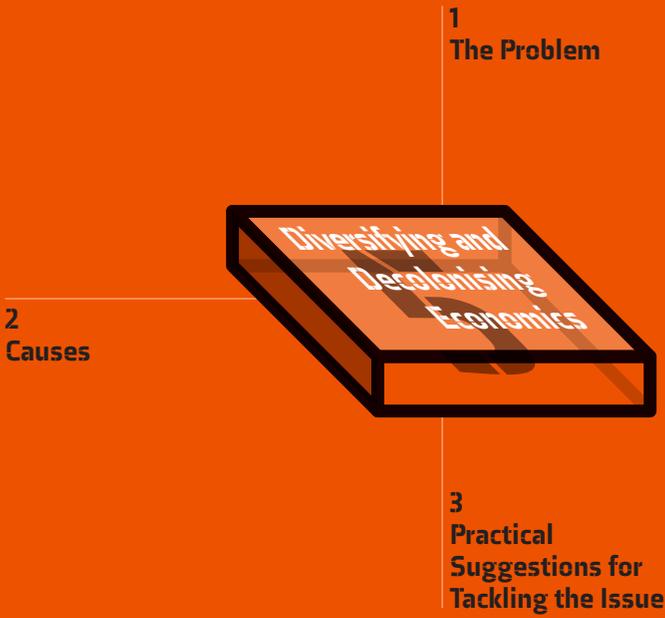


## Foundation 5

# Diversifying and Decolonising Economics

Respecting women, minority, lower class and Global South economists and taking their contributions seriously will improve everyone's understanding of the economy.



Economics has historically been, and is still, dominated by white upper and middle class men. This has caused important biases in economic thinking and in the community of our discipline. The ideas of women, Global South, minority and lower class scholars have frequently been ignored, both in research and in education. The same applies to their economic realities, values, interests and ways of organising economic processes. Currently, women and minorities face more hurdles in economics than men and white people do. Causes for this range from subtle but pervasive unconscious biases to outright sexual harassment from colleagues.

We need to diversify and decolonise economics. That includes: working to decrease those additional barriers which women, minorities, Global South and lower class scholars currently face, quite apart from the normal entry requirements of ability and interest. It also includes making the concepts of our global discipline more representative of the worldwide diversity of economic arrangements and ideas.

This will not only help marginalised groups, important though that is. It will also make economics education itself better for all students, offering them a broader, more realistic and more relevant set of ideas and realities.

The chapter starts with a brief overview of the problems of underrepresentation of women and minorities in our discipline and some of the main challenges they are facing. We then discuss a number of potential causes for these problems and evaluate where the fundamental bottlenecks might lie. Third, we discuss several paths towards tackling these issues, from actively acknowledging them to teaching different material and using different didactic techniques.

*“We are tired of leaders in the field refusing to see problems happening right under their noses. And we are tired of having these problems distract from what we came here to do: meaningful, high-quality economic research.”*

An open letter regarding harassment and discrimination in the economics profession signed by hundreds of graduate students and research assistants a few days before the annual meeting of the American Economic Association in 2018

A note before we start. While we are trying to help diversify and decolonise economics, this book only goes so far. Much remains to be done. What’s more, as the main authors of this book are two young white university educated middle-class men from the Netherlands, the book has an inevitable bias towards our own experiences. Ideas and suggestions on how to diversify and decolonise economics are therefore very much welcome. With the international movements of *Rethinking Economics* and *Diversifying and Decolonising Economics*, we will keep on working on these matters and are always looking for more people to help in creating change.

## 1 The Problem

First, we present some basic numbers illustrating which social groups are underrepresented and which are overrepresented within economics. While each of these numbers deserves a more detailed analysis, we go over them rather briefly, to show the general pattern: economics as a discipline is dominated by white men, while other groups are underrepresented. Second, we compare economics to other disciplines to see how much of the problem is specific to the discipline of economics.

