

# *What Can Economics do for Racial Justice?*

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The Econometric Society  
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# What Can Economics do for Racial Justice?

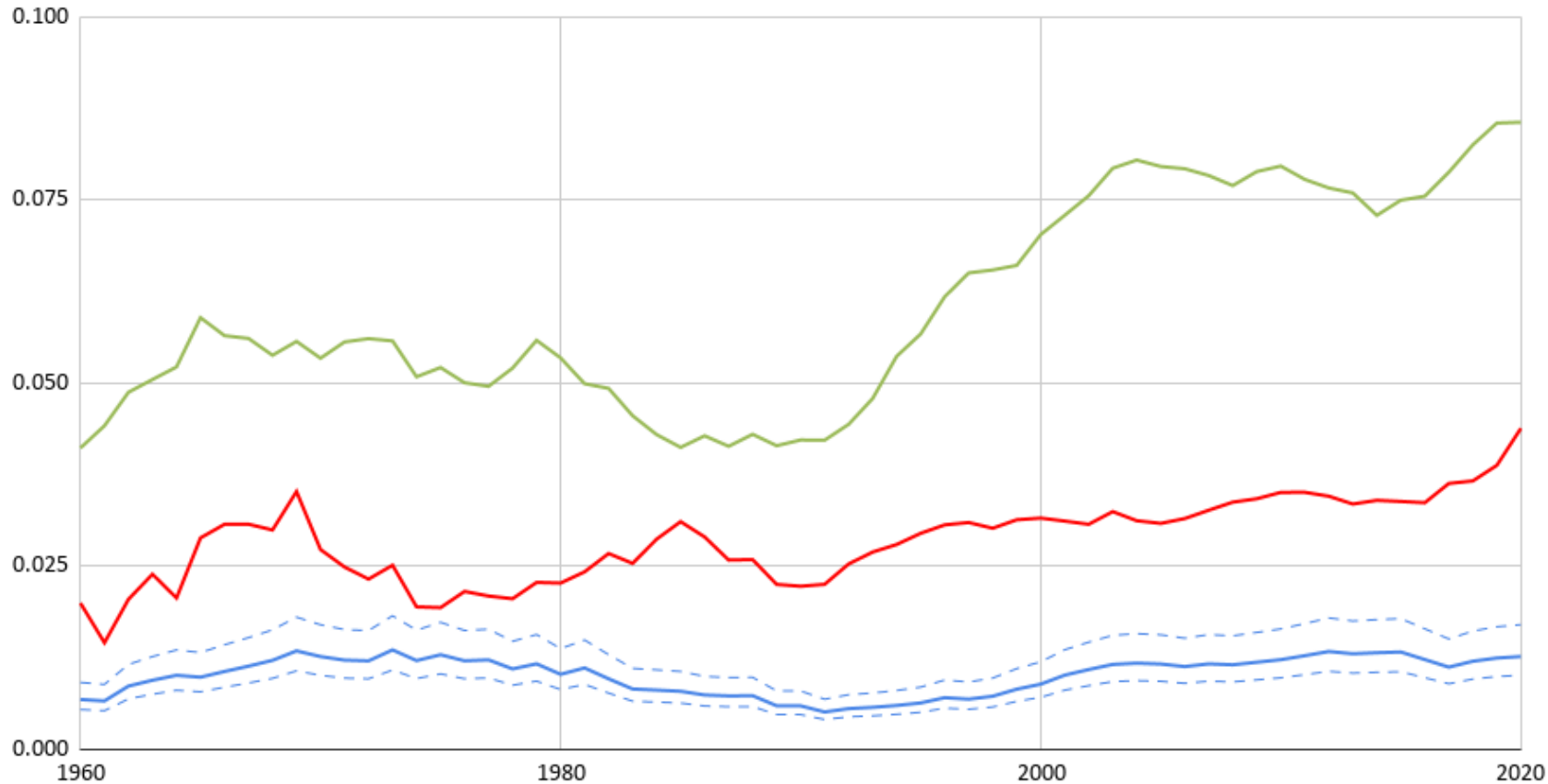
- to study the role of race/ethnicity in the economy
- **subject matter**: which race-related topics do we study, which do we give less attention to?
- **incentives** to conduct such research
- **selection** of minorities into economics (*pipeline*)
- these slides: (very preliminary) results on subject matter

