

LAST LECTURE 2017

IF WE TAUGHT YOU ANYTHING . . .

Professor Martha Olney

Department of Economics

University of California, Berkeley

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IF WE TAUGHT YOU ANYTHING I HOPE WE TAUGHT YOU THIS

Outline

- Model(s) of Intellectual Development
- Challenging Assumptions
- Here, and Here, and Here, and Here
- Going Forth

MODELS OF INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- What's a "model"?
 - Key takeaway: describes behavior on average but typically not for everyone
- This model: How do people engage with knowledge and learning?
- Combination of two studies
 - Perry's Model (William Perry)
 - *Women's Way of Knowing* (Mary Field Belenky et al)

STAGES OF INTELLECTUAL & ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Stage 1: Dualism (Perry) or Received Knowledge (Belenky et al)
 - There is Truth. There is One Right Answer. Learning = Memorizing “Truths”
- Stage 2: Multiplicity (Perry) or Subjective Knowledge (Belenky et al)
 - There are lots of opinions, no Truth, no right answer. Need to read Prof’s mind
- Stage 3: Relativism (Perry) or Procedural Knowledge (Belenky et al)
 - Knowledge is affected by assumptions; analytic methods allow comparisons
- Stage 4: Commitment in Relativism (Perry) or Constructed Knowledge (Belenky et al)
 - I can take a stand, backed up by logic & evidence. I can generate knowledge

Sources: Perry, William. *Forms of intellectual and ethical development in the college years: A scheme*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970. Belenky, Mary Field, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, Jill Mattuck Tarule. *Women's ways of knowing : the development of self, voice, and mind*. New York: Basic Books, 1986. See also <http://www.cse.buffalo.edu/~rapaport/perry.positions.html>

RESEARCH

- What is research?
 - A question
 - A method for answering the question
 - An answer
- In short, it's a story.
- All research is based on assumptions

CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS

- How to critique an argument
 1. Replicate the argument
 2. Identify the assumption(s)
 3. Change one assumption
 4. Argue to the (new) conclusion (If same conclusion, repeat step 3)
 5. Argue in support of or verify empirically your alternative assumption
- Sources of challenges?
 - Other knowledge, including from other fields
 - Life experience

CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS: HERE, AND HERE, AND HERE

- Debating ideas
- Research and the Creation of Knowledge
- 2016 Election and what we missed

ELECTION AND WHAT WE (ECONOMISTS) MISSED

- How do we teach “gains from trade”?
 - Long-run versus short-run; On average for the economy as a whole versus for every individual
 - Vance, J.D. *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*, Harper, 2016.
- How do we think about work and unemployment?
 - Is work “just a job” or is it part of our identity?
 - George A. Akerlof & Rachel E. Kranton, *Identity Economics: How Our Identities Shape Our Work, Wages, and Well-Being*, Princeton Univ. Press, 2011
- How do experiences (“large macroeconomic shocks”) affect our decisions?
 - Malmendier, Ulrike & Stefan Nagel, “Depression Babies: Do Macroeconomic Experiences Affect Risk Taking?” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (2011): 373-416.

“DIVERSITY MAKES US SMARTER”

