

Conference on Diversity and Inclusion in Economics,  
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# Comments on Diverse Policy Committees Can Reach Underrepresented Groups

Randall Akee

Associate Professor, UCLA

NBER



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# Research Design

- Randomized Control Trial for 9000 participants
- Intended to understand how the race or gender of the FOMC members affect
  - Unemployment forecasts
  - Inflation forecasts
  - Trust in the Federal Reserve
- Provided reports to participants and randomized the FOMC member's photo shown
  - Thomas Barkin (White man), Raphael Bostic (Black man), and Mary Daly (White woman)
  - Control = no photo of FOMC member

# Research Findings

- White women and Black women form unemployment forecasts within the FOMC's forecasts when Bostic or Daly are shown.
- The agreement is lower when no photo is provided.
- Black men are more likely to form agreement when Bostic is shown.
- No effects for Hispanics.
- No negative effects for White men

# Research Findings, continued

- Find female and Black subjects are less distrustful when Daly or Bostic are shown of the Fed (on a Likert scale).
- For Hispanic respondents, whose ethnic group was not represented on the FOMC at the time of our experiment, we detect different patterns: Hispanic men tend to be more distrustful when exposed to a female or non-White FOMC member.

# Pathways

- Conclude a taste for diversity instead of homophily are driving their results.
- This is based on the fact that female and Black subjects react similarly to Daly and Bostic.
- Homophily would say that they should respond to their own group in a more substantial way.
- There's little to no evidence for that among female or Black subjects in their study.

# Comments

Interesting that there is no adverse impact of diversity on the beliefs of Non-Hispanic white men. Perhaps because they believe the majority of the FOMC is influenced primarily by white men.

- “Female and Black subjects should not react to diversity salience either because they would think a White male majority drives the decisions.”
  - But perhaps, the perception is that some diversity is better than none. Therefore, this belief doesn’t have to be symmetrical as it is for white men.
- “Second, many treated White men in our manipulation check report a perceived FOMC demographic composition in which White men are not the absolute majority.”
  - It is probably quite difficult to test where the threshold may lie (if at all). But I do question whether there is some of that occurring here.

# Comments

- Very little response from Hispanic population.
  - Potentially due to sample size
  - Race for this group is not considered.
  - Hard to know which race group they would self-identify with, but would that change any of the results?
  - For example, if they were included with Black or White?

# Comments

- Overall, leads me to wonder if different things are salient to different populations in terms of representation?
  - Race in some cases
  - Gender in others
  - Ethnicity in others
  - Sexual orientation
- Or is there a hierarchy for which matters most?