

Fall 1997 Newsletter

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Special Commemorative Issue: CSWEP'S 25 Years

Kenneth A. Small, Co-Editor - University of California-Irvine

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of CSWEP, so we thought it a good time to take stock. How are women doing in our profession? How much progress has been made since women's participation was officially recognized by the American Economic Association as a significant issue? And what role have the programs promoted by CSWEP played?

We begin by reprinting the resolution passed by the AEA on December 28, 1971. It declares that economics is not exclusively a man's field. It commits the AEA to undertake actions to eliminate discrimination against women in admissions and employment. It calls for the appointment of women to editorial boards and as program chairs. It calls for open listing of all job openings, a practice that was not common up to then. It establishes CSWEP and mandates it to make recommendations for affirmative action.

One of CSWEP's first tasks was to issue a report to the Association. The report's first half consists of a thoughtful essay on "Role Prejudice as an Economic Problem." We think the principles articulated there are durable and deserve to be pondered again, so we reprint this section of the report.

We then present four contemporary views on the questions raised above. All are by women whose own careers exemplify the degree of excellence and accomplishment that many women aspire to. Three of them have also served (or are serving) as chair of CSWEP. Carolyn Shaw Bell, Katharine Coman Professor of Economics and Wellesley and the founding CSWEP chair, provides a delightful historical perspective on the advent of the organization within AEA politics and a unique view of what it means today. Rebecca M. Blank, Professor of Economics at Northwestern University, writes about women in academics; using her expertise as a labor economist, she reviews and interprets the available facts, including data she helped collect as CSWEP chair from 1993 through 1995. Sharon P. Smith, Dean of the College of Business Administration at Fordham University, uses her current position as well as her previous career in business to illuminate how the dramatic changes in business during these 25 years have interacted with affirmative action to change the nature of women's business careers. Finally the current CSWEP chair, Robin L. Bartlett, Professor of Economics and the Laura C. Harris Chair at Denison University, gives a perspective more directly focused on CSWEP's role.

It's been an interesting 25 years. Some readers will recognize in these pages events that affected their lives. Others may well be surprised to discover that things were not always as they are now, and that things taken for granted came about and continue only through tireless effort. Many will be distressed at the incompleteness of achievement of CSWEP's goals. Some may conclude that past efforts have borne fruit and that new and different goals are more urgent for the next quarter century. Wherever your own perspective, we hope that the efforts of women and men over the years, and our modest attempt to capture them in these vignettes, will be recognized as a significant part of the history of the profession in which you toil. We also hope this understanding will make your toil more rewarding.

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CSWEP, In Retrospect

Carolyn Shaw Bell, CSWEP Chair, 1973-76

I am reminded of a meeting of the Wellesley Economics faculty with an applicant for initial appointment: we very much needed his field of economic history and thought him a very strong candidate. At luncheon I asked dutifully "what exactly is your dissertation about?" and was told "the decline of share-cropping in the South and its economic impact on black migration North." "But, was my immediate unthinking retort, "that's not HISTORY. I remember that!" My colleagues roared with laughter, the young man of course knew better, until he joined me in laughing at my total oblivion to my age.

I do remember a lot, but have decided CSWEP is part of history, so I looked up primary data. *The American Economic Review* (May, 1972, pp 470-474) reports the business meeting in 1971, establishing CSWEP to investigate sex discrimination among professional economists in all lines of work and to recommend an affirmative action program. The Committee was charged to report, and the American Economic Association to publish, its "findings, conclusions, and recommendations."

The report was a session on the program at the 1973 annual meeting in New York; the panel discussion became a lively debate preserved on tape. Professor Milton Friedman was invited to join the panel but did not attend the meetings; five long and thoughtful letters between him and me exist with copies in the Wellesley College archives.

As for publication, the Committee opted for one of the quarterly issues of the AER to carry its formal findings. The then editor of the journal asked me repeatedly to forget the whole thing, not to write and publish a piece that could only be divisive, that should be tactfully ignored for the sake of professional collegiality, that would cause hard feelings among the men and not help women at all. I kept replying that I had no power, since I merely chaired the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession, to ignore a Resolution passed by the American Economic Association, nor did I think, honestly, that it was in his power to do so. And so in the December 1973 issue of the *AER*, tucked away at the very end with "Announcements and Notes," appears the article "Combatting Role Prejudice and Sex Discrimination."

I've reread this report, and urge you all to look it up. The first part was drafted by member Ken Boulding, and although the ideas had been kicked around by us, the writing displays his inimitable imprint of style and felicitous language. It points out that insofar as women's abilities remain unused, getting rid of discrimination would increase the labor supply both quantitatively and qualitatively at very little cost. This itself was not an original idea; but Boulding's identification of role prejudice and the ensuing discrimination as a "false social learning process," and of the existence of a "betterment production function," were both enlightening. The article refused any discussion of quotas or goals, for when gross disproportionality between men and women exists in a given occupation or profession precise numbers are unnecessary: "where there is clearly not enough, the simplest and most necessary guideline is `more.'"(p. 1053.)