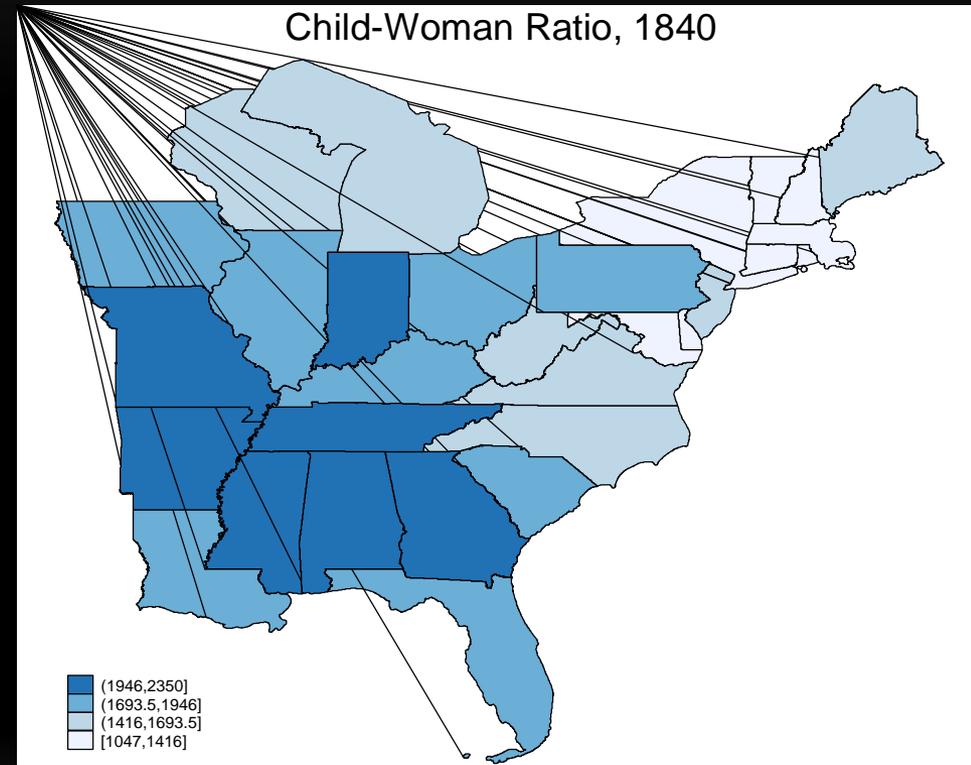
- “Socially diverse groups are more innovative than homogeneous groups”
 - Phillips, Katherine W., “How Diversity Makes Us Smarter,” *Scientific American* (2014).
- Which assumptions do we challenge, and on what basis?

EXAMPLE: MODEL(S) OF INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Question: How do people understand knowledge, learning, the role of faculty?
- Perry's approach: Interviews in 1950s and 1960s with Harvard undergraduates
- Critique: Are Harvard (all male) undergraduates representative of all students?
- Belenky et al: Interviews in 1980s with women ages 16-60+, rural & urban, variation in SES, ethnicity, educational background
- Further critique: Are people from the U.S. representative of today's students?

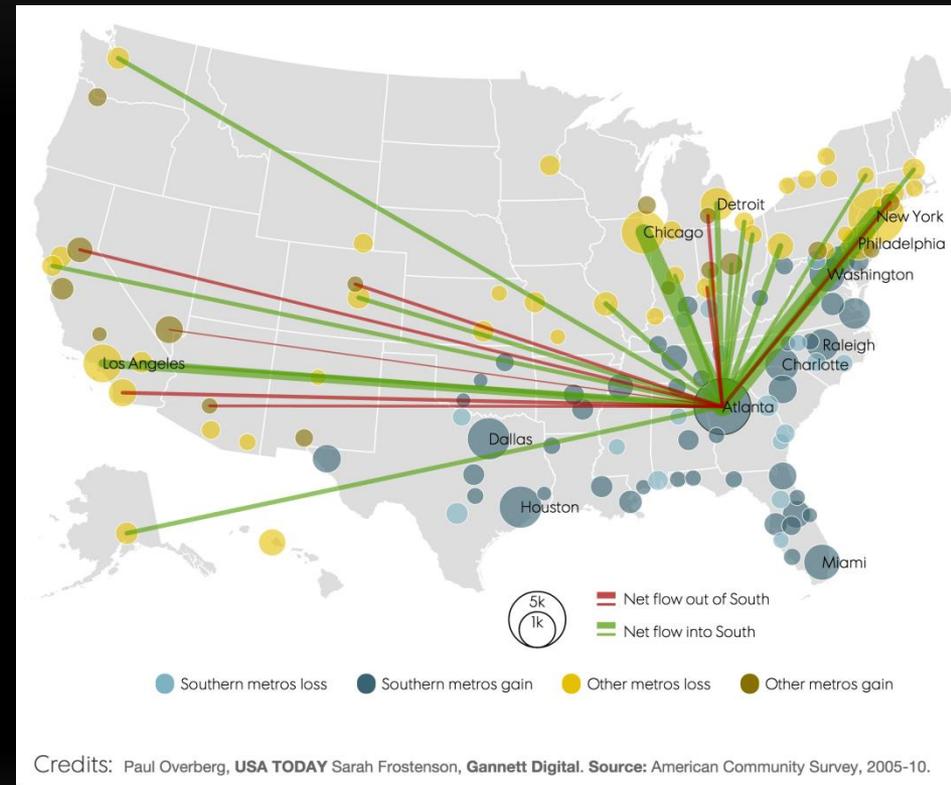
SOME RANDOM EXAMPLES: FERTILITY DECLINE

- Question: Why does fertility decline over time and why is it lower in urban areas than it is in rural areas?
- One Story: People have children to satisfy “Old-Age Security Motive.” But if better job opportunities mean children might leave home & never look back, then people won’t rely on children for old-age security; they’ll save \$\$ instead
- Source: Sundstrom, William A. and Paul A. David. “Old-Age Security Motives, Labor Markets, and Farm Family Fertility in Antebellum America.” *Explorations in Economic History* 25 (April 1988): 164-197.