### Underrepresentation

In the US, UK and Australia, over the last decades roughly one third of undergraduate economics students are women (Tetlow, 2018). In 2014 in the US, 2% of economics doctorate degrees were awarded to racial minority women, 8% to minority men, 29% to white women, and 62% to white men (Bayer & Rouse, 2016). Worldwide, on average 19% of economists are women (Boring & Zignago, 2018). When countries are compared, Thailand

and Eastern European countries, such as Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria and Russia, have relatively high female representation at around 40-50% of economists, while countries such as Saudi Arabia, Ghana, Israel, Japan and Brazil have relatively low representation at around 7-15% (IDEAS, 2021).

In the US, only 6% of tenured and tenure-track economists and 4% of full professors are black or Hispanic (Bayer & Rouse, 2016). There are virtually no black editors at the top economics journals (Casselman & Tankersley, 2020). There is a 20% gender gap in achieving tenure and one of 50% in promotion to full professor (Da Costa, 2017).

The Global South is strongly underrepresented in global economics journals and conferences. Even within the field of development economics, this is true as only 10% of papers published in 2018 were (co-)authored by someone from the Global South (Naritomi et al., 2020).

The most prestigious prize in the discipline, The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, has been awarded to 86 people, as of 2020. Among its winners there are one black man (Arthur Lewis in 1979), two Indian men (Amartya Sen in 1998 and Abhijit Banerjee in 2019), two white women (Elinor Ostrom in 2009 and Esther Duflo in 2019) and 81 white men.

Our discipline has a long way to go towards creating a culture that treats everyone equally and fairly, as the findings of the 2019 'Professional Climate Survey' of the American Economic Association made clear (Allgood et al., 2019). Almost half of all black and half of all female economists experienced discrimination. Only 14% of black economists felt that black people are respected in the discipline and only 45% of all respondents felt that minorities are respected. Economists with a disability or other sexual orientation were also found to experience more discrimination. The survey also showed that about half of female economists declined to present at work or a seminar to avoid disrespectful behaviour.

Perhaps even more alarming, sexual harassment seems to be widespread. 42% of female economists experienced sexual comments or behaviour from colleagues or students, 10% were stalked by a colleague, 7% were threatened if they were not romantically or sexually cooperative, 2% experienced sexual assault: being fondled, kissed or rubbed up against private body parts, had their clothes removed without consent, and/or were penetrated, fingered, or made to have oral sex without consent, 6% experienced attempted sexual assault, and 12% were touched in a different way that made them uncomfortable. The #MeToo movement also brought to light a broader culture of sexist behaviour in economics. Perhaps most

famously, Alice Wu showed how misogynistic and toxic the language on economics jobs websites is (Wu, 2017).

The existing underrepresentation of women, minorities, lower class and Global South scholars has many undesirable consequences for the discipline, but perhaps one of the most direct is a lower quality of research. A good example is *Invisible Women* by Caroline Criado-Perez (2019), a data-packed exposition of the many ways in which women are left out of the data and the many ways in which this makes products and policies less than suitable for women, in some cases even dangerous or deadly. As she makes clear, from daily life to workplace organisation, from the design of physical products to the institutions of public life, a more representative group of researchers, designers and managers leads to better outcomes.

### **The problem is bigger in economics than in other disciplines**

Underrepresentation of women and minorities is not exclusively a problem of the economics discipline, but it is relatively large here. Today's societies are characterised by multiple forms of social inequity and discrimination. Solving all problems related to unequal chances and unfair treatment within economics will thus be difficult as long as the larger society remains so unequal. However, the available research indicates that economics is doing worse than other disciplines (Bayer & Rouse, 2016). This is sad news. But it also means that quite some progress can already be made within the discipline without having to do the difficult work of forerunning the rest of society.

Besides outright harassment and bodily violation, there are many more subtle ways in which women face a tougher environment than men do in our discipline. Compared to other math-intensive fields, economics has the largest gender gaps in terms of salaries, job satisfaction, promotion and tenure rates (Bayer & Rouse, 2016; Ceci et al., 2014; Ginther & Kahn, 2004). And rather than displaying progress over time, some inequalities seem to have increased over the last decades (Dolar, 2021; Lundberg & Stearns, 2019). The gender gap in salaries of economics professors has, for example, increased from female salaries being 95% of male salaries in 1995 to 75% in 2010 (Ceci et al., 2014).

