

Incorporating the Racial Justice Topic into an Econometrics Course

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Why incorporate racial justice into economics courses?

- Racial justice has been at the forefront of the public discourse.
- Inspired by Skidmore College President Conner's Racial Justice Initiative in 2020 and Racial Justice Teaching Challenge organized by faculty:
 - "...called on faculty members to devote a significant portion of the educational content in their courses to focusing on (a) the lives and experiences of Black folks in North America and/or the African diaspora, or (b) substantive engagement with issues of race and racism."
- Topics related to race remain rare in economics courses.

Because it is important!

Student-led presentations of journal articles.

How to incorporate racial justice into econometrics?

- Students select journal articles about race in the economy (for example, articles about racism in the housing and credit markets) and write questions about the article.
- Students prepare a PowerPoint presentation including the questions and lead a discussion about the article.
- The presentations include econometric aspects of the articles, which opens opportunities to discuss issues related to race.

Gabriel and Spring (2019) "Neighborhood Diversity, Neighborhood Affluence: An Analysis of the Neighborhood Destination Choices of Mixed-Race Couples With Children & Urban":

1. What is the main research question?
2. What did the previous research conclude about this question?
3. What were the observation years for this research?
4. What was the sample size?
5. What variables were used for this research?
6. Why cannot traditional regression methods (OLS) work for this research?
7. What are multinomial logit models?
8. How many coefficients are being used in the logistic regression equation?
9. How many equations are there and what do they estimate?
10. What does Table 1 represent?
11. Explain Table 2 including what the numbers mean.
12. Explain Table 3 including what the numbers mean.
13. Explain Table 4 including what the models represent.
14. Explain Table 5 including what the models represent.
15. What is the most significant explanation for the result?
16. Are there other explanations for the result?

Example of a journal article and questions

Other articles were from experimental, financial, sports, and urban economics.

Information about the course:

- 3-credit course that meets twice a week.
- 5 prerequisites: Intro macro, intro micro, calculus I, statistics, and either intermediate macro or intermediate micro.
- Focused on the theory behind econometric techniques and application of the techniques to economic data.
- Uses a standard econometrics textbook and covers topics standardly taught in econometrics.
- Grading:
 - 4 homework assignments (20%)
 - Midterm (15%)
 - Final exam (20%)
 - 2 projects (20%)
 - In-class Stata exercises (10%)
 - Journal article presentations (10%)
 - Participation during journal article presentations (5%)
- Capped at 18 students.

More details

Information about required resources

- Preparation time:
 - Minimal (Provide instructions in the syllabus)
- Grading time:
 - Grading matrix for presenting students
 - 0, 1, or 2 points for non-presenting students
 - Completed during presentations
- Class time:
 - 25 minutes per presentation
 - Worth the time because students solidify their learning of class material and are more engaged
- Can be done in teams or outside of the classroom.
- Could be done in remote learning.