

# DIVERSITY STATEMENT

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As a researcher, teacher, and colleague, I am committed to DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) principles that foster an environment where everyone feels valued and supported. As a white male Swiss, I am acutely aware of my privileges and recognize that my own experiences with discrimination are limited. Having faced challenges as a linguistic minority, I know how difficult it can be to interact with the majority as an outsider. I understand that this experience, though significant, is not comparable to the systemic discrimination faced by racial minorities and other underrepresented groups. Similarly, as a father of two, I am aware of the difficulties in balancing work and family responsibilities, and I acknowledge that these challenges are often still disproportionately harder for women, especially in academia. This awareness drives me to actively support practices that promote equity and inclusivity in academia. Often, policies that advance inclusivity are simple and costless to implement; for example, scheduling seminars during lunchtime instead of the evening makes them more accessible to academics with children.

As a teacher, I strive to create an inclusive atmosphere where every student feels welcome and comfortable to actively participate, engage in discussions, and offer constructive criticism. This interactive approach not only helps me understand the specific needs of students from diverse backgrounds but also greatly enriches classroom discussions. For instance, while teaching papers on ethnic identity and conflicts in Africa, a student from Uganda shared invaluable contextual knowledge that enhanced our discussion. Her firsthand insights provided a deeper understanding of the case study and made the topic more relatable for all students. This example illustrates how fostering an inclusive environment not only supports individual contributions but also elevates the overall learning experience for everyone involved.

In my teaching experience, I also had the opportunity to work with a blind student, which heightened my awareness of the special needs some students face. We adapted both the coursework and exams to accommodate his needs, organizing an oral exam on one occasion and setting up another on a computer equipped with assistive technology that allowed him to read using specialized software. I also adjusted my teaching approach, moving away from phrases like "as you can see on this graph," and instead providing thorough, detailed descriptions of the graphs, enabling the student to visualize them mentally. This experience significantly improved my teaching skills, as I now routinely offer more detailed explanations in all my classes. I've found that this benefits all students, enhancing their understanding of the material and fostering a more inclusive learning environment. This experience highlights that being responsive to the needs of students with disabilities not only supports them but enhances the learning experience for everyone.

As a researcher in political economy, my work engages with questions related to political participation, electoral accountability, and responsive representation, with a particular focus on gender disparities. My current research analyzes the challenges women face in political and policy representation. For example, in a joint project with Alda Marchese, we investigate how regressive gender norms and social pressures shape the gender turnout gap in Switzerland and how this translates into the underrepresentation of women in politics. Additionally, in related work with Patricia Funk and Noam Yuchtman, we examine the long-term effects of the 1991 Women's Strike in Switzerland — one of the largest female protests in history — on women's identity, political organization, and career paths. These studies contribute to a deeper understanding of how gender inequalities persist in political systems, and how they translate into the substantive underrepresentation of women's interests in politics and policy. Through this research, I aim to inform policies that promote diversity and inclusion in political representation.