

Author Ordering Statement

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The overwhelming convention in academic economics is to list paper authors in alphabetical order. By now there is a substantial amount of suggestive evidence that this practice leads to authors with alphabetically earlier names receiving disproportionate credit and harms those with later names, and that there are distortionary effects on the research activities of those with later names [2, 1, 4].

Although there are certainly other, much more pernicious biases affecting this profession [3], I bring up alphabetical discrimination because it has an especially easy solution: use public randomization to determine author order. (The other commonly discussed alternative is to order by significance of contribution, but this risks