## **2 Causes**

Why are women and minorities so badly underrepresented in economics? Is it because women and minorities have less inherent ability or less interest in economics? Or is the discipline somehow biased in favour of white men, making it more likely that they become (highly placed) economists? In other words, is it a supply side or demand side problem?

## Is underrepresentation caused by less talent for, or interest in, economics?

First, we discuss the hypothesis that underrepresentation of women and minorities is at least partially a question of talent. The discipline of economics has become heavily mathematised over the last decades. This strong emphasis on mathematical skills is sometimes given as a reason for why there are less women in economics. This is based on the stereotype that men would be better at mathematics than women (Halpern et al., 2007). If the required level of mathematical skill was key, the problem should be similar in other math-intensive disciplines, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). This is, however, not the case. While all of these fields have historically been dominated by white men, in economics in particular the problem seems to be persistent (Varathan, 2017). Related explanations that the lack of role models, or strict grading, within economics would scare women off, are also implausible as this was also the case in other math-intensive fields. Research, furthermore, indicates that the level of math preparation of students does not explain the underrepresentation of women and minorities (Bayer & Rouse, 2016; Crawford et al., 2018). In sum, explaining, or justifying, unequal outcomes based on 'talent' is not convincing.

Second, might the underrepresentation of women and minorities be a matter of research interests? Surveys do indicate that women are less interested in economics (Bayer & Rouse, 2016; Harvey, 2019). But, we must ask, why is this the case? Do women and minorities have a 'natural' lack of interest for the economy? Or is the discipline shaped by the concerns and experiences of white men, thereby seeming less relevant to other social groups? This is also connected to our discussion in the earlier chapter *Philosophy* of what the discipline is, and should be, about.

Men are overrepresented in real and fictional examples in economics textbooks (Stevenson & Zlotnik, 2018). Many parts of mainstream economics focus on what are sometimes described as stereotypical masculine topics, such as impersonal markets and 'the rational man', who cold-heartedly maximizes his own utility (Nelson, 2018). Stereotypically feminine aspects of the economy, on the other hand, are often ignored, whether it is unpaid labour, care or housework, all of which are often described as altruistic, warm and loving.

Similarly, issues related to race and ethnicity are understudied. From 1990 to 2018 only 0.4% of the papers published in the top five economics journals dealt with race or ethnicity (Francis & Opoku-Agyeman, 2020). Economics produces less race-related research than other social sciences (Advani et al., 2021; Bayer, 2018). While economists do seem to know

this, they underestimate the differences by overestimating the amount of race-related research that is done in economics. They, furthermore, overestimate the amount of progress that is made over the last decades, as there was only an increase of about 10% in race-related research from 1980-2000 to 2000-2020 while the median estimate by economists was an increase of roughly 40% (Advani et al., 2021).

Geographically, there is a strong bias in favour of the US. From 1985 to 2005, there were more economics papers about the US than the rest of the world combined, as only 1.5% of all papers in the top five economics journals were about other countries than the US (Das et al., 2013). For economics education, it is problematic that most economics textbooks are written from a US perspective, causing many students to learn more about the US than their own country.

But it is also about how we explain certain economic phenomena. If we, for example, want to understand why some people earn more than others do, what theoretical explanations do we give students? Currently, economics courses typically provide answers that are more likely to resonate with (relatively privileged) white men than with women and minorities. As one observer put it (Harvey, 2019, p. 1):

*“The core explanation of the determination of wages in the typical economics classroom centers on the idea that your salary equals some objective measure of your actual contribution (in econ talk, the wage rate is equal to the marginal product of labor). If you earn \$5/hour, that’s sad but it’s what you deserve. And if women earn less than men even in the same profession, then that’s simply the objective, scientifically-valid judgement of ‘the market’. ... Now stop and think about it: who among the members of an introductory-level economics class is this likely to attract? For whom is ‘you get what you deserve’ likely to strike a chord? Women? People of colour? White males? I’m sure I don’t have to answer that.”*

The current focus of the discipline, which is on the types of topics and approaches to which the more privileged groups in society have most affinity, could certainly explain why women and minorities feel less drawn towards economics. However, were the discipline redefined to its original definition, as being the science of human provisioning, there need be no reason for a bias towards the interests of white men. This would, however, require a serious reorientation. It would imply bringing in topics that are currently too often neglected, such as discrimination, patriarchy, sexism, racism, imperialism, colonialism, slavery, exploitation and unequal life chances, but also unpaid labour, care, reciprocity, gift economies, commons, and non-western ways of organising economic processes.