# Race-related Research in Economics

- JSTOR corpus [1960-2020] in economics, sociology, political science
- economics: 200+ journals, 170K+ publications
- 4000+ publications annually in economics
  - same number as in political science, more than sociology (3000)
- algorithmic approach to classifying race-related research:
  - **group** (rac\*, african-american, person of color, ethnicity...) [48 such keywords]
  - **topic** (discriminat\*, identity, stereotyp\*...) [107 such **economics orientated** keywords]
- algorithm: at least one group keyword & one topic keyword in title or abstract
- keyword lists: [https://bit.ly/ESWC\\_RaceGroup](https://bit.ly/ESWC_RaceGroup), [https://bit.ly/ESWC\\_RaceTopics](https://bit.ly/ESWC_RaceTopics) , feedback welcome

# Share of Published Research that is Race-Related

— Economics — Political Science — Sociology

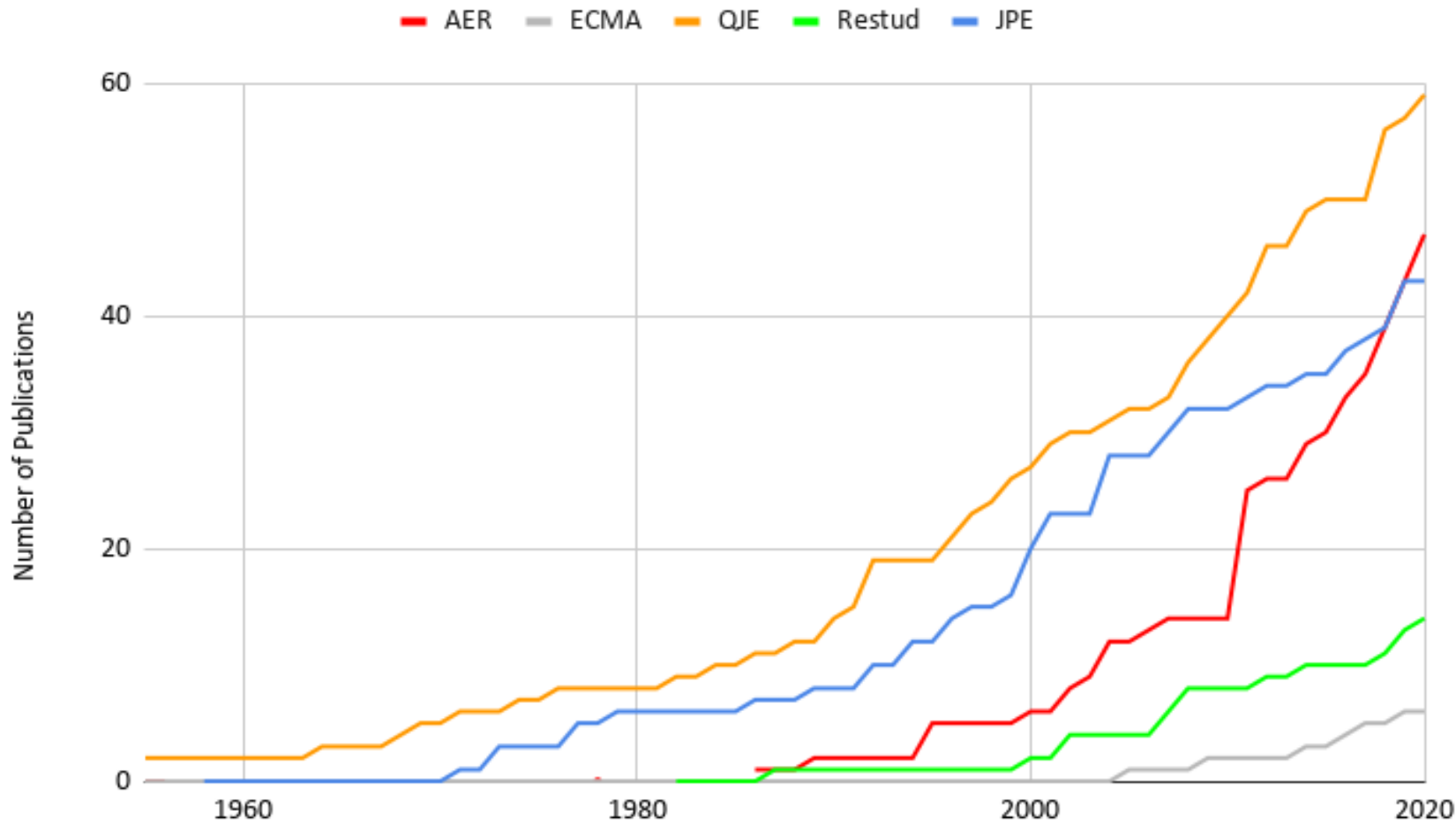


SC (1980-99: 5.3%, 2000-20: 8.5%)  
PS ( 2.9%, 3.9%)  
EC ( .9%, 1.4%)

- Cumulative counts of race-related research to 2020:
  - EC 1621; PS 3780; SC 7444
  - EC today is where PS was in 1990s, and where SC was in 1980s

# Cumulative Count of RR Research in Top-5 Journals:

General interest, reflect views of leading scholars, influence...

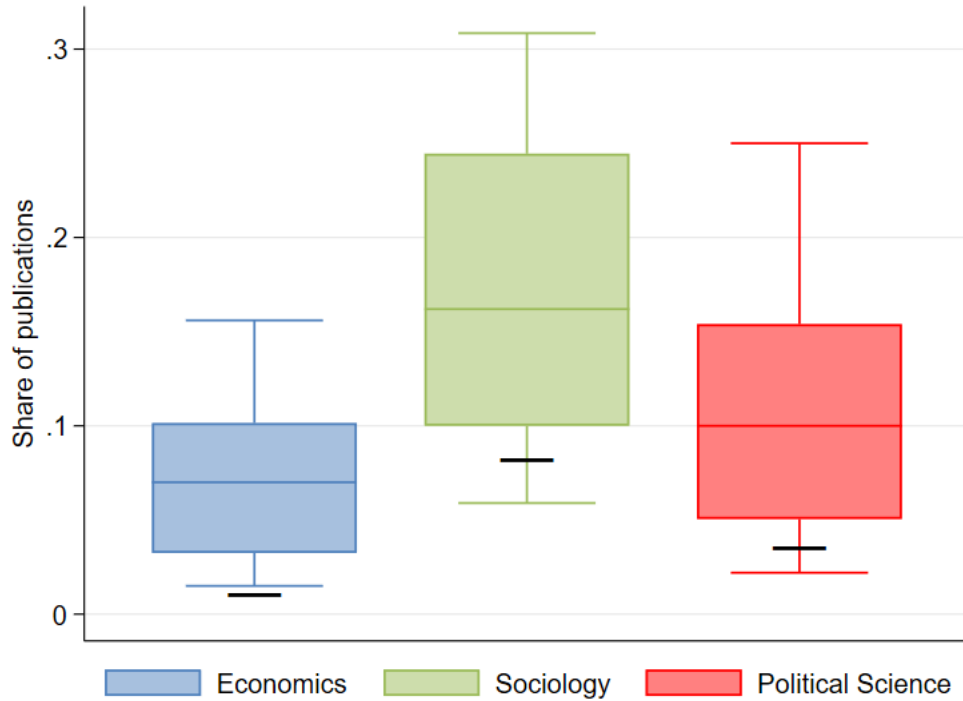


All (1980-99: .9%, 2000-20: 1.4%)  
T5 (1980-99 .7%, 2000-20 2.0%)