Four tools, he said, could help increase the blatantly low proportion of women in the economics profession. These were information, persuasion, rewards, and sanctions. Member Barbara Reagan, in the second part of the article, spelled out the Committee's ideas. We had struggled for almost two years about how to implement the Resolutions and we believed that all economists, not just CSWEP, should take the 1972 Association action extremely seriously. That's why I have been pushing for over ten years to get these resolutions reprinted, to inform everyone of the commitments made by the professional

association for itself and for all economists, including specific methods of affirmative action.

During those early years, when the Committee was building up the roster, encouraging regional and local meetings, sponsoring newsletters and functions to inform people about CSWEP and gathering the first hard data about education and employment for women economists, we realized that these activities themselves helped dispel role prejudice. A male chairman commenting on his department's numbers of economics majors, enrollment in first and subsequent economics courses, faculty, promotion, tenure, alumnae experiences, and so on among men and women, commented that he had not at all realized the existing waste of resources. His colleagues agreed to deliberately encourage women students in the field and to use all their professional contacts to locate women candidates for the economics faculty. CSWEP informed women economists about each other, too. They rejoiced in finding a kindred soul in the same subspecialty, a reader of first drafts, members of a panel, and many friendships. A colleague leaving the first meeting of the New England Women's Economic Association exclaimed gleefully, "I've finally got my own club!"

My conclusion from this brief historical summary is that CSWEP accomplished highly useful "consciousness-raising." At the time I was totally unsympathetic to this notion; I refused to accept the premise of "the movement" that women were helpless, trapped by their husbands, their fathers, their male teachers and physicians and other men, and that women needed women's encouragement to understand their predicament in society. I also opposed most of the leaders in the women's movement for refusing to recognize economic facts - I suppose I have always found ideology unacceptable. But the examples above, echoed by other men with similar reactions, and the experience of women (including myself) who rejoiced at a newfound collegiality, made me accept that what Ken Boulding had called "information" and "persuasion" can also be called "consciousness-raising."

My conclusion today is that both information and persuasion are still badly needed. It may never be possible to raise children to be totally oblivious to stereotypes, particularly that women clearly destined for marriage and motherhood need not trouble their pretty heads about taxes and discount rates and statistical errors in measuring inflation. Despite sophisticated knowledge and liberal goodwill, the old-fashioned image of women remains powerful. A business reporter interviewing me about a woman CEO of a Fortune 500 firm observed that one particular industry, and even the entire region where it was located, were inhospitable to women in executive roles. He asked for my reaction. "Gracious!" I thought, but did not say to him, "what makes you think there is any industry, or any region, which does accept women?" And he wrote a fine article, appreciative of his subject's abilities and accomplishments. Nonetheless, many of its observations would not have existed in the case of a man.

In the 1973 article, Ken Boulding pointed out that genetic differences, like hair color or gender or skin color or height, undoubtedly exist but have not proven impact on job or role performance, with the exception of reproduction. Over the past few years new research suggests other genetic differences in mental and psychological attributes between the sexes, with much to be explored; some genetic differences may in fact affect education and employment. But, CETERIS PARIBUS! the social environment remains overwhelming. It follows that social action can change any preconceived notion of social roles, and it is possible to enhance the "social betterment function" by new and striking information, convincing persuasion, and a sensible yet impassioned system of incentives and deterrents.

I would like to add a fifth tool for CSWEP and everyone else, namely boasting. Perhaps social conditioning makes women more modest about their own accomplishments, but that's not contributing to social learning. We need every day to herald some woman's achievements, to tout a woman's book or painting or scholarly article, to brag about a promotion or prize and to show admiration for the efforts and influence of women, in their professional and technical and social and human endeavors of all kinds. And if the woman is your mother, or your sister, or your wife, or yourself, go ahead and boast! If we are

part of the knowledge industry, then let us help our knowledge to be more

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Women in the Academy

Rebecca M. Blank, Northwestern University, CSWEP Chair, 1994-96

The progress of women in the academic world of economics can best be characterized as a good news/bad news story. The good news is that women economists have made substantial gains in numbers and status in academic departments. The bad news is that there is still evidence that women face greater barriers in this world than their male colleagues.

The good news is clear from the data. The National Science Foundation indicates that the share of new Ph.D.s in economics awarded to women has increased from 10 percent in 1974 to 25 percent in 1995. The American Economic Association's (AEA) annual survey of Ph.D.-granting departments indicates that the share of untenured but tenure-track assistant professors who are female has risen from 7 percent to 25 percent over these years. The share of full tenured professors who are women has risen much more slowly, from 2 percent to 5 percent. CSWEP's own (and more complete) survey of Ph.D.-granting departments indicates that over 8 percent of full tenured professors are women. Further, there is evidence that a growing share of published papers are authored or co-authored by women and that women's participation in annual meetings of the AEA has risen.

While these gains should be celebrated, there are still ongoing problems faced by women in academic economics. Most notably, women are still very scarce on most economics faculties. A number of departments continue to have no tenured women. In 1996-97, the CSWEP survey indicates that there were only 108 tenured women in 98 Ph.D.-granting departments. With an average department size of 25, these departments averaged 3 women at all ranks. For many purposes the gender of one's colleagues may be irrelevant. But most women who have been among only one or two in their department will testify that they regularly experience a sense of isolation, even if this is just the lack of someone who will laugh at some of the same jokes. It has also been suggested that the lack of women on economics faculties is one reason fewer young women are attracted to the field. However, recent research (Canes and Rosen, 1995, or Neumark and Gardecki, 1996) suggests the effects on students of having a role model of the same gender may not be large.