## Illustrations of Racism and Discrimination in Economics Over Its History

Historically, discrimination was widespread and very explicit in society at large, including within the discipline of economics. Over time, discrimination has become less accepted and is less often expressed openly. Nevertheless, it still exists. So far, we have mainly focused on systematic research to get a better understanding of the issue. But it is important to also look at specific examples that illustrate how hostile economics can be to marginalised groups. Below, we provide a few examples, in chronological order, to help us get a better understanding and feeling for what discrimination in economics is.

The most common nickname of the discipline is the *“dismal science of supply and demand”*. It is worth noting that this term was originally coined by Thomas Carlyle in his essay called *“Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question”* published in 1849 (pp. 530-532). He argued for the reintroduction of slavery in order to restore productivity. While white men should be left free in accordance with classical liberal thinking, the *“idle Black man in the West Indies”* should, instead, be *“compelled to work as he was fit, and to do the Maker’s will who had constructed him”*. He based his claim on the economic discipline which he described as *“[n]ot a ‘gay science’, but ‘a dreary, desolate and, indeed, quite abject and distressing one; what we might call, by way of eminence, the dismal science’*.”

Around the turn of the century, the academic discipline began to take shape, under its new name *economics*, rather than the old one, *political economy*. One of the founders of the American Economics Association, Richard Ely, wrote in 1898 (p. 781): *“The problem is to keep the most unfit from reproduction, and to encourage the reproduction of those who are really the superior members of society ... There are classes in every modern community composed of those who are virtually children, and who require paternal and fostering care, the aim of which should be the highest development of which they are capable. We may instance the negros, who are for the most part grownup children, and should be treated as such.”*

Half a century later, the economics discipline had grown enormously in size as well as in influence. During the time of the Civil Rights Movement in 1962, one of the white male winners of the The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, George Stigler, wrote a small piece called *‘The Problem of the Negro’*. He set the tone of the article by opening with *“The task of our time has been to make the Negro discontented with himself, not with the white man”*. He continued on writing (1962, p. 4): *“Consider the Negro as a neighbor. He is frequently repelled and avoided by the white man, but is it only color prejudice? On the contrary, it is because the Negro family is, on average, a loose, morally lax, group, and brings with its presence a rapid rise in crime and vandalism. No statutes, no sermons, no demonstrations, will obtain for the Negro the liking and respect that sober virtues*

*commend. And the leaders of Negro thought: they blame the crime and immorality upon the slums and the low income- as if individual responsibility could be bought with a thousand dollars a year."*

More recently in the age of Twitter in 2020, the editor of one of the top five economics journals, Harald Uhlig of the Journal of Political Economy, likened the Black Lives Matter protesters to "flat-earthers and creationists" as response to the protests following the killing of George Floyd. Again, coming back to the narrative of childishness, he wrote on twitter: "Oh well. Time for sensible adults to enter back into the room and have serious, earnest, respectful conversations about it all. ... Look: I understand, that some out there still wish to go and protest and say #defundpolice and all kinds of stuff, while you are still young and responsibility does not matter. Enjoy! Express yourself! Just don't break anything, ok? And be back by 8 pm." Later that week, it became clear that it was not a one-off incident but a recurring pattern for Harald Uhlig. The black economist Bocar A. Ba wrote a few days later to Harald Uhlig, his former teacher: "I sat in your class in Winter 2014: (1) You talked about scheduling a class on MLK [Martin Luther King] Day (2) You made fun of Dr. King and people honoring him (3) You sarcastically asked me in front of everyone whether I was offended".

## Unintentional biases and discrimination

A third hypothesis: might the underrepresentation of women and minorities be caused by systemic biases? Rather than looking for an explanation on the supply side with the behaviour, decisions, talents or interests of underrepresented groups, here we look at the demand side and the biases that exist within the discipline.