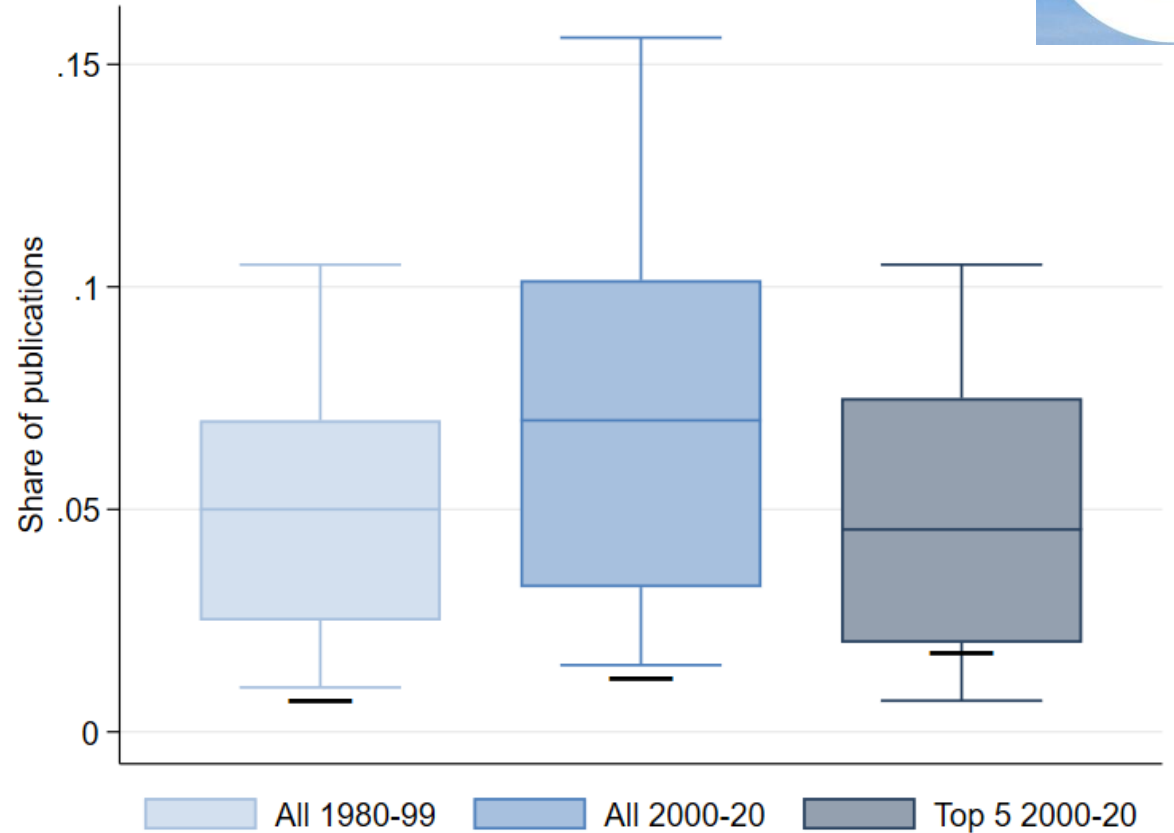
- Cumulative count in Economics T5 combined by 2020: **169**
  - American Journal of Sociology reached that total in 1970s; American Sociological Review reached it in 1980s
  - American Journal of Political Science: cumulative count by 2020 145

# Predictions of Economists

Social Science Prediction Platform (N=296)



Accurately predict ranking of share of RR research across disciplines, 2000-20



Over predict growth of RR research in economics

Under predict share of RR research in econ T5

# What Can Economics do for Racial Justice?

- in comparison to SC, PS, economics has something like a 20-30 year gap to catch up in cumulative RR research
- could just reflect (acceptable) differences in subject matter
- but if not, then what economics-specific factors can narrow this gap?
  - subject matter
  - incentives
  - selection
- *some speculative Q's (no As)...*

