

## Chair's Message

I've been thinking a lot about the importance of community lately. This topic has been forefront in my mind for a few reasons. First, because I have a couple of graduate students who are interested in immigrant communities in Canada and have been discussing "ex-pat" communities quite often. Second, I've decided that I want to live another 50 years and so have been reading about the Blue Zones and longevity. Beyond nutrition and exercise, researchers are pointing to a strong sense of community as a key ingredient for aging well. Third, we at CWEC/CFEC are deep in planning for this year's CEA conference in Toronto, and are always looking for ways to build our community.

I think we, as academics, have to work a bit harder to create and maintain communities in our lives. Most of us live far from our extended families and childhood friends, and many of us fall more on the introversion side of the scale. The CEA has many opportunities for community building – CWEC/CFEC, and now the CEDC (Canadian Economic Diversity Committee), as well as various study groups. With work-related communities, the benefits are not only in the friendships we develop, but also in potential research connections, feedback, and advice to move our careers forward.

CWEC/CFEC's newsletter committee (Elisabeth, Ella, Marwa, and Kareman) has once again put together a great newsletter. Inside you'll find articles on Claudia Goldin, an interview with Brenda Eaton, and highlights of the brownbag talks from this year. Enjoy!

I am very grateful for the community of women economists that I have met and worked with through CWEC/CFEC (and previously CWEN/REF). I invite you to join us whenever you can at our events throughout the year, and [at the CEA conference](#) – more information on our activities can be found within this newsletter.

I look forward to seeing you all in Toronto!

*Janice*



*Janice Compton (University of Manitoba)*



## Claudia Goldin – 2023’s Nobel Laureate in Economics

By Marwa Abdou

The first Nobel Prizes were awarded on December 10, 1901, while the first Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel was not awarded until 1969. On October 9, 2023 the American Economic Historian and Labour Economist Claudia Goldin became the *third* woman to win the Prize in Economic Sciences (Elinor Olstrom won in 2009, Esther Duflo won in 2019), and *first woman* to win it solo. The award recognizes Goldin’s ground-breaking research on how our understanding of the (US) labour economy radically changes when factoring in the often-overlooked impact of women. ([See here for a PBS interview with Goldin shortly after learning that she had won the prize.](#))

Also in October 2023, NBER released a new working paper by Goldin titled "[Why Women Won](#)". In it she catalogues and distils the critical moments from 1905 to 2023 in women’s rights history when women in the US obtained legal rights equal to men’s. These rights go beyond the right to vote and include areas like the workplace, marriage, family, social security, criminal justice, credit markets, and other parts of the economy and society (“despite recent setbacks”, p. 1). “The chronology ends today when several states have passed paid parental leave laws (CT to begin in 2022; OR to begin in 2023) but also when *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* (2022) overruled *Roe v. Wade* (1973). It is a history of many ups, and some downs. It is also a history of deep divisions among women and men regarding the rights for women they believe will further their cause” (p. 4).

Goldin is not new to firsts. More than 30 years prior to her Nobel Prize win, in 1989, she became the first woman to earn tenure in Harvard University’s Economics Department. For a myriad of women in economics, and for those who have long advocated for gender equality, Goldin’s singular recognition adds to the milestones and “wins” she has long documented in her work. Still, we would be remiss to think that the lifting of these “legal constraints” over 120 years which Goldin also documents in her 2021 book “[Career and Family: Women's Century-Long Journey Towards Equity](#)” have translated into equality for women across the board. Goldin asserts that “[greedy work](#)”—jobs with inflexible or unpredictable schedules that pay better – presents a central hurdle. It is because of this proliferation of greedy work that women are more likely to abandon these jobs as they also take on more care responsibilities in the family, while men are more likely to be enticed by the higher pay.

