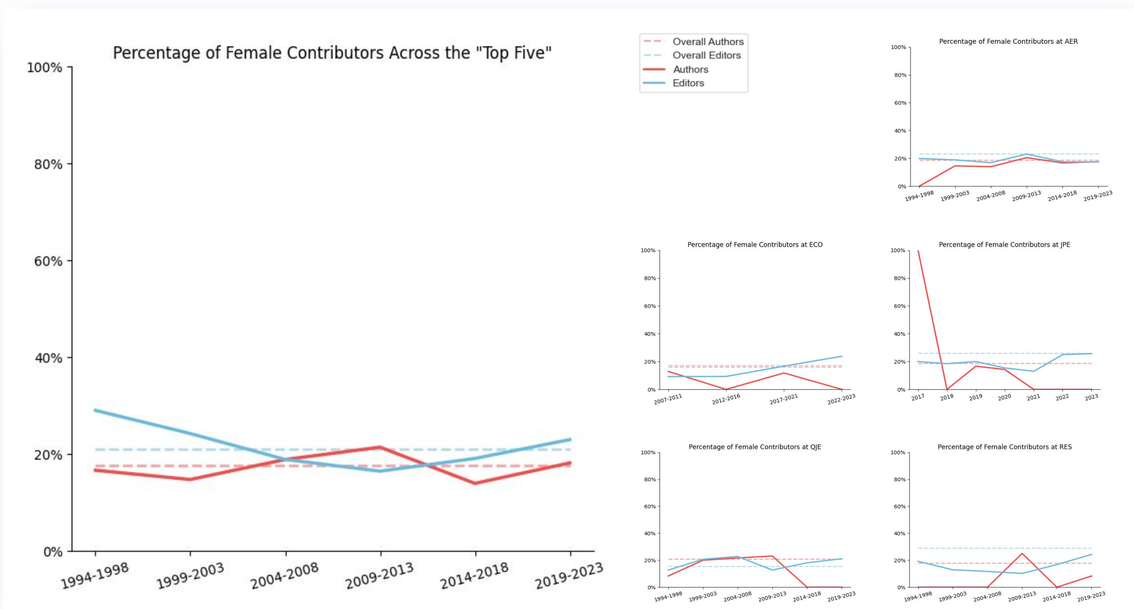
White, male, and top-ranked affiliated academics are overrepresented among the top five economics journals

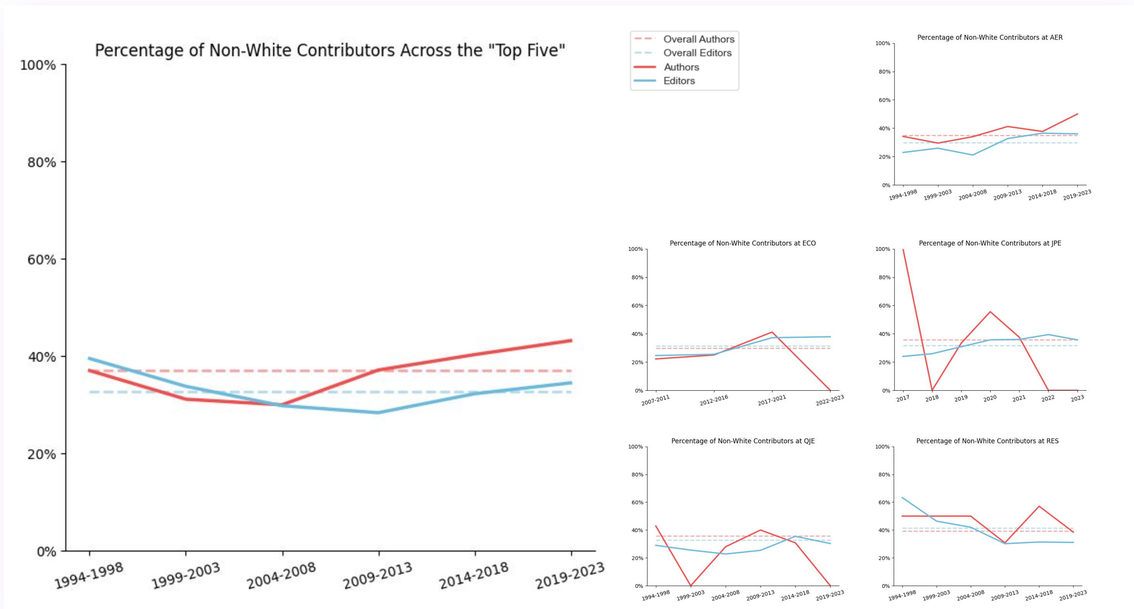
Investigating Author and Editorial Board Diversity Across the "Top Five" in Economics