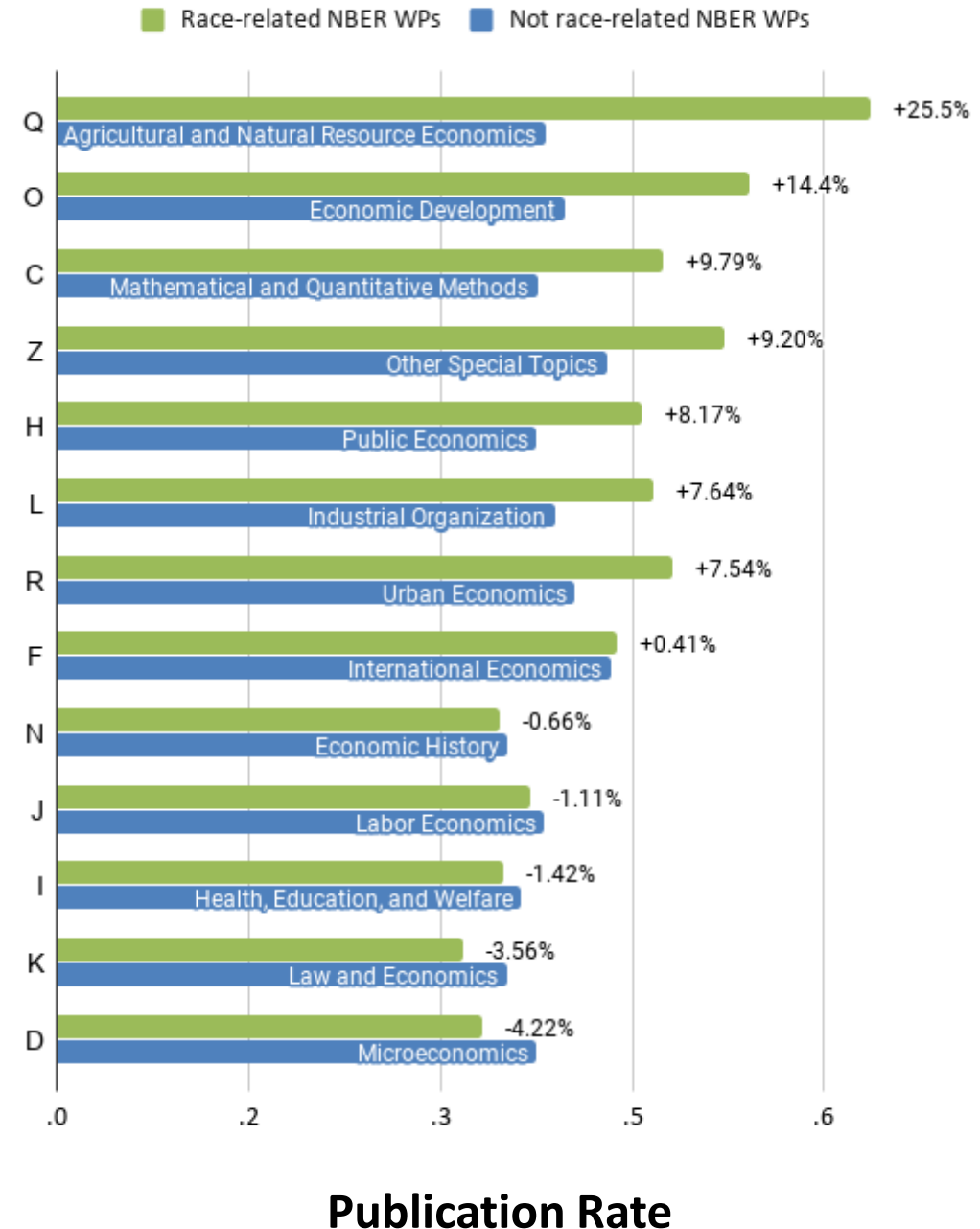
# Subject Matter

- race through the lens of discrimination
- economic approaches to discrimination *tend* to emphasize:
  - contexts of human interaction/exchange
  - motives of discriminators [micro-foundations/measurement/research designs]
- potentially under researched subject matter:
  - role of perception/anticipation of future discrimination on *ex ante* behavior
    - beyond self-fulfilling prophecies, life cycle interactions [origins & complementarities of divergences BG]
  - (*ex post*) cumulative affects of ‘micro-aggressions’ on behavior
    - formation of self-identity [WG variation, use of race dummies?]
    - experience effects [Malmendier et al. various]
  - institutional biases - e.g. referral norms, prediction
    - misallocated HK [Hsieh et al. 2019]
    - understated role of macro approaches/methods in race-related research