In addition, there is evidence that women disproportionately drop out of tenure track positions. Several years ago I tried to simulate a model of expected progression through the ranks for men and women in economics, starting with the men and women in the profession in 1980. Whichever set of assumptions I adopted about how to simulate "equivalent" progress for women and men, I came up with the same answer: women were advancing more slowly than any simulation would suggest they should be. In short, the sparsity of women at the full tenured level is due both to the fact that women start as a smaller pool of Ph.D. students and to the fact that they leave, or fail to be promoted, at a higher rate than men. Kahn (1993), for instance, finds that the median time to tenure among women is 3 years longer than among men.

Women are now spread more evenly across disciplinary topics than they used to be, although they remain over-represented in the empirical subfields and under-represented in the more theoretical subfields. The academic jobs in which women are located also remain skewed. There are relatively more women in teaching colleges and in jobs at lower-ranked universities. Barbezat (1992) discusses differences in the placement of men and women in the economics job market. Singell and Stone (1993) and McMillen and Singell (1994) investigate the determinants of first job placement and subsequent promotion between men and women in economics, finding evidence consistent with the theory that women are "underplaced" in academic jobs.

Perhaps the largest change is simply the widespread acceptance of women in economics. Women present at the formation of CSWEP in the early 1970s tell numerous stories of being belittled and not taken seriously by their male colleagues. (For instance, see the conversation with Carolyn Shaw Bell about the founding of CSWEP in the Fall 1993 CSWEP Newsletter.) Current cases of egregious sexual discrimination and exclusion in the profession are few (although not entirely absent.) Instead, the problems that many women currently face are more subtle: Not being as often included in conversations or invited to be part of research projects simply because they aren't "one of the guys"; sitting in faculty meetings as the only woman and realizing their colleagues just don't understand their point of view; or facing institutional issues (the lack of university maternity leave policies, for example) that deeply affect them but don't affect their male colleagues. The good news is that these problems can be dealt with more easily than the outright hostility that women faced 30 years ago in academics; the bad news is that these problems still exist.

A major institutional issue that continues to affect women in academic positions more than their male colleagues is the problem of career timing. Launching a career as an academic economist means extended schooling, followed by a minimum of 6 hard-working years until a tenure decision. The years when a younger faculty member is expected to demonstrate high research productivity and strong service to the university are exactly when many women are also in their prime childbearing years. As recent participants in a CSWEP panel on marriage and children (at the 1996 AEA meetings) indicated, life just isn't fair for women with children inside the university. Although many husbands do increasing amounts of childcare, most women put significantly more time into childcare responsibilities than their husbands. The typical pattern of older generations of academic women was to have children -- if one had children at all -- after tenure. One of the changes in the profession is that a growing number of women at well-regarded research schools are having children as junior faculty members. It is still an open question how they will fare in the long run as they try to combine career and family.

Organizations like CSWEP have helped advance women's progress in academics. CSWEP has provided opportunities for (particularly younger) women to get on the program at AEA annual meetings and to be published in the *AER's Papers and Proceedings*. CSWEP has also been a consistent voice within the AEA for issues of particular concern to women, such as child care at the annual meetings. The networking that occurs through CSWEP receptions and through the Newsletter is also important. As one woman once said to me, "I go to the CSWEP reception at the AEA annual meetings each year just because it's such a lift to walk into a roomful of economists and see that they're all women." Butressing the work of CSWEP, the formation of the International Association of Feminist Economists (IAFFE) in recent years has created additional avenues through which women can make connections. IAFFE has been particularly active in promoting the application of feminist theory to the field of economics, creating a new subfield of the discipline.

The question of "Why aren't there more women in academic economics?" remains key for the profession. Of particular concern is the continuing low share of undergraduate economics majors who are female. Less than 30 percent of graduating seniors in economics were women in the mid-1990s. While all of us can work to make our departments and universities better places for women faculty to work, until we also improve the pipeline and increase the number of younger women with an interest in the field, the number of women entering academic research and teaching careers in economics will remain low.

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Women in Business

Sharon P. Smith, Dean, College of Business Administration, Fordham University

The anniversary of the founding of CSWEP offers an appropriate occasion to consider how women have fared in business during the past twenty-five years. This question has often been addressed through an analysis of the size and sources of wage differentials between the sexes and how they may have changed over time. I will not address that dimension of the issue here. Instead I will consider whether women have prospered in terms of their access to positions of power and influence in business. To do so requires looking not only at what progress women have made in business but also at what changes have occurred in business that have affected both men and women. It is helpful to begin by viewing women's position in business from a cultural perspective at the time CSWEP was founded and then reflecting on how and why that position has changed over the intervening years.

