than homogeneous groups
PhD economists’ views (May, McGarvey & Whaples 2013)

- Disagree: “The U.S. has an excessive amount of government regulation of economic activity.”
  - Men: 41%
  - Women: 62%

- Disagree: “Job opportunities for men and women in the U.S. are approximately equal.”
  - Men: 16%
  - Women: 58%

- Agree: “The U.S. should link import openness to the labor standards of its export partners.”
  - Men: 22%
  - Women: 52%

- Agree: “The distribution of income in the U.S. should be made more equal.”
  - Men: 41%
  - Women: 73%

Percentage of academic articles containing the word *racism*

Bayer. *The Minority Report, AEA*, 2018
"The lack of diversity skews viewpoints and constrains the issues being discussed."
Former FRB Chair Yellen

"We make better decisions when we have a wide range of backgrounds and voices around the table."
FRB Chair Powell

"If two people always agree, one of them is redundant."
Former FRB Chair Bernanke
Two recent aha moments

Bachelor’s degrees in economics and other disciplines, U.S. universities

Doctorate degrees in economics and other disciplines, U.S. universities


Gender Bias in Rumors among Professionals: An Identity-Based Interpretation

Alice H. Wu

Posted Online October 16, 2019
https://doi.org/10.1017/rev.2019.0387
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Review of Economics and Statistics
Just Accepted: p1-40

JEL classification: A11, D83, J16, J44

Abstract

This paper measures gender bias in discussions about women versus men in an online professional forum. I study the content of posts that refer to each gender, and the transitions in the topics between consecutive posts once attention turns to one gender or the other. Discussions about women tend to emphasize their personal characteristics instead of professional accomplishments. Posts about women are also more likely to lead to deviations from professional topics than posts about men. I interpret these findings through a model that highlights posters’ incentives to boost their own identities relative to the underrepresented out-group in a profession.
AEA responses

- Code of Professional Conduct
- Policy on Harassment and Discrimination
- Professional climate survey
- Committee on Equity, Diversity and Professional Conduct
- Committee on the Status of LGBTQ+ Individuals in the Economics Profession
- Formal vetting process for all nominated officers, journal editors, and honorees
- Eliminating hotel bedroom interviews
- AEA ombudsperson to collect information and offer guidance
- Developing and disseminating best practices for economists’ professional conduct
- Increasing outreach to high school and college students
- ASSA panels on how economics might solve its race/gender problems
- <and more>

**AEA Code of Professional Conduct**

**Adopted April 20, 2018**

The American Economic Association holds that principles of professional conduct should guide economists in academia, government, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector.

The AEA's founding purpose of “the encouragement of economic research” requires intellectual and professional integrity. Integrity demands honesty, care, and transparency in conducting and presenting research; disinterested assessment of ideas; acknowledgement of limits of expertise; and disclosure of real and perceived conflicts of interest.

The AEA encourages the “perfect freedom of economic discussion.” This goal requires an environment where all can freely participate and where each idea is considered on its own merits. Economists have a professional obligation to conduct civil and respectful discourse in all forums, including those that allow confidential or anonymous participation.

The AEA seeks to create a professional environment with equal opportunity and fair treatment for all economists, regardless of age, sex, gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, health condition, marital status, parental status, genetic information, political affiliation, professional status, or personal connections.

Economists have both an individual responsibility for their own conduct, and a collective responsibility to promote professional conduct. These responsibilities include developing institutional arrangements and a professional environment that promote free expression concerning economics. These responsibilities also include supporting participation and advancement in the economics profession by individuals from all backgrounds, including particularly those that have been historically underrepresented.

The AEA strives to promote these principles through its activities.
AEA Professional Climate Survey

- Designed and analyzed by the AEA Committee on Equity, Diversity and Professional Conduct (Sam Allgood, Amanda Bayer, Marianne Bertrand (chair), Sandy Black, Nick Bloom, and Lisa Cook)
- Asked members about experiences in the profession and views on the climate
- Administered November 2018-January 2019
- 10,406 current and former AEA members responded
- The final report, released September 2019, presents the quantitative data and text from de-identified responses to open-ended questions
  
2019 AEA Professional Climate Survey Results

Experiences of discrimination or unfair treatment in economics

- White men
- White women
- Asian men
- Asian women
- Hispanic men
- Hispanic women
- Black men
- Black women

Bayer 2020
“Many members of the profession have suffered harassment and discrimination during their careers, including both overt acts of abuse and more subtle forms of marginalization. This is unacceptable. Excluding or marginalizing people based on their gender, race, or other personal characteristics is not only deeply unfair to those who are excluded, it damages the field as a whole by limiting the diversity of perspectives and dissuading talented people from becoming economists.”