It is important to note here that the majority of these demand side problems are not the result of intentional discrimination, but of unconscious biases. A growing body of psychological evidence indicates that large parts of human behaviour are characterised by unconscious assumptions and decisions. It is important to note here that while having unconscious biases seems to be an inherent part of human nature, the kinds and types of biases we have come from the society and culture we live in. Implicit biases and social stereotypes play important roles in our cognitive processes (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Greenwald & Krieger, 2006). Similar patterns are being found by economists who study discrimination on the labour and housing markets (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Ihlanfeldt & Mayock, 2009). But the fact that a bias is unintentional rather than active malice is no excuse for keeping quiet about it or not trying to solve it. After all, it still has a negative impact for those on the receiving end of discrimination or marginalisation. If anything, it is harder to face unconscious biases: those holding the biases

tend to get defensive and deny that there is any problem at all.

Today's pervasive biases generally do not take the form of open and explicit racism or sexism. Instead, biases mainly come from people who do not think they are discriminating, often claiming to be 'colour-blind', fair and objective in their judgements. As such, discrimination does not only come from dominant social groups, but can unfortunately also be internalised and reproduced by members of the marginalised groups themselves. For instance, studies indicate that there is widespread bias in academic hiring in favour of white men. This bias seems to live not only in white men, but also in those minorities who do make it into the discipline: research found '*no evidence that women benefited from contacting female faculty, nor that black or Hispanic students benefited from contacting same-race faculty*' (Bayer & Rouse, 2016, p. 229). Working through such biases takes a lot of effort, and it is understandable if some members of relatively marginalised groups who do make it into the field do not always manage to find the additional energy required to also act as role models or mentors.

The gender bias also shows up in various forms of review, such as publication peer review, credit distribution between co-authors and teaching reviews by students. Female economists face higher publishing standards and longer peer-review processes (Hengel, 2017), are given less credit when they co-author with men (Sarsons et al., 2021), and female teachers systematically receive lower teaching evaluations from male students than male teachers do (Mengel et al., 2019).

Discrimination can also be embedded in procedures, policies, rules, and routines of organisations, often referred to as institutionalised or systemic discrimination (Lopez, 2000). Seemingly neutral practices can disadvantage people based on their gender, ethnicity/race and other supposedly irrelevant background characteristics. Research among the top 50 economics departments, for example, found that 'gender-neutral' policies to stop the tenure clock for new parents had the undesirable effect of increasing tenure rates of men and decreasing those of women (Antecol et al., 2018). Economics, compared to other disciplines, hires more from elite universities and programmes. This seemingly merit-based practice, unfortunately, reproduces social inequalities as the chances for getting into an elite programme are unequally spread (Wu, 2005). Similarly, the practice of only hiring junior job candidates that finished their PhD within six years disproportionately affects racial and ethnic minorities (Bayer & Rouse, 2016).

## The culture of the economics discipline

The discipline of economics also has a unique culture. Economics is notorious, also among other disciplines, for being particularly combative, arrogant, authoritarian, and having infamously aggressive seminars (Fourcade et al., 2015; Nelson, 2019). While this relatively harsh culture affects everyone within the discipline, it has a disproportionate impact on women and minorities. Research, for example, shows that female and minority students feel less comfortable asking questions in class, felt less often that the professor cared about whether they were learning the material, and had less frequently the feeling that *'people like me can become economists'* (Bayer et al., 2020).

Behavioural norms are also generally created by the dominant social group, creating often invisible barriers for other social groups. Many first-generation college students, for example, are less likely to approach teachers as they often feel it is not appropriate to 'bother' the teacher with their problems (Strassmann & Starr, 2009). Many teachers, however, perceive this as a lack of commitment, rather than a cultural difference, causing first-generation students to receive less help and worse assessments from teachers. Also, between men and women behaviour differs. Male students have, for example, more intellectual self-confidence than female students, which is related to what is called the impostor syndrome (Carlin et al., 2018).

Furthermore, because white men are generally dominant in the discipline, many people have the impression that their situation and perspectives are the 'normal' ones, while those of other social groups are 'special'. This misconception causes relatively particular interests of white men to be often presented as the general interests, while concerns of large social groups are perceived as 'niche' subjects. Surveys among students show that female and minority students felt more often that important aspects of the studied issues were overlooked and felt less often that examples given by professors were relatable to their lives (Bayer et al., 2020).