Some twenty years ago, Rosabeth Moss Kanter characterized the corporate world of that time as a culture in which "Women populate organizations, but they practically never run them, especially the large business and public establishments.."1 The segmentation of office work into male managerial jobs and female clerical jobs both contribute to and was, in part, a consequence of the idealization of what Kanter termed the "masculine ethic" (that is, being tough-minded and analytical, setting aside emotional and personal considerations in making analyses and decisions) as "necessities for effective management." [p. 22] Such occupational segregation reflected both individual choice in career and discriminatory practices in hiring and promotion. It also reflected a pipeline problem: although women's labor participation was increasing dramatically, women were not yet moving in great numbers into the sorts of educational programs that were attractive to corporate employers and thus were not eligible for many of the entry level positions. In 1972, for example, only 9.1 percent of the undergraduate degrees in business and 3.9 percent of the master's degrees in business were awarded to women. Whatever the original source of the segmentation, it was clear, as Kanter observed [pp. 264-287], that correcting it by moving women into positions of influence and authority would not only heighten their commitment to the organization but would also signal the more effective use of a major untapped resource. The quality of worklife would improve throughout the organization, as the hostility that often accompanies blocked opportunities would be eliminated and the talents of all the human resources would be used more effectively.

The business world has changed dramatically in the ensuing twenty-five years. Faced with the challenge of global competition, American business has restructured and re-engineered itself totally. These changes have transformed what constitutes a career path and have shifted the responsibility for movement along that path. Career paths are no longer clearly defined: they may be vertical, horizontal, diagonal. They may move across functional boundaries as well as across companies and industries, according to larger needs and opportunities. They may move among corporations, entrepreneurial operations, and non-profit organizations. Thus the career path is now the responsibility of the employee to manage rather than in the control of the employer. Indeed most individuals can anticipate having multiple careers over a lifetime. Networks and alliance are of paramount importance, not only for individuals as they manage their careers but also for firms as they retain the loyalty of their customers.

Women's labor force participation rates continue to rise. Women have dramatically altered their chosen areas of study. In 1995 (the latest figure available), 47.6 percent of baccalaureate business degrees and 39.4 percent of master's degrees in business were awarded to women. Women are now moving into very different occupations and industries than they did twenty-five years ago, though they continue to shoulder a disproportionate share of household responsibilities. In the corporate world, their increased movement into accounting has been particularly remarkable. However, these changes do not mean the

segmentation and powerlessness that Kanter observed have been eliminated. A glass ceiling persists. Catalyst, a nonprofit research group, reports that women hold only 2.4 percent of the highest-ranking corporate office positions in the 500 largest corporations. Not surprisingly, predictions in the business press of individuals who will form the next generation of CEO's identify a scant handful of women at most. The ceiling has been raised but not eliminated.

Judy B. Rosener's study of leadership style has confirmed that there are innate differences between men and women and that these differences have special implications for the changing business climate. In particular, men generally display a "command-and- control" style whereas women tend toward an interactive manner that is "particularly effective in flexible, nonhierarchical organizations of the kind that perform best in a climate of rapid change."² At present, these abilities "remain undervalued and underutilized" [p. 199]. This undervaluation, coupled with an anticipated increase in flexibility for managing other household responsibilities, are most likely principal reasons for women's choosing a career path in which they leave the corporate world to start their own entrepreneurial operations. Will the corporate world recognize and value women's abilities at all levels? Despite the growing numbers of women in the pipeline, I do not believe the glass ceiling will disappear quickly. Talented women will gravitate to those corporations that recognize women as a resource innately qualified to add value to a business world challenged by rapid change. The strategic advantage those corporations gain may provide the incentive for other corporations to act similarly. Then, perhaps, the ceiling will eventually be eliminated and men and women will have equal opportunity for their talents to be recognized and rewarded accordingly.

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¹Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1977), p. 16.

²Judy B. Rosener, *American's Competitive Secret Utilizing Women as a Management Strategy* (New York: Oxford University, 1955), p. 11.

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CSWEP: Past, Present, Future

Robin L. Bartlett - Denison University, CSWEP Chair

The stage was set at the Annual Business meeting of the American Economic Association (AEA) December 29, 1970 in Cobo Hall, Detroit, Michigan. A resolution was offered to have a session at the 1971 meetings on the role of women in economic life. And the rest is history. According to an interoffice memo (Chamberlain 1972) of the Ford Foundation from Mariam K. Chamberlain to Marshall A. Robinson, dated January 11, 1972, there were lively gatherings at the AEA annual meetings held December 27-29, 1971 in New Orleans. First Barbara Bergmann chaired the session titled "What Economic Equality for Women Requires." The overflow audience spilled into the corridors and was very sympathetic. Later that same day another gathering took place to form the Caucus of Women Economists and to draft a resolution to present at the AEA's business meeting for action.

Two Yale graduate students jointly chaired the meeting. Over 100 men and women - established and novice members of the profession alike - were present. The seven items spelled out in the original draft of the resolution began with: "Resolved that the AEA endorses the principle that sex discrimination and inequality have no place in the Economics profession." The Caucus wanted discrimination against women in the profession to stop and for the AEA to facilitate that effort. Carolyn Shaw Bell, Catherine Coman Professor of Economics at Wellesley College, was elected chair of the Caucus and was designated to present a modified resolution to the Association's business meeting. Interestingly, this version of the resolution began with: "Resolved that the American Economic Association declares that economics is not a man's field." John Kenneth Galbraith chaired the business meeting. One of the first amendments to the resolution was to add "exclusively" to the first sentence (*AER* 1971). Six of the original items were passed almost intact. The creation of a roster of women economists was tabled for later action. Token opposition arose. The timely remarks of Robert Eisner and Andrew Brimmer, however, expediated the process.