Goldin’s research wasn’t always centred on women’s experience in the labour force. In a 1998 book “[Passion and Craft: Economists at Work](#)”, she was one of 20 (and one of the few female) mid-career economists who brought together “personal accounts of their work and lives”. In her [essay](#) which was appropriately titled “The Economist as a Detective” she opens by saying “I have always wanted to be a detective and have finally succeeded.” She continues later to share:

“How I became an economist says much about how I work as an economist. There has often been no agenda or program, no particular theory that must be followed, no one econometric technique to be used, and no agency or foundation to pay for a bottom line. Yet the subconscious produces nagging questions. Mine concern the evolving human condition and the material conditions of life, the long-run issues of economic development. It doesn't seem to matter what I work on, I return to these issues. I also am dedicated to seeking the “truth” through fact-finding detective work. It is frequently a highly descriptive “truth” ...”

She elaborates that in the years following graduate school, her focus was initially on the economic history of the South after the Civil War later meandering into “family decisions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries about who worked and went to school, when children left home, where the family resided, and so on”. But “as she sniffed around for something of deeper interest”, Goldin “realize(d) that something was missing” from the study of economics: the wife and mother.

“Women were in the data when young and single and often when widowed. But their stories were faintly heard after they married, for they were often not producing goods and services in sectors that were, or would be, part of GNP. I recall the precise moment when I switched my attention to the evolution of the female labour force.”

No one can deny Goldin’s exemplary career and contributions to the field. With individual finesse and creativity, building on historic data and economic approaches, her work continues to unveil crucial determinants for gender disparities in the labour market. In her acceptance speech, Goldin said “Women are now at the center of the world’s economies...(they are also) at the center of the world’s economies because they are the vast majority of college students in every OECD nation. Because of the hidden care work they do all the world over. And also, because they largely determine the birth rate.”

Claudia Goldin’s win is long overdue. [In her interview with PBS](#), Goldin reported that she had received “hundreds and hundreds of emails” that said, that upon learning of her award, people had cried or wanted to hug her. Reading these emails gave her the sense that this wasn’t just her prize, but that it was a prize for women in general and for that she was very pleased.

## **Cross-country Conversations**

Looking for an informal place to reconnect with (or meet) fellow economists across the country? The CEA/CEDC/CWEC/CFEC Mentoring Sub-Committee is once again hosting a set of Canada-wide online discussions. Join us on the first Wednesday of the month in April/May at 8PM EST. For each session, we have a topic chosen just to get things rolling, but feel free to drop in for a chat regardless of whether the topic is up your alley. We’re holding these on kumospace (link below).

### **April 3: Grant Writing**

New elements keep showing up in SSHRC and other grants – most recently, EDI and knowledge mobilization have both taken on a bigger role. This is an opportunity to share ideas and tips for success on those (or any other) aspect of grant-writing.

### **May 1: Challenges of AI in the classroom**

ChatGPT and other LLMs may be both a blessing and a curse for teaching. This is an opportunity for us to share our experiences on the front lines.

No need to register. To join in, just grab your preferred beverage or snacks and then click here at the scheduled time/date: <https://www.kumospace.com/winter-2024-cross-co?inviteSource=modal&roomId=t0VjACWfuUVcwr0li5wu>



## **CWEC/CFEC Luncheon Speaker, June 1<sup>st</sup> 2024**

**Nina Banks (Bucknell University)** is the 2024 CWEC/CFEC Luncheon Speaker on Saturday, June 1, 2024 at TMU in Toronto. Don’t forget to order a ticket when you register for the [58<sup>th</sup> annual meetings of the CEA](#).

## Interview with Brenda Eaton

by E. Gugl



*Brenda Eaton*

*Brenda Eaton holds a Master's Degree in Economics from the University of Victoria. Brenda has held various senior positions in provincial government and was the CFO of a health authority. She has vast experience as a certified director on several boards of public, private, and not-for-profit organizations. Brenda received several recognition awards including the Queen's Jubilee Award for community contribution, is one of the University of Victoria's Distinguished Alumni and WXN's 100 Most Powerful Women in Canada.*

### **Can you tell us how you found your way into Economics?**

As a high school student, I was interested in all sorts of subjects. Economics seemed to cover a lot of territory and it was topical. The newspapers were full of articles about industrial policy, trade issues, monopolies and oligopolies. Monetary policy, too, although I didn't really know what that was at the time. Economics seemed important, relevant, and challenging. I could also write my first year exam based as much on what I read in the newspaper as on my study work. As a young student, that was a big bonus.