In sum, while unconscious biases are a fundamental part of human nature and our societies, there is a clear pattern in economics favouring white people and favouring men, and the skewness is larger than in neighbouring disciplines. Our discipline clearly has work to do.

### 3 Practical Suggestions for Tackling the Issue

What can we do to tackle the issues of underrepresentation, bias and discrimination in economics education? We suggest three points. Firstly, we need to actively and openly acknowledge the problem. Secondly, we can teach in different ways. Thirdly, we can broaden the content of what we teach.

#### **Acknowledge the problems**

The first step in solving any problem is acknowledging its existence. This sounds easier than it is, in particular because one of the main causes of the problem is unintentional bias and discrimination. It is very human to deny the existence of one's wrongdoings and weaknesses, but until we manage to honestly look at ourselves in the mirror it is unlikely that we will be able to change our patterns of behaviour. This does not mean that we are 'bad' people, or that we should see ourselves as such. It just requires us to acknowledge that our behaviour is not morally perfect. We all grow up in societies with biases and discrimination, and if we do not actively work against them, it is likely that we will reproduce and perpetuate them.

Surveys indicate that currently, awareness of the problem is still often lacking. 82% of US economists agreed that when judging a statement, only the content should matter and not the author (Javdani & Chang, 2019). However, when statements are randomly assigned to male and female names, male economists agree significantly more often with a statement if it is assigned to a male, rather than a female, name, which is not the case for female economists. Nevertheless, 72% of male assistant professors and 87% of male professors do not think the profession has a serious gender problem (Javdani, 2019).

In the broader economy, male economists also assume there is less gender inequality than female economists do. Male economists are 42% more likely to think that labour market opportunities are equal for men and women (May et al., 2014). Furthermore, male economists were 26% less likely than female economists to agree with the following statement: *"Unlike most other science and social science disciplines, economics has made little progress in closing its gender gap over the last several decades. Given the field's prominence in determining public policy, this is a serious issue. Whether explicit or more subtle, intentional or not, the hurdles that women face in economics are very real."* (May et al., 2014, p. 33).

So how can we raise more awareness? We can start by educating ourselves and continue with our close colleagues. One example of how this could be done is the open letter '*regarding harassment and discrimination in the economics profession*' signed by hundreds of graduate students and research assistants a few days before the annual meeting of the American Economic Association in 2018, also cited at the beginning of the chapter. The letter called for the creation and enforcement of department-level standards of conduct and a discipline-wide reporting system to document bad behaviour so that young economists do not have to rely on '*whisper networks*' to protect themselves, often from senior and established economists.

Furthermore, it is important that we recognize and acknowledge that diversifying and decolonising economics education will not only help marginalised groups (Perry, 2020), but also everyone's understanding of economies and work as an economist as it gives us broader, more realistic and relevant knowledge. We have to realise it is not just a problem of marginalised groups, it is a problem for all of us.

### Change how we teach

A popular approach to tackling underrepresentation is training and mentoring of women and minorities (Sandberg, 2013). While this can help build personal alliances and skills, it does not tackle the underlying structural issue in the profession (Zandt, 2013). The international network Diversifying and Decolonising Economics, therefore, argues we should not try to resolve the problem by changing the behaviour of marginalised groups, but instead change the dominant culture and structures that create biases and discrimination. This starts with the way we teach.

Fortunately, studies indicate there are many concrete steps that could be taken to make our teaching more inclusive.

First, make more use of active learning, whether it is with peer instruction, classroom experiments, or open discussions. Economics is still primarily taught in passive ways with traditional lecturing. A meta-analysis of 225 studies among STEM programmes found that all students, but women and minorities in particular, benefit from active learning (S. Freeman et al., 2014). A key reason for this seems to be that active learning activities strengthen a sense of community and self-efficacy among underrepresented groups which often have to deal with stereotype threats and microaggression in the classroom (Theobald et al., 2020). Another cause seems to be that underrepresented groups have often done fewer (quality) active learning activities in their earlier education than overrepresented groups and therefore develop more by engaging in them. Furthermore, it seems that active learning activities combined with

a demonstrated commitment to inclusivity is disproportionately more effective in enhancing the performance of underrepresented groups, which brings us to the next point.