Background: Publishing in one of the top five economics journals (The American Economic Review [AER], Econometrica [ECO], the Journal of Political Economy [JPE], the Quarterly Journal of Economics [QJE], and the Review of Economic Studies [RES]) is incredibly impactful in an economist's academic career, to the degree that it can be the difference between achieving or missing out on a tenure-track position. Given their outsized influence within the field of academic economics, these journals present an interesting opportunity to study the phenomenon of the "leaky pipeline". In accordance with this phenomenon, our hypothesis is that the editorial boards of these journals will tend to be less diverse than the authors they publish, as measured by gender, race, papers published, citations received, and affiliation rankings.

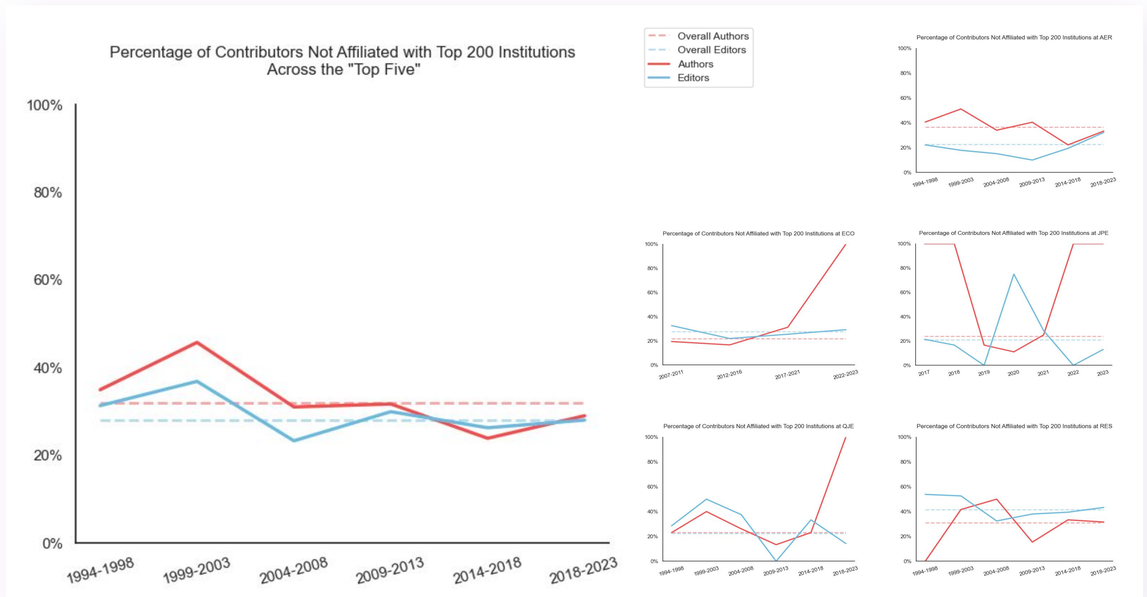
Result 1: Female Contributors Make Up Less Than 30% of Both Authors and Editors Among the Top Five Economics Journals



Result 2: Non-White Contributors Make Up Less Than Half of Both Authors and Editors Among the Top Five Economics Journals



Result 3: Contributors Not Affiliated with Institutions Ranked in the Top 200 Make Up Less Than Half of Both Authors and Editors Among the Top Five Economics Journals



Methods

This study examined editorial board and author diversity over a period of thirty years, beginning in 1994 and ending in 2023. Editorial data **(n = 1513)** was sourced from the Front Matters documents of each journal where available. Author data **(n = 1410)** was sourced from the Microsoft Academic Graph (MAG), which is a knowledge graph of scholarly publications. For gender data, the project team used Genderize.io and only considered contributors whose first names were classified with a confidence level of 90% or greater. For race data, the project team used Namsor.app to classify race into four labels in accordance with the United States census: White, Hispanic and Latino, Black, and Asian. Where permitted by the available volume of data, author and editor counts across each diversity metric were bucketised into periods of five years to prevent small sample sizes from leading to extreme results in the final visualizations.

Limitation: Front Matters pages were not available across the entire study period for certain journals, namely Econometrica and the Journal of Political Economy. This limited the study period for these journals to the earliest years for which editorial board data was available (2007 and 2017 respectively). Beyond this, data in the Microsoft Academic Graph is only current up to 2021 and does not contain all papers published in the relevant journals. This significantly limited the author-editor comparisons for the years 2022 and 2023. It also resulted in several years or time periods with only a single data point for authors, contributing to extreme results in the individual journal plots.

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