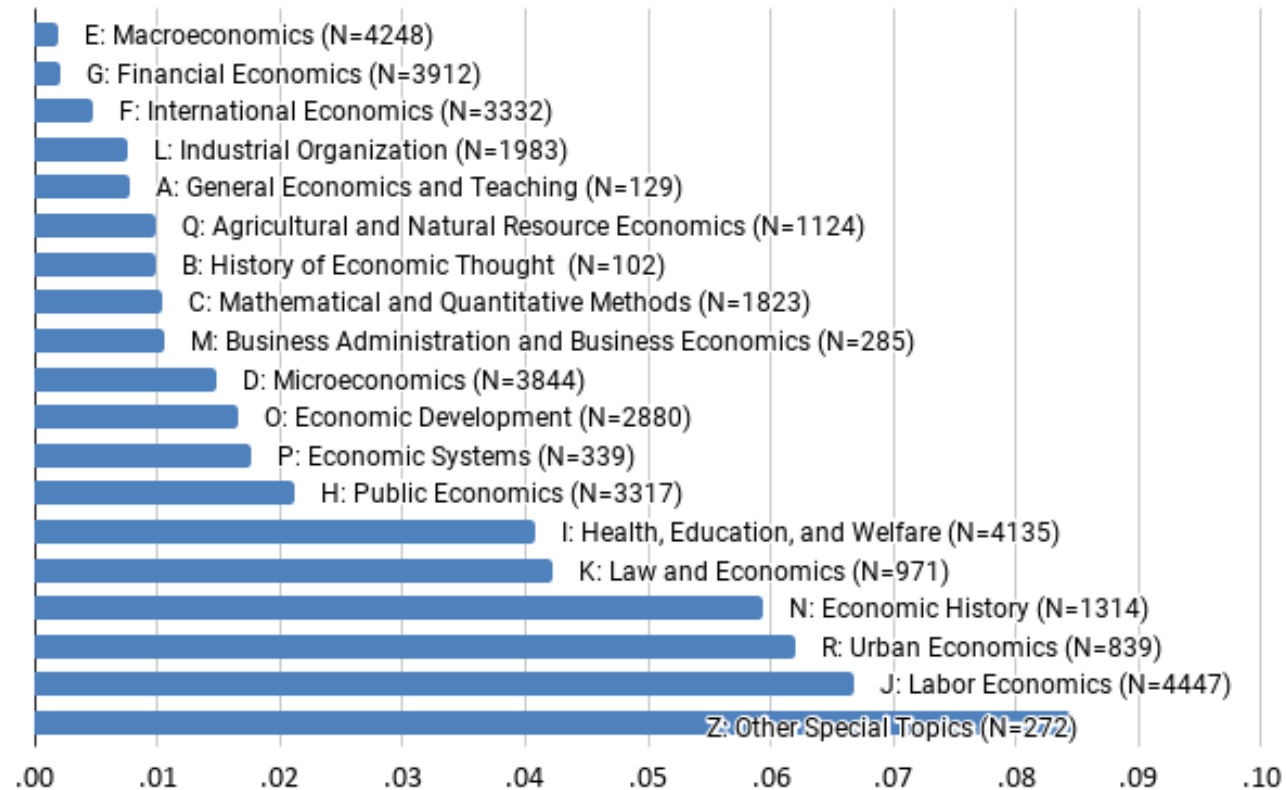
# Incentives?

- are there weaker publication incentives for RR research?
- apply algorithm to NBER WPs (tracked to publication)
- by JEL code, compare publication rates of RR and non-RR NBER WPs
  - *to do: citations, publication lags*



# Selection?

- intrinsic value of diversity [Bayer et al. 2020]
- own experience matters for research
- but danger of sorting/marginalization?



Share of NBER WPs that are Race-related, by JEL Code

*Thank You!*

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