Second, explicitly value diversity. Research indicates that giving cues about valuing diversity in terms of social identity improves minorities and women's sense of belonging, while promoting a neutral, or 'colour-blind', philosophy increases experienced identity threats (Bayer & Rouse, 2016; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). A basic way to do this is to pay attention to representation of women and minorities in examples and materials that are used. While many textbooks are shifting towards a more gender- and ethnic-balanced distribution of examples, the standard human in most quantitative work still appears to be a white male (Perez, 2019). If more balanced materials of the right type and quality are not available, a first step is to mention this in class when presenting or assigning them, to make students more aware.

Third, debias teaching and assessing, as well as hiring and admissions, practices. If we organize our activities in specific ways, we can minimize the effect of biases that are some inherent human behaviour (Soll et al., 2014). We can, for example, make evaluations less-biased by *'removing identifiers, minimizing time pressure and distractions, discrediting feelings of connection or chemistry, committing to fair and relevant admissions or hiring criteria before learning applicants' race or gender, collecting more evidence on candidates' competencies, creating accountability, and strategically setting default options and other nudges'* (Bayer & Rouse, 2016, p. 237). And regarding hiring, it helps not to make use of referrals from traditional networks, elite programmes and test score cut-offs.

Finally, it is important to be aware of potential unintended consequences and dilemmas. Research, for example, indicates that the desire to have equal gender representation on university committees, while having fewer female than male faculty members, causes female academics to spend more time on service and less on research on which academic success is (largely) based (Bayer & Rouse, 2016). To improve equal chances, white men can more often take on 'less promotable' tasks, which are necessary for the organisation but irrelevant for one's career advancement such as serving on a committee, writing a report or organising an event, as these are often disproportionately performed by women and minorities (Babcock et al., 2017).

### **Change what we teach**

Last but not least, we need to rethink the contents of economics education. This means recognising contributions of economists from marginalised

groups and making students aware of them. But it also means paying more attention to the lived experiences and concerns of marginalised societal groups. As such, it has implications for virtually every economics course. Below, we briefly discuss these implications, for each of our three organising principles: real-world, pluralism, values.

First, real-world. When studying, we always have to make choices in terms of what topic and aspects to focus on. In these choices, we need to become less biased and pay more attention to currently understudied and under-taught topics, such as discrimination, patriarchy, sexism, racism, imperialism, colonialism, slavery, exploitation, unpaid labour, care, reciprocity, gift economies, commons, and non-western ways of organising economic processes. So when we teach a course on an economic topic, theory, empirical analysis, policy, institutions, or history, we need to bring in the experiences of women, minorities, lower classes, and the Global South. This is especially important when mainly relying on standard US textbooks, which are generally written by white middle or upper class men. Try to also make use of studies and material created by women, local, minority and/or lower class economists. Decolonize teaching materials (Basole & Jayadev, 2018; Chelwa, 2016). This is not only important for these groups themselves, but also for all economics students as it gives them a better, less biased and broader understanding of the economy.

Second, pluralism. This chapter shows that the issue of diversity in economics relates not only to ideas and tools, but also to people and identities. While thoughts can theoretically be separated from thinkers, in practice they often go together. For example, the theories advanced by privileged white men have historically often ignored issues of power imbalances, discrimination and exploitation, because they less often experienced or observed the negative impacts of these phenomena in their own personal lives. So when teaching economic theories, we need to bring in ideas from the Global South, women, minority, and lower class economists. Again, this is not to please these groups but to open and decolonize all of our economic thinking and broaden the domain of considered knowledge. Two recent examples of ideas from the Global South may serve to illustrate. Comaroff and Comaroff (2012) argue that the Global North can learn from theories developed in the Global South as it is increasingly experiencing similar phenomena such as economic informality, rising inequality, and austerity. To understand dynamics and (core-periphery) relationships within the eurozone, dependency theory and structuralist economics, which are mainly developed by Latin American economists, seem particularly useful (Kvangraven et al., 2017).