AEA president Ben Bernanke, immediate past-president Olivier Blanchard, and president-elect Janet Yellen (AEA Member Announcement, March 18, 2019)
2019 AEA Professional Climate Survey Results

Views on the economics profession

- Percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing
- Bayer 2020

Key resources
Diversifying Economic Quality: A Wiki for Instructors and Departments

Proven practices for instructors

- NEW: Show these videos to your students.
- Align course content with Div.E.Q. Standards for Introducing Economics to High School and College Students.
- Foster a growth mindset in your students.
- Offer wise feedback.
- Use active learning techniques.
- Consider the impact of wait time.
- Employ technology wisely.
- Avoid stereotype threat.
- Use cooperative learning.
- Promote inclusive communication.
- Get to know your students as individuals.
- Design your course to teach essential competencies in economics, and provide students with learning outcomes and rubrics.
- Incorporate service learning.

Proven policies for departments

- Actively recruit students who may be

Best Practices for Economists
Building a More Diverse, Inclusive, and Productive Profession

This site presents best practices for economists in four areas of professional conduct. Click on the buttons to find practical suggestions for implementation and supporting research and resources.

Best Practices for Economists

Conducting Research

1. Organize conferences, seminars, and visits programs that are inclusive. Each conference, seminar, or visit program should address a group of economists.

2. Avoid that the conferences and seminars discussed are not conservative. Setting and exceeding rules of responsible behavior by attendees is important and conferences and seminars can increase the quality of the intellectual exchange.

3. Provide equitable access to journals. Ensuring that the board of editors at journal are diverse, that the standards of ethics and equitable behavior are set, that referees are selected from a range of different backgrounds, and that the editors discuss the policy can improve the research and the discussion.

4. Share research opportunities broadly, having diversity in identifying research assistants and potential collaborators can help create exciting ideas.

5. Learn more.

Best Practices for Economists

Serve as Colleagues

1. Discuss and emphasize code of conduct. Establishing rules for unbiased research facilitates important observations, sets clear expectations, and creates a more productive and inclusive environment.

2. Be an effective mentor. Setting a high standard of ethical behavior and expectations that is respected and rewarded can promote ethical behavior.

3. Be a good mentor. Improving your mentoring skills encourages more women and men to become mentors. A more supportive environment at universities and colleges increases the number of women and men who become mentors.

4. Create room for your colleagues' work-life balance. Supporting underrepresented groups and the professional and personal lives of faculty and graduate students.

5. Meet with your colleagues at least twice a year. Valuing everyone's time and contributions helps everyone to feel included.

6. Support the women in your life. Make time for family and friends. Spend time with family and friends.

7. Keep your colleagues informed. Valuing everyone's time and contributions helps everyone to feel included.

8. Stay in touch. Make time for family and friends. Spend time with family and friends.

9. Help your colleagues understand your research. Make time for family and friends. Spend time with family and friends.

10. Help your colleagues understand your research. Make time for family and friends. Spend time with family and friends.

Best Practices for Economists

Writing with Style

1. Use more specific language. Establishing rules for unbiased research facilitates important observations, sets clear expectations, and creates a more productive and inclusive environment.

2. Be a good mentor. Improving your mentoring skills encourages more women and men to become mentors. A more supportive environment at universities and colleges increases the number of women and men who become mentors.

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10. Help your colleagues understand your research. Make time for family and friends. Spend time with family and friends.

Best Practices for Economists

Embracing Change

1. Implement a structured and fair screening process. Adopting best practices for reviewing can increase the diversity of candidate pools and increase the influence of hiring and gender equity.

2. Conduct promotion, tenure, and annual performance reviews in transparent and equitable manners. Requiring transparency about the evaluation will determine recruitment outcomes, and linking evaluators whose duties should be done can silence feedback that might improve promotion.

3. Implement an inclusive process for admitting and supporting graduate students. Developing tools to evaluate admissions and advising processes can identify areas of strength and weaknesses.

4. Conduct initial and continuous cultural and ethnic awareness training for all new faculty, and ongoing cultural and ethnic awareness training for all students.