Item II of that resolution gave birth to the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession. President Galbraith (*AER* 1972) appointed Carolyn Saw Bell and eight other members: Walter Adams, Francine Blau, Martha Blaxall, Kenneth Boulding, Collette Moser, Barbara Reagan, Myra Strober, and Phyllis Wallace. Mariam Chamberlain then wrote a grant to the Ford Foundation which helped finance CSWEP through its formative years.

CSWEP has accomplished much over the past 25 years. There have been 10 chairs of CSWEP and 77 board members. Their names are listed at the end of this piece to give them the recognition they deserve. During its early years, CSWEP set out to document the problems of women in economics. Questionnaires were sent to all the Ph.D.-granting institutions in the US to systematically collect the first information on how many women were economists and where they were employed. This questionnaire eventually led to the annual survey distributed by the AEA known as the Universal Academic Questionnaire (UAQ). The UAQ provides information on the number of male and female assistant, associate and full professors at Ph.D.-granting institutions used in CSWEP's annual report as well as widely used salary information (also see Albelda, forthcoming).

To ensure that potential employers could identify available women economists, CSWEP established a roster. A roster provides employers with the list of over 7000 women economists and their areas of expertise. To ensure that everyone in the job market has all the available information about potential jobs, the AEA subsequently began the publication of Job Opportunities for Economists or JOE. Anti-nepotism rules, formal and informal, were dropped in many departments in order to enable both members of a couple to belong to a faculty (see AEA Resolution I, part f). Over the years CSWEP has

published a newsletter three times a year which contains a variety of "how to" articles to help women pursue their professional goals.

CSWEP sponsors six sessions at the annual AEA meetings each year. Half of the sessions pertain to gender-related material and are intended to explore the economic position of women in and outside of the market. The other three sessions focus on specific topics or areas to showcase the young women who are entering these fields. Six to eight of these papers are selected to be published in the proceedings. Recently, to facilitate custodial parents attending its annual meetings, the AEA contracted with Kiddicorp to provide child care at the meetings. The AEA sessions, JOE, Kiddiecorp, and the employment of couples in the same department all grew from seeds planted in the founding resolution.

In 1993, CSWEP began collecting its own data not only to obtain an accurate count of women in academic jobs, but also to determine the number of women in the pipeline. While significant progress has been made with regard to the percentage of women in academia, a serious gender imbalance still exists at the upper ranks. Information gathered by CSWEP's 1996 annual departmental questionnaire shows that 29 percent of all undergraduates who earn a baccalaureate in economics in the Ph.D.-granting institutions are women. Thirty percent of those entering Ph.D. programs are women. Twenty-eight percent of the ABDs are women and 24 percent of the Ph.D.s earned in economics go to women. Only 20 percent of the jobs at Ph.D.-granting institutions, however, go to women. At non Ph.D.-granting institutions, 26 percent of the new hires are women. As Rebecca Blank Points out, the number of women hired in tenure track positions at the country's Ph.D.-granting institutions has improved noticeably, but the number who received tenure is still not on par with that of men.

While previous efforts of CSWEP have been helpful, it will take many more years before the serious imbalance between the status of men and women in economics is rectified. The 25th anniversary of CSWEP provides the opportunity to evaluate its success with respect to the original items in the founding resolution. In its new mission statement, CSWEP members have reaffirmed their belief that economics is a woman's field as much as it is a man's field; their commitment to represent women's views within the Association; and their determination to help women succeed in the profession. To these ends, CSWEP is in the process of taking several new initiatives. First, since publishing and grant-writing are keys to the success of young faculty members, CSWEP wrote a grant to the National Science Foundation (NSF) to hold a series of workshops that will bring junior and senior women together in teams to catapult more women into the tenured ranks and above. The CSWEP board and several senior women in the profession are trying a new approach to facilitating the progress of younger women through the ranks. Fourty junior women and eight senior women are scheduled to meet for the first time after the AEA meetings to work in teams to cooperatively help each other with publishing, grant-writing, networking, and balancing life choices. Working together on each other's projects will speed up the process of feedback and review. At the regional meetings, CSWEP board members will also facilitate similar workshops. We hope to reach over 160 female economists in the course of the coming year.

Second, CSWEP's regional representatives are making connections with women in their areas and with regional associations. CSWEP is making a concerted effort to reach out to women who are not at the large research institutions. The newsletter has more articles on teaching and research institutions other than those granting Ph.D.s. The newsletter will also begin a new section where responses from readers will be published. Finally, as Carolyn Shaw Bell suggested, women economists need to boast more about their achievements. CSWEP is currently exploring the establishment of a prize in economics that would celebrate the work of a woman economist.

Women economists have a critical role to play in the development of the profession and the discipline of economics. CSWEP hopes that the next 25 years will see the abolition of the gross gender imbalance that

Kenneth Boulding wrote 25 years ago.