Third, values. As we explained in the previous chapter, it is important to pay attention and explicitly discuss normative assumptions and aspects. Assuming to be neutral, universal or objective, in practice often means being blind to one's own position. Therefore, it is important to actively ask and investigate what other people's and groups' concerns, values and interests are, rather than assuming to know them. Research shows, for example, that male and female economists, also when controlled for PhD attainment and job position, have different normative views related to government regulation, income distribution, and linking labour standards to import openness (May et al., 2014). The underrepresentation of women and minorities in economics causes their concerns and views to also be underrepresented. Therefore, it is critical that we bring in normative ideas and concerns from different groups when teaching.

In terms of values, it is also important to help students realise that many of the concepts in economic theory, whether mainstream or heterodox, are grounded in western ideas and value concepts. For instance, the autonomous individual, whether selfish or not, plays a large role in our theories. But the western culture of individualism is much less self-evident or even accepted in many other parts of the world. Other value concepts exist in every language or culture, yet carry other connotations: the average Thai, Englishman or Burundian might mean something quite different when they use words like freedom, fairness or wellbeing.

The worldwide diversity of economically relevant concepts goes beyond the matter of value judgements or cultural norms of what is worthwhile. Seemingly neutral and factual economic entities and relationships like a household, a company, an employer-employee relationship and a business deal can also have very different structures and implications from one place to another. Unfortunately, we have few ready-to-implement suggestions as to how to get this point across. One possibility would be to ask an anthropologist, sociologist or historian, for a guest lecture or workshop, just to briefly expose students to the diversity of cultures, social inequalities, and the diversity of economic relationships and forms that exist today or have existed in the past.

## Resources

In this chapter, we hope to have flagged some important issues, but we fully recognize that more is needed to diversify and decolonize economics education. Fortunately, there is a growing body of well-designed resources that can help with this. Here, we provide a brief overview of a few useful books, articles and chapters.

- *Reclaiming Economics for Future Generations* by Nicola Scott, Lucy Ambler, and Joe Earle, forthcoming. A book about the need to diversify, decolonize and democratize economics education written by active members of the international *Rethinking Economics* movement, based in the UK.
- *Valuing Us All: Feminist Pedagogy and Economics* by April Laskey Aerni and KimMarie McGoldrick, from 1999. A collection of essays discussing both changing what is taught and how it is taught in order to make economics education more inclusive.
- *A User's Guide to Debiasing in The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Judgment and Decision Making* by Jack B. Soll, Katherine L. Milkman, and John W. Payne, from 2015. A chapter on strategies to reduce the biases in our cognitive processes.
- *A Better Economics for the Indian Context* by Amit Basole and Arjun Jayadev, from 2018. This article reflects on using the new textbook *The Economy* by the CORE team in undergraduate education in India and discusses the need for a different version of the book that would better fit the Indian context.
- *Decolonising SOAS Learning and Teaching Toolkit for Programme and Module Convenors* by the Decolonising SOAS Working Group, from 2018. This report provides practical suggestions on how to decolonize courses by using inclusive pedagogies and tackling colonial and racialised discrimination and privilege.
- *Decolonizing the university* by Gurminder K. Bhambra, Dalia Gebrial, Kerem Nişancıoğlu, from 2018. This collection of essays provides critical reflections and practical suggestions by academics, students and activists, and was inspired by student protests in South Africa which in turn triggered a global discussion about decolonising universities.
- *Decolonisation in Universities: The politics of knowledge* by Jonathan Jansen, from 2019. This collection of essays discusses what decolonisation is, why it is important, its difficulties and problems, practical cases and examples of decolonising programmes in universities located in Africa, and ideas for how to move forward.
- *Postcolonialism Meets Economics* by S. Charusheela, Eiman Zein-Elabdin, from 2004. A collection of essays exploring colonial and hegemonic aspects of classical and contemporary economics and how a postcolonial economics would look.
- *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi, from 2019. A popular and controversial book arguing we should look at racism from a consequentialist perspective, meaning that we should not care about whether intentions are 'racist' and instead focus on whether policies create inequitable outcomes between social groups.