5. Enhance your own cultural and ethnic awareness. Understanding the values, beliefs, and behaviors of different cultures can help create inclusive environments.

6. Keep your colleagues informed. Valuing everyone's time and contributions helps everyone to feel included.

7. Help your colleagues understand their research. Make time for family and friends. Spend time with family and friends.

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10. Help your colleagues understand their research. Make time for family and friends. Spend time with family and friends.
One-stop shopping for relevant research and resources

How to foster diversity and inclusion in remote economics courses
Diagnosing the Learning Environment for Diverse Students in Introductory Economics: An Analysis of Relevance, Belonging, and Growth Mindsets

By Amanda Bayer, Syon P. Bhanot, Erin T. Bronchetti, and Stephen A. O’Connell

Building on educational psychology research, we focus on three aspects of a student’s introductory economics experience:

- Relevance: the student perceives the material to be directly relevant or useful to their own life.
- Belonging: the student is socially integrated in their classes and feels that they belong in the department.
- Growth mindset: the student believes that their ability in economics is not fixed, but rather a malleable quality that can improve and grow.
### Table 1: Measures of R, B, and G Among Introductory Economics Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevance</th>
<th>White Men</th>
<th>Women and URM Students</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance Index (average of standardized variables measuring Relevance)</td>
<td>0.560</td>
<td>0.351</td>
<td>0.118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The textbook used examples that were relatable to my life</td>
<td>0.132</td>
<td>0.105</td>
<td>0.541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The professor used examples that were relatable to my life</td>
<td>0.406</td>
<td>0.296</td>
<td>0.079*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We discussed important, real-world issues in class</td>
<td>0.311</td>
<td>0.216</td>
<td>0.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The class gave me a useful framework for thinking about important issues</td>
<td>0.277</td>
<td>0.272</td>
<td>0.930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree: We overlooked important aspects of the issues we studied</td>
<td>0.347</td>
<td>0.243</td>
<td>0.080*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belonging</th>
<th>White Men</th>
<th>Women and URM Students</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belonging Index (average of standardized variables measuring Belonging)</td>
<td>0.241</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>0.001***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Econ 001 class was collegial</td>
<td>0.287</td>
<td>0.201</td>
<td>0.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt that the students supported each other</td>
<td>0.340</td>
<td>0.244</td>
<td>0.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt the prof cared about whether I was learning the material</td>
<td>0.436</td>
<td>0.284</td>
<td>0.015**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt comfortable asking questions in class</td>
<td>0.386</td>
<td>0.259</td>
<td>0.038**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt comfortable asking questions at TA clinics</td>
<td>0.289</td>
<td>0.231</td>
<td>0.374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The economics department values Swarthmore students</td>
<td>0.306</td>
<td>0.241</td>
<td>0.310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People like me can become economists</td>
<td>0.410</td>
<td>0.211</td>
<td>0.002***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answered NO: Do you feel different from the typical economics student?</td>
<td>0.849</td>
<td>0.600</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Growth Mindset</th>
<th>White Men</th>
<th>Women and URM Students</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth Index (average of standardized variables measuring Growth Mindset)</td>
<td>0.067</td>
<td>-0.164</td>
<td>0.035**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt the prof believed I could learn the material</td>
<td>0.450</td>
<td>0.370</td>
<td>0.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While taking the course, I believed I could learn the material</td>
<td>0.446</td>
<td>0.304</td>
<td>0.025**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Except where noted, dependent variables are indicators for responding **Strongly Agree** to the statement. Only respondents with non-missing self-reports of gender and minority status are included.

### Table 2: RBG and Performance and Persistence in Economics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1) Grade A- or Better</th>
<th>(2) Grade A- or Better</th>
<th>(3) Declared Major</th>
<th>(4) Declared Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female and/or URM</td>
<td>-0.104 (0.065)</td>
<td>-0.074 (0.065)</td>
<td>-0.196** (0.094)</td>
<td>-0.175* (0.094)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High RBG</td>
<td>0.259*** (0.078)</td>
<td>0.065 (0.094)</td>
<td>0.196* (0.116)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Control for grade in Intro Econ?**
- Yes

**N. of obs.**
- 238

**R-squared**
- 0.205

**Notes:** Results from linear probability models; * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.001. All regressions include controls for first-generation college student, varsity athlete, international student, taking the course as Credit/No-credit (i.e., no letter grade), and instructor, cohort, and semester of college fixed effects. Columns 3-4 add control for student’s grade in introductory economics. Sample excludes any student with missing survey data on gender or URM status. Sample in columns 3-4 includes only students who took the course in the first four semesters of college, since major is declared near the end of the sophomore year.