SOME RANDOM EXAMPLES: THE GREAT REVERSE MIGRATION

- Question: Why are Black families migrating from the North to the South, reversing The Great Migration of 1910-1970?
- One Story: It's a puzzle because incomes are typically lower in the South than in the North, even once you adjust for the lower-in-the-South cost of living.
- Focus of my critique: a grad student's paper. Not going to cite it here, but you get the idea. Photo source: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/02/24/black-history-great-migration-mobile/23268349/>

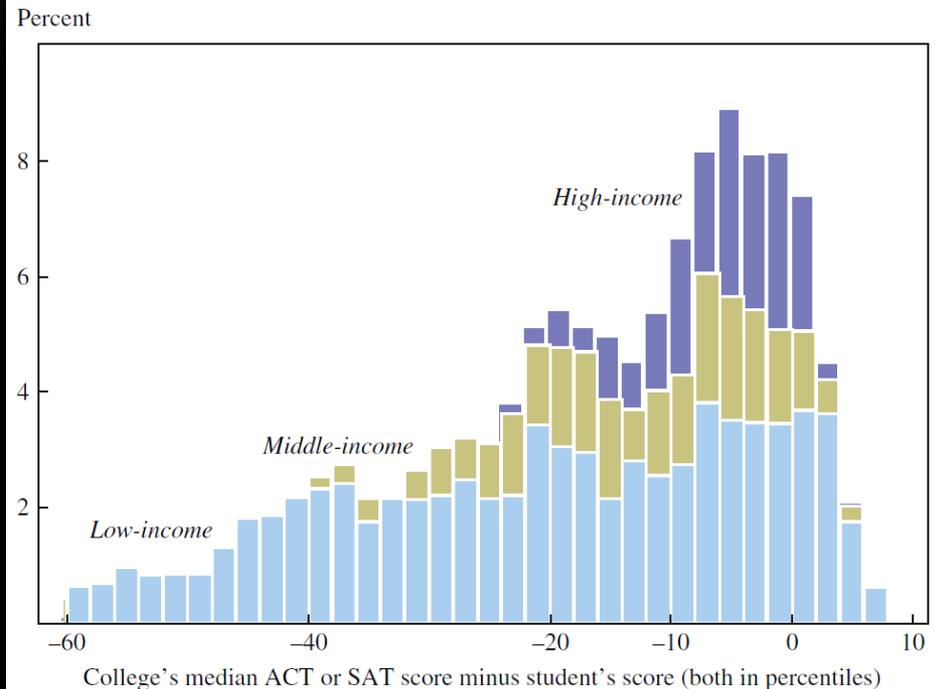


SOME RANDOM EXAMPLES: LOW-INCOME HIGH-ACHIEVERS

- Question: Why do low-income high-achieving high school students, many of whom are first generation college students, not apply to top-rank selective schools more often?
- One Story: It's due to a lack of information. They and their families think the "sticker price" is what they'll actually pay. With better price signals, behavior will change.

- Source: Caroline Hoxby & Christopher Avery, 2013. "The Missing "One-Offs": The Hidden Supply of High-Achieving, Low-Income Students," *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, vol. 46 (Spring 2013), pp. 1-65.

Figure 10. Distribution of All High-Achieving Students' College Applications to Selective Institutions, by Student-College Match^a



Source: Authors' calculations using the combined data set described in the text.

a. The figure is constructed in a manner analogous to figure 8, truncating the left tail of the distribution. The bars for middle-income students are to be read as extending downward to zero behind the low-income bars, and the high-income behind the middle-income.

IF WE TAUGHT YOU ANYTHING, I HOPE WE TAUGHT YOU THIS

- Not what to think, but how to think
- To always be ready to question the assumptions
- To listen to and learn from people with different experiences than your own
- To own *your* passion, and to let others own theirs
- To use your knowledge, skills, and passion to engage in and change the world
- To go forth and be a Golden Bear