

Since the Great Recession, economics has increasingly featured calls for rethinking the discipline in terms of theory and methodology. There is a growing movement claiming the core of the science is negligent toward challenges for humanity.¹ This is reflected in economics education, and economics students have increasingly challenged the current consensus taught in most universities. Remarkably, influential economists would like to celebrate the current consensus as a victory of scientific methodology over political posturing.² It is likely this self-image is false. Theoretical contributions and empirical research can be significantly linked to the research networks economists inhabit, suggesting possible bias.³ While influential mainstream economists readily admit that economists may hold a wide variety of opinions, they would defend the scientific validity of the consensus framework. Yet, this framework is increasingly challenged by the heterodox economics community on theoretical, methodological and empirical grounds.⁴ As economics has increasingly become a contested field, students have not been educated about this ‘war in heaven’. Economics education is still largely a ‘textbook science’.⁵ The same basic textbooks are widely used around the world to study economics.⁶ These texts feature the consensus as an a-priori paradigm that – in the best case – is seen as shaping local conditions. These have changed very little in terms of theoretical content since the time of Samuelson.⁷ Students are thus only taught one set of (usually antiquated) tools to analyze a wide variety of problems. This is where the student’s movement call to rethink the economics curriculum originates. This call goes further than simply asking for more relevant applications, examples and problems to solve in class.⁸ It has become a call for a revival of humanist education by embracing scientific pluralism.⁹ The response to this is an increasingly varied market for economics textbooks. Bowles and Gintis (2020) argue broadly three types of textbooks are now available. The most popular texts still feature a ‘consensus’-presentation. In response, heterodox economists have supplied ‘alternative’ texts positing their paradigm in direct opposition to mainstream ideas. Lastly, a growing number of ‘pluralist’ textbooks are available. These aim to show the variety of ideas and methods economists can be used to analyze a variety of problems. My research aims to confirm this framework for thinking about economics education. I am seeking to replicate Bowles and Gintis’ method of investigating popular introductory textbooks by way of unsupervised machine learning. This promises to amplify the reflexive potential of economics educators and actively engaged students. With this I would like to contribute to the call for a humanist economics education that teaches students to think critically about their education. This can only be realized by embracing scientific pluralism, adopting truly pluralist textbooks, yet abandoning the current centrality of the ‘textbook’ in education. I would invite students and teachers to investigate that mission-statement and actively engage with economics education.

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- 1 See for example [Real World Economics Review](#) or [Oswald and Stern 2019 Why are economists letting the world down on climate change](#)
 - 2 See for example [Krugman's contribution to Business Insider in 2014](#) or [Romer, P. M. \(2015\). Mathiness in the theory of economic growth. American Economic Review, 105\(5\), 89-93.](#)
 - 3 [Jelveh, Z, B Kogut and S Naidu. \(2014\). Economists aren't as non-partisan as we think. FiveThirtyEight, December 8.](#) and [Fourcade, M. \(2018\). Economics: the view from below. Swiss Journal of Economics and Statistics, 154\(1\), 1-9.](#)
 - 4 See for example [Boland, L. A. \(2020\). Foundations of Economic Method: A Popperian Perspective. Routledge](#) or [Keen, S. \(2011\). Debunking economics: The naked emperor dethroned?. Zed Books Ltd.](#)
 - 5 [Graupe, S. \(2018\). "Waging the war of ideas": Economics as a textbook science and its possible influence on human minds 1. In Advancing pluralism in teaching economics \(pp. 173-190\). Routledge.](#)
 - 6 [Bowles, S., & Carlin, W. \(2020\). What students learn in economics 101: Time for a change. Journal of Economic Literature, 58\(1\), 176-214.](#)
 - 7 [ibid](#)
 - 8 See for example [Rethinking Economics](#)
 - 9 [Earle, J., Moran, C., & Ward-Perkins, Z. \(2016\). The econocracy: the perils of leaving economics to the experts. Manchester University Press.](#)