### **After graduating with an MA in economics, you worked for the provincial government in several different positions. How much did you draw on your Economics degree in your various positions?**

In my first few positions in the provincial government, it was all economics. I chose to go to government because it was one of the few career paths where I would actually practice economics, as opposed to banking or finance, for example. My first job was writing the annual edition of a book called the Financial and Economic Review, which gave me broad exposure to the entirety of the BC economic and financial situation. Invaluable for future career prospects. My second job was to turn the economic forecast into a fiscal forecast. For example, if the economic situation evolved as forecast by my colleagues, what would that mean for provincial revenue and expenditure in the short term, but more importantly, in the longer term. That meant assessing the likelihood of structural surpluses or deficits, which in turn would drive tax and expenditure decisions.

After a few years, I moved into the financial world, as many economists do. This meant: managing the province's cashflow; issuing bonds for borrowing; and investing cash, retained earnings and pension holdings in a variety of financial instruments. This had the added career advantage of requiring me to look outward into the broader economy, both domestically and internationally, while most provincial government departments tend to be focused on the province. What a gift that was to me.

My career then evolved into more senior positions as deputy minister of finance, treasury board, social services, and energy. One of the great advantages of working in government is the many career opportunities that are available in so many fields.

After a fascinating stint as CFO at a health authority, I went back to the provincial government as deputy minister to the premier. What an interesting position that is – where the public servant profession meets the political world.

**From your impressive career in the provincial government, what do you think are the key problems in translating academic work in Economics and other disciplines into policy? Are there academic disciplines that are better in getting their policy recommendations across than Economics? If so, what do you think is their advantage?**

Academic policy work, especially economics, is often done within a narrow slice of reality. All things being equal. Rational expectations. Complete information. Non-biased thinking. This makes sense in studying economic theory. However, government does not operate in this world. In reality, there are many competing factors. Other policy options. Competing priorities. Geographic inequities in policy application. Communication. Special interest groups. Implementation challenges. To name only a few. Other academic disciplines also struggle with making their voices heard on policy options. It is up to us in part to figure out how to make our suggestions heard, learn to be practical about our policy suggestions, and realize that government is trying as hard as any other part of society to sort out the world's thorniest challenges.

But all is not lost. There are many examples of economic policy playing an important role; two that come immediately to mind are carbon pricing and economic regulation.

**You have a vast experience as a member of the boards of private, public and not-for-profit organizations. How do you become a board member?**

This is such an interesting question because there is no one way to get an opportunity to participate on a board. First and foremost, have a skill that the organization is searching for, given their needs at the time. Most are also looking for breadth of leadership experience, as well as governance experience on a board of similar size where you have shown yourself to pull your weight. Many corporate boards use recruitment firms to locate the talent they are looking for, so having a board-focused resume and being known to recruitment firms is a must. And of course, there are corporate director certification programs, as well as networks -- as there are in most professions.

I have found being a board member one of the most interesting and fulfilling opportunities in my career.

**Can you tell us a bit about the work you do and how your background in Economics helps inform the positions you take on these boards?**

My background in economics contributed to my board work in part by the opportunities it gave me to work in a variety of sectors and roles – from policy analyst to executive leadership to board work. My economics background leads me to take a broad perspective on most issues. And perhaps more importantly, to think several steps ahead, as well as contemplate unintended consequences. These are characteristics that are relevant whether the board is private, public, or not for profit. After all, most organizations need a strategic direction, a talent management focus, financial wherewithal, revenue sources, information management plans, and stakeholder relations -- no matter what type of organization it is.