Twenty-five years of CSWEP Board Members from 1972 through 1997

- 1997
 - Robin Bartlett, *chair*
 - Maureen Cropper
 - Hali Edison
 - Catherine Eckel
 - Henry Farber
 - Joyce Jacobsen
 - Daphne Kenyon
 - Arleen Leibowitz
 - Nancy Marion
 - Olivia Mitchell
 - Susan Pozo
 - Kenneth Small
 - Joan Haworth

- 1996
 - Rebecca Blank, *chair*
 - Kathryn Anderson
 - Robin Bartlett
 - Maureen Cropper
 - Hali Edison
 - Ronald Ehrenberg
 - Joni Hersch
 - Joyce Jacobsen
 - Daphne Kenyon
 - Arleen Leibowitz
 - Nancy Marion
 - Olivia Mitchell
 - Susan Pozo
 - Kenneth Small
 - Joan Haworth

- 1995
 - Rebecca Blank, *chair*
 - Kathryn Anderson
 - Robin Bartlett
 - Marianne Baxter
 - Maureen Cropper
 - Ronald Ehrenberg
 - Joni Hersch
 - Irene Lurie
 - Lisa Lynch
 - Nancy Marion
 - Kenneth Small
 - Ann Witte

- Joan Haworth
- 1994
 - Rebecca Blank, *chair*
 - Kathryn Anderson
 - Robin Bartlett
 - Ivy Broder
 - Linda Edwards
 - Ronald Ehrenberg
 - Jo Anna Gray
 - Joni Hersch
 - Irene Lurie
 - Nancy Marion
 - Roger Noll
 - Ann Witte
 - Joan Haworth
- 1993
 - Elizabeth Hoffman, *chair*
 - Robin Bartlett
 - Rebecca Blank
 - Ivy Broder
 - Linda Edwards
 - Jo Anna Gray
 - Ethel Jones
 - Frank Levy
 - Irene Lurie
 - Roger Noll
 - Jennifer Reinganum
 - Leigh Tesfatsion
 - Ann Witte
 - Joan Haworth
- 1992
 - Elizabeth Hoffman, *chair*
 - Rebecca Blank
 - Ivy Broder
 - Linda Edwards
 - Jo Anna Gray
 - Marjorie Honig
 - Ethel Jones
 - Frank Levy
 - Roger Noll
 - Jennifer Reinganum
 - Leigh Tesfatsion
 - Barbara Wolfe
 - Myrna Wooders
 - Joan Haworth
- 1991
 - Elizabeth Hoffman, *chair*

- Rebecca Blank
 - Marjorie Honig
 - Ethel Jones
 - Frank Levy
 - Shelly Lundberg
 - Daniel Newlon
 - June O'Neill
 - Jennifer Reinganum
 - Leigh Tesfatsion
 - Barbara Wolfe
 - Myrna Wooders
 - Joan Haworth
- 1990
 - Nancy Gordon, *chair*
 - Rebecca Blank
 - Elizabeth Hoffman
 - Marjorie Honig
 - Shulamit Kahn
 - Shelly Lundberg
 - Kathryn Morrison
 - Barbara Newell
 - Daniel Newlon
 - June O'Neill
 - Barbara Wolfe
 - Myrna Wooders
 - Joan Haworth
- 1989
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 - Martha Blaxall
 - Kenneth Boulding
 - Collette Moser
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Combatting Role Prejudice and Sex Discrimination

Findings of the American Economic Association Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession*

I. Role Prejudice as an Economic Problem¹

It is well recognized among economists that arbitrary discrimination in the labor market creates a general economic loss. Where certain people are excluded from jobs for reasons which have nothing to do with the performance of the jobs themselves, the loss to consumers plus the loss to those who are excluded is greater than any gain to those who are favored. There is now copious literature on this subject.

It is less well recognized that discrimination among existing members of the labor force is only a special case of a much larger process of role learning and role acceptance, which begins almost from the moment of birth. It is not merely that differences in skills are learned, as in Adam Smith's famous passage about the porter and the philosopher,² but images of possible roles on the part of both the role occupants and the role demanders are likewise learned in the long process of socialization. The existing division of labor at any one time, therefore, may reflect "role prejudice" that is, a learning process by which certain irrelevant biological or genetic characteristics of individuals are associated with certain roles. Some genetic distinctions are significant for role performance, but many are not and yet are widely believed to be significant. These beliefs are products of a false social learning process, which can be a source of economic loss even larger than false discrimination within an existing labor force. Discrimination in an existing labor force indeed emerges as one consequence of the much larger process of the development of role prejudice.

Role prejudice tends to develop when there are genetic differences in the human population which are visible but are not necessarily significant for role performance. We see this clearly by considering those genetic differences which are undetectable except by refined methods and therefore are socially invisible. Some of the blood types are perhaps an example. In ordinary life we are quite unaware of a person's blood type. Consequently, it can be safely assumed that there is no role prejudice against blood types of different kinds, unless these happen to be associated with other characteristics which are socially visible. For the major types, this association is fairly minimal. Consequently, we would be very surprised to find a distribution of blood types in any occupational group or income group of any size which is markedly different from the distribution of blood types in the population as a whole.

For any particular distribution of genetic characteristics, it is clear that we can postulate "no-prejudice proportions" in all the different occupations and structures of society. In the case of the socially invisible and irrelevant characteristics mentioned above, the no-prejudice proportions, subject to random variation, in any group of society would be expected to be the same as the proportion of the characteristic in the society as a whole. If there were any case and I must confess I have not been able to think of one of a genetic characteristic which is relevant to role performance but which is socially invisible and not in the information system, then the existing structure of proportions of the characteristic in different occupations might not be the same as the proportions in society as a whole, and those occupations which this invisible characteristic favored would have a larger proportion than in the society as a whole, but this would still constitute a no-prejudice distribution. Paradoxically enough, without knowledge there can be no prejudice; without some knowledge, there can be no false knowledge.

Role prejudice may easily arise where there are highly visible and observable genetic characteristics,

such as sex, race, height, size, color, and so on. Historically these have frequently been perceived as having some relevance to performance in different roles. But this relevance tends to be exaggerated, because a rational tendency to economize information can easily turn into an irrational process of stereotyping and false knowledge.

The genetic division of the human race into men and women qualifies in most societies as the major form both of discrimination in the existing labor force and of role prejudice. This is not surprising, as the genetic difference between the sexes is far greater than it is among the races in terms of the structure of information of the genetic code. There is one role indeed that of bearing children is which there is 100 percent genetic specialization between the sexes, in the sense that no men will be found in the childbearing population. The very social visibility of the distinction between the sexes, however, makes it a prime candidate for role prejudice, which creates a huge reservoir of false knowledge, false education, and false learning processes. All are costly to society in exactly the same sense that an unknown and unutilized natural resource is costly in the sense of opportunity foregone. We can, oddly enough, think of role prejudice as a large natural resource which can be mined by the development of true knowledge and better learning processes to the benefit of the whole society.

Where the sex distinction is completely irrelevant to role performance, role prejudice can be said to exist wherever there are substantial deviations from the 50 percent rule that is, 50 percent of each sex in the occupation this being assumed to be the proportion of the sexes in the total society. The difficult case, of course, is where there is some genetic foundation for partial role differentiation. It is the cases between the 50 percent and 100 percent that are difficult, and in these cases there is often no information system at the moment at any rate which can inform us as to the exact proportion of the sexes in different occupations which constitutes zero role prejudice. Fortunately, however, we do not have to know where the exact position of the ideal proportion is if the existing proportion clearly represents a gross disproportion. In order to set up a social policy we do not have to know exactly where the ideal lies. We merely have to identify those cases in which the deviation from the ideal is so clear and striking that we can find wide agreement as to the desirable direction of change. At the bottom of the mountain, one knows which way is up, even though one may not know exactly where the top of the mountain lies. Maximizing is an illusion, but betterment is not.

It is the contention of the American Economic Association Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (the Committee) that there is gross disproportionality in the proportion of women to men in the economics profession, and especially in university teaching, as revealed in the data which have been collected. Fortunately, we do not have to argue whether the genetic differences between women and men would result in a no-prejudice proportion of women in economics of 40 percent or 50 percent or 60 percent when the actual proportion is less than 10 percent. This gross disproportionality, of course, arises from sources in the long history of the human race, most of which are outside the economics profession. This, however, does not excuse the economics profession from setting in motion processes which will raise its proportion of women. We are a sector of the knowledge industry and a group of people concerned with eliminating sources of unnecessary economic loss. Only if we are successful beyond our wildest expectations, considering the vastness of the mine of ignorance and false learning, will it be necessary to raise the question as to whether we have gone too far.

The critical question, therefore, is that of the "betterment production function," as it might be called. The social indicator of betterment is in this case clearly an increase in the proportion of women in the profession, especially in those branches where the proportion is least. If the rate of change of this proportion is regarded as the product, the question is: What are the inputs which produce this output, and particularly, what are those inputs that can be most easily expanded and that have the highest marginal productivity? We might also look at those inputs which have a high negative marginal productivity and which can be contracted. Four broad classes of inputs may be named: Information, Persuasion, Rewards,

and Punishments.

1. Information

Information properly organized changes the images of the world of people who receive it and consequently changes their behavior. There are two aspects of the information process theoretical structures and information about fact. Better theoretical structures are an essential ingredient in the advancement of knowledge, and in this particular case it is important that the theory of role prejudice, as outlined above, should be widely recognized as a legitimate extension of economic and social theory. One of the greatest enemies of the fact of prejudice is the spread of the idea of prejudice. Once it is recognized as a theoretical construct, the facts of perverse social learning which previously have been invisible become glaringly visible. The improvement and elaboration in detail of the theory of role prejudice is still an important task for the future.

Coupled with a wider appreciation of the theory, the development of statistical information, case studies, and a continuing series of social indicators can serve as a constant criticism of what is false in existing theories of the world and a reinforcement of what is true. It is tempting to think of every advance in knowledge as the result of a combination of new theoretical insights with new information collection and processing procedures. In social systems, however, knowledge does not merely reflect the world it changes it. And in this case particularly, the more we know about role prejudice, the less there is likely to be. Getting lost is one way to improve one's knowledge of the terrain, but studying a map is a better way, and diminishes the amount of getting lost.