(Bayer, Bhanot, Bronchetti, & O’Connell 2020)
Relevance

Does the student perceive the material to be directly relevant or useful to their own life?

Does Simple Information Provision Lead to More Diverse Classrooms? A field experiment
(Bayer, Bhanot & Lozano 2019)

- Study population: 2,710 incoming college students from underrepresented groups, including all women, at 9 liberal arts colleges
- Randomization: at the student level within schools
- Treatments: two emails sent in the summer before students started college
  - Treatment 1 – “Welcome”
  - Treatment 2 – “Welcome+Info” showcasing a diversity of research and researchers within economics
  - Control – No messaging from the economics department
- Outcome: whether the student completed an economics course in their first semester
Welcome+Info treatment

Meet Some Economists:

Lashawn Richburg-Hayes, Senior Research Associate, MDRC
"My own neighborhood is always at the back of my mind."

Mark Hugo Lopez, Director of Hispanic Research, Pew Research Center
"I should have had more confidence in myself...Nothing happens unless you make it happen. You aren't sought; you have to seek."

Janet L. Yellen, Chair of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System
"When economics is tested by future challenges, I hope that our profession will be able to say that we have done all we could to attract the best people and the best ideas."

Explore a wide range of topics:

Can strong peer networks close the gender gap in entrepreneurship?

Can a nearby SAT test center boost college attendance?

Do employers frown on for-profit colleges and online degrees?

Why do mothers with medical degrees get fewer C-sections?

Main result

Table 1: Average Treatment Effects on Course Completion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome+Info</td>
<td>0.030*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-0.126***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URM</td>
<td>-0.066***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.152***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>2710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Fixed Effects</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: This table shows the average treatment effects of the Welcome and Welcome+Info treatment conditions, with and without controls for gender, whether or not a student is from an underserved minority group (URM), and school fixed effects. Standard errors are in parentheses. *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01

(Bayer, Bhanot & Lozano 2019)
Treatment effects for first-generation college students

(Bayer, Bhanot & Lozano 2019)

Building relevance

- Offer course content that is relevant for diverse students:
  https://www.aeaweb.org/resources/best-practices/working-with-students#p2

- Don’t try to “cover” all the material. Uncover it!

- Prepare students for future economics courses by building the essential competencies of economics. (See the next slide and http://highered.ssrc.org/projects/measuring-college-learning-project/economics/.)
Belonging

Is the student socially integrated in their classes, and do they feel that they belong in the field?
Who is Being Trained in Economics? The Race, Ethnicity, and Gender of Economics Majors at U.S. Colleges and Universities

Who belongs? The not-so-subtle messages in introductory economics textbooks

- Stevenson & Zlotnick (2018) find 77% of the people are men.
- Imbalance in all categories: economists, made up and ordinary people, celebrities, policy makers, real business leaders.
- Women take fewer actions, are more likely to be involved in fashion, food, or household tasks. Men are more likely to be in business or policy.

Image from "Gender Representation in Economics Textbooks," Stevenson & Zlotnick 2018
https://www.aeaweb.org/conference/2018/preliminary/powerpoint/KK2aadN

Building belonging

- Build a sense of belonging for all students:
  https://www.aeaweb.org/resources/best-practices/working-with-students#p4
- Be upfront about the implicit and explicit messages they encounter.
- Introduce students to a diverse array of research and researchers. (See the next slide and http://diversifyingecon.org/index.php/Videos_on_economists_and_their_research.)
- Tell students the story of your own journey to economics.
- Organize students into study groups that meet and support each other outside of class.
- Assign group projects and collaborative work.
Growth mindset

Does the student believe that their ability in economics is not fixed, but rather a malleable quality that can improve and grow?
Building growth mindsets

- Communicate through your words and actions that: intelligence is malleable, math ability can be developed, economic intuition can be acquired, and academic skills and abilities are acquired through hard work, mistakes, and perseverance.
- Offer wise criticism.
- Visit https://www.aeaweb.org/resources/best-practices/working-with-students#p5

I encourage you to continue brainstorming and sharing concrete steps you can take to build 

**Relevance + Belonging + Growth mindsets**

in this summer’s remote learning environment.