**Have you faced situations as a woman economist that seemed to be specific to your gender? If so, would you mind sharing one of these incidents with us?**

Even though in my early career I might have been the only woman in a room of 30 people I do not recall any specific incidents of gender discrimination. Although all my bosses in my entire career were male, I was treated the same as all the others in my circle.

But I do recall a boss' boss telling me that I was proof positive that women can get ahead as well as men. I told him that was unfair to women, because one person does not paint a picture of the entire gender. I had no children, worked long hours, and had an incredibly supportive (and retired) spouse, which allowed me to put my career at the centre of our world. This is not the case for so many women. It might be possible to have it all, as some women say, but in my opinion, it's not possible to have it all, all at once. We women need to help employers appreciate this -- in much more than a superficial way.

**Would you mind sharing any advice you have for women economists in Canada?**

Economics is an incredible field. It opens so many doors, but open doors are only helpful to our careers if we choose to walk through them. I hope we can see economics as the broad field it is, appreciate the value it gives to us, use curiosity to expand our horizons and take some risks in order to advance our experience and careers.

***Thank you so much, Brenda!***





Join us virtually for CWEC/CFEC's  
International Women's Day lecture

## Nava Ashraf

Professor of Economics  
at the London School of Economics  
and Political Science (LSE)



### *Inspire Inclusion*

March 8, 2024

11am PT/12pm MT/1pm CT/2pm ET/3pm AT

Nava Ashraf's research combines psychology and economics, using both lab and field experiments to test insights from behavioural economics in the context of global development in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. She also conducts research on questions of intra-household decision making and gender norms in the areas of finance, fertility, and labor force participation. Her papers are published in leading journals including the *American Economic Review*, the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* and the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. Her field experiments on health services delivery and educational investment have been carried out jointly with the Ministries of Health and Education in Zambia, using a model of co-generation of knowledge, reaching national and global scale.

**Join us via zoom:**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81831575916?pwd=B1ZMcffjuYaR8iGj2anPg34SOAIRM.1>

Meeting ID: 818 3157 5916

Passcode: 060815

## Research Highlights

The Canadian Women Economist Committee (CWEC/CFÉC) is hosting a brownbag series this winter 2024. It is held on the last Monday of every month from January 2024 to April 2024 (10 AM PT/11 AM MT/12 PM CT/1 PM ET/2 PM AT).



### Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88180522236?pwd=Tp9lMZ0KglMbUJYyHx4GOghsfEmz51.1>

Meeting ID: 881 8052 2236

Passcode: 149515

Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/u/kSCLFBY2c>

## Upcoming Talks:

### March 25, 2024

Sara Wray Enns (University of Victoria)

*Title:* The effects of labour demand shocks on participation in the traditional economy

Renfang Tian (King's University College at Western University)

*Title:* Neural Network Empowered Two-stage Regression

### April 29, 2024

Yixuan Li (MacEwan University)

*Title:* Stochastic Discount Factors in Incomplete Markets

Yiwen Victoria Wang (The University of Winnipeg)

*Title:* Crude Oil, Sovereign Wealth Funds, and Global Equilibrium Real Interest Rates

## Past Presenters:

### Gillian Petit (University of Calgary)

#### **A Basic Income for Nunavut: Addressing Poverty in Canada's North**

[Using individual-level tax filing data, we simulate basic income designs for Nunavut.](#) We identify basic incomes that are feasible—within Nunavut's budget—and optimal—deliver the greatest poverty reduction for the lowest cost. We find that Nunavut could implement a small basic income using “savings” from the elimination of Nunavut tax credits and Income Assistance. Given the low tax base in Nunavut, a more generous basic income would require federal funding. We also discuss the ability of a basic income to address poverty, conceptualized through the lens of Inuit well-being, and within the context of Nunavut. While the identified basic incomes can mitigate some concerns, such as food insecurity, they are not sufficient to eliminate these concerns. A basic income should also not jeopardize the provision of important programs such as housing. Priorities such as community, relationships, culture, kinship, and healing may not be met by a basic income.



**Ardyn Nordstrom (Carleton University)**

## **It Takes a Village: The Impact of Community Mobilization Campaigns on Attitudes and Education**

[This paper](#) uses a quasi-randomized field experiment in Zimbabwe to assess the impact of large-scale community mobilization campaigns to build support for girls and marginalized groups in rural communities. I analyze the impact that the program has had on attitudes, the behaviour of teachers and caregivers, and the learning and progression outcomes of at-risk youth. The quantitative survey and learning assessment data I use for this is complemented by transcripts from focus groups and interviews, which I analyze using innovative text mining methods to measure changes in community sentiment towards marginalized groups. I find that the program improved community attitudes toward girls' education by 0.560 SD over the three and a half year project. This contributed to a 20.9 percentage point increase in the likelihood that students in the treatment group reported receiving enough support from their community to continue learning during COVID-19 school closures, along with other changes in the behaviours of community members and families. The program facilitated better learning and progression outcomes, with marginalized students performing 0.28 SD better on learning assessments after the project. These findings lead to two important conclusions about the efficacy of interventions designed to mobilize communities to reshape community attitudes and support marginalized students. The first is that community attitudes can be influenced in a relatively short time to become more supportive towards marginalized groups. The second is that these interventions can support education outcomes. This paper also demonstrates the usefulness of qualitative methods and text mining techniques for future experimental work.

**Kareman Yassin (University of Ottawa)**

## **Peer Effects in Residential Energy Consumption**

[This paper](#) examines the spatial peer effects generated by Canada's largest home energy efficiency retrofit program and its impact on energy consumption within a city in the Prairie provinces. Utilizing a decade of monthly data on energy consumption, tax assessments, program participation, and house audits in the city, I demonstrate that neighbors in close proximity to energy-efficiency retrofitted homes reduce their monthly natural gas and electricity consumption by an average of 2.4% and 1% respectively. Similar results are obtained when using three different comparison groups. Notably, visible retrofits such as windows, doors, and exterior wall insulation have a three-and-a-half times stronger impact on peer energy savings compared to less visible retrofits like natural gas furnace upgrades. Additionally, the effect diminishes as the distance to neighbors increases.

**Doriane Intungane (MacEwan University)**

## **Macroprudential Policies and Global Banking**

This paper examines the ability of macroprudential policies to dampen the pro-cyclicality of credit market cycles and to enhance the macroeconomic stability in countries open to cross-border banking activities. For the analysis, we developed a two-country dynamic stochastic general equilibrium model with collateral constrained investors and global banks. The existence of cross-border lending activities is the source of transmission of shocks across countries. The macroprudential policies analyzed are loan-to-value ratios and capital requirements, also known as the capital adequacy ratio, which are formulated as Taylor-type rules. Our results show that the effectiveness of capital requirement financial regulations is undermined if borrowers can increase credit from foreign banks originating from a country with more

relaxed financial restrictions. When cross-border lending is permitted, national financial regulators can improve the financial stability of credit growth and management of credit by complementing the capital adequacy ratios with loan-to-value ratios.

**Dana Ghandour (Concordia University)**

### **Harmonizing Environmental and Trade Policies: The Impacts of Environmental Damage Heterogeneity in an Endogenous Framework**

Addressing environmental damage heterogeneity, this paper uses a three-country static model of environmental cooperation with trade to analyze the feasibility and stability of partial and global International Environmental Agreements (IEAs) among heterogeneous countries. Strong incentives to free ride and difficulties in enforcing international environmental agreements make international cooperation a challenging task. With international trade, governments face the tradeoff of higher taxes to cooperatively reduce emissions or higher tariffs on exports when acting non cooperatively. Diamantoudi et al. (2018a) found that stable coalitions among homogeneous countries are larger and provide more significant welfare gains than the basic model without trade. The paper's objectives, therefore, are: (i) to determine whether environmental cooperation among countries with different environmental damage parameters provides environmental gains, overall welfare gains, or both, (ii) to identify which cooperative scenarios will emerge in a stable environmental coalition to exploit these gains, and (iii) to capture the effect of heterogeneity in environmental damages on the stability and success of such environmental coalitions.

The model assumes that each country has a single firm producing an emission-intensive homogeneous good, which results in an equal number of transboundary emissions such as carbon dioxide. In stage one, each country chooses its coalition membership. A coalition is deemed stable if no firm has an incentive to either enter or exit the coalition (D'Aspremont et al. 1983). In stage two, each country determines the optimal emissions tax rate and import tariff that maximize the coalition's welfare. In stage three, each firm chooses non-cooperatively its production rate to maximize its own profits. Firms compete à la Cournot in a segmented market with positive endogenous import tariffs rather than in a free trade setting. The three-stage static coalition formation game is solved by backward induction.

The numerical simulation demonstrates that the grand coalition is stable at varying levels of environmental damage heterogeneity. When market sizes are sufficiently small, the grand coalition leads to both environmental and overall welfare gains. However, as market sizes grow sufficiently larger, the grand coalition only yields overall welfare gains. Consequently, this research provides evidence that the coordination of environmental and trade policies can be a valuable strategy to reduce global emissions in sufficiently small markets, even when countries exhibit heterogeneity in their environmental damages.

**Xiaowen Lei (University of Guelph)**

### **Oil price and Inequality**

This paper studies the effect of oil price changes on income and wealth inequality. Using data on macroeconomic aggregates, oil prices, and inequality metrics, we employ a structural vector autoregressive model and find that an increase in oil prices leads to a persistent and large increase in consumption, income and wealth inequality. To understand these dynamics, we solve an incomplete market model with aggregate oil price shocks, and calibrate the model to the US data. We find that when oil serves as both consumption goods and production input, positive oil price shocks affect inequality

through the relative price change of labor and capital, as well as changes in the marginal propensity to consume (MPC) channel. Our numerical results demonstrate that a one standard deviation shock to oil prices raises both income and wealth inequality. While the initial increase in inequality is primarily driven by changes in relative prices and MPC differences, the gradual recovery of capital returns and capital stock explains why inequality remains high.

**Ming Xu (Queen's University)**

**Wage Setting Passthrough: The Role of Market Power, Production Technology and Adjustment Costs**

[We develop a dynamic model of firms and wage setting in imperfect labor markets](#) and show that markdowns, and thus the link between firm productivity and wages (passthrough), depend on firm-specific labor supply elasticities, production technology, and adjustment costs. Our framework allows us to recover the full distribution of firm-level productivity, wage markdowns, passthrough and labor supply elasticities, controlling for unobserved worker heterogeneity. Using administrative data from Denmark, we find that on average, firms respond to a 1% increase in idiosyncratic productivity by lowering (widening) markdowns by 1.7% and increasing marginal productivity by 2.1%, leading to a 0.4% increase in wages. Aggregate shocks have full passthrough to wages and do not affect markdowns. Firms hoard labor and raise wages in response to adjustment costs and uncertainty about future productivity, reducing passthrough to wages. Labor market power also reduces passthrough, with large firms having one fifth of the passthrough of smaller firms. Both market imperfections combined decrease the labor income volatility arising from firm risk by 77%.

## Congratulations!

Congratulations to Dr. Tracy Snoddon, who was awarded [Wilfrid Laurier University's Donald F. Morgenson Award for Sustained Teaching Excellence](#) in 2023.

We would like to celebrate Women Economists' achievements. Please let us know if you received an award or if you know of somebody who did. Submissions should be sent to [egugl@uvic.ca](mailto:egugl@uvic.ca).