2. Persuasion

The mere existence of knowledge and information is not always enough to insure its spread. One of the major sources of ignorance is inattention, and to insure the spread of new knowledge it is often necessary to call it to the attention of people in ways which are dramatic and persuasive. The fact that persuasion can be abused to propagate false knowledge does not excuse us from its proper use in the propagation of truth. Persuasion plays a particularly important role in the change of values, and without getting into the ancient controversy about the truth of values one has to recognize that change in our image of the world inevitably changes our values about it. As scientists, we have to guard against the information filter which our values create. We cannot pretend, however, that information is value free. Change in knowledge and change in values are joint products of a single process.

A problem of particular difficulty is that of irrelevant and unconscious sources and attitudes, even in the academic and intellectual community, which is supposed to be on its guard against irrationality. The relations between the sexes are often characterized by high levels of emotion, and hence are particularly subject to the distortions which arise from unconscious or irrelevant sources. It is one of the functions of ethical persuasion to raise our awareness and to set up defenses against attitudes and prejudices which arise from this source.

3. Rewards

It is widely recognized in the learning process that positive and negative payoffs are of great importance. Every economist is familiar with the proposition that any human activity which is rewarded above some neutral level will expand and those rewarded below this level will contract. The structure of knowledge and values in the human mind, likewise, grows towards its own more positive payoffs and away from the less positive and negative payoffs. It is by constructing a reward structure that society is most likely to achieve change. These rewards may be either internal or external. Our own applause, as Paul

Samuelson suggested, may indeed be the greatest reward of all. No economist, however, can deny the significance of external reward, whether the applause of others or those more tangible things, such as subsidies, tax remissions, and price changes. Curiously enough, although psychologists seem to agree that rewards are more successful than punishments in the learning process, it seems harder to legitimate a reward structure. A suggestion, for instance, that dues paid by members of the American Economic Association should be scaled down if the organization or department to which they belong had a high proportion of women might be hard to legitimate, even though it might be effective. Nevertheless, the search for reward structures should go on.

4. Sanctions and Punishments

Punishments always seem to have been easier to legitimate than rewards, perhaps because of a belief that they are cheaper, in spite of much evidence that they do not contribute as much to learning. Nevertheless, there is one extremely good reason for the use of sanctions. In the case of public goods and public bads it is well recognized by economists that legitimated threat of some kind is essential if we are to avoid some "tragedy of the commons." Private reward structures, such as the market and the price-profit mechanism, are particularly well adapted to the provision of private goods, but are poorly adapted to public goods, where without some sanctions in the collection of taxes public goods would simply not be provided in adequate amount. Private reward systems are also poorly adapted to dealing with public bads such as pollution, of which role prejudice is a prime example, in the sense that everybody is somewhat diminished by it. The "freeloading principle" applies here, for if there are no sanctions it will pay the individual not to participate in a collective sacrifice required for the increase of a public good or the diminution of a public bad. To rely on purely private rewards and exhortations for the diminution of role prejudice is rather like trying to finance a government with purely voluntary contributions.

To say that sanctions are necessary does not mean to deny that there are acute problems both in the quantity and the quality of sanction, and that bad sanctions may be worse than no sanctions. This, however, does not excuse us from the search for good sanctions, which must not be larger than necessary, must be credible, legitimate, precise, equitable, and so on. Sanctions should call on violators and not on the innocent; they should be appropriate that is, any punishment should fit the crime and it should be recognized that, like all deterrents, punishments are most successful when they are not carried out. Economists will recognize, however, that no system of sanctions can be perfect and that there has to be some kind of tradeoff between imperfection in the system of sanctions which will inevitably lead to some failures of both justice and of deterrence, and the failure of the provision of public goods or the elimination of public bads which too weak a system of sanctions might involve.

The power of the American Economic Association to invoke sanctions is small indeed, and it could be argued that, apart from publicity which under some circumstances is itself a sanction a professional association should not legitimately engage even in linguistic sanctions like censure. Nevertheless, it is only realistic to be aware of the fact that sanctions of government can be invoked by groups in the society in the furtherance of what they believe to be general betterment. Even a profession is not exempt from participating in the society of which it is a part. It is important that vigilance be maintained against both the abuses of sanctions and their undue neglect, even though the primary emphasis of the intellectual community is properly on information, persuasion, and rewards.

The Committee is aware that it has a special task which is part of a much larger social process. Role prejudice in particular is by no means confined to women. Men also suffer from role prejudice, and it accounts for other kinds of discrimination than one based solely on sex. Nevertheless, as economists we believe in the division of labor and we believe that the pursuit of our particular task is to complement rather than compete with the labors of others in the long process of social betterment. The guidelines

that we are proposing, while they are particularly applicable to our special case, are all simply examples of the fundamental general principle that where there is clearly not enough, the simplest and most necessary guideline is "more." In what follows we spell out in detail this essential principle.

*This report is published pursuant to a resolution adopted by the members at the Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association, December 28, 1971. In providing for establishment of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession, the resolution specified that "Its general findings, conclusions, and recommendations shall be published by the American Economic Association upon the Committee's request" (*Amer. Econ. Rev. Proc.*, May 1972, p. 474). This report has not been considered or approved by either the Executive Committee or the membership.

1 *Part I* was drafted for the Committee by Kenneth E. Boulding, professor of economics, University of Colorado.

2 "The difference between the most dissimilar characters, between a philosopher and a common street porter, for example, seems to arise not so much from nature, as from habit, custom, and education" (p.15) Adam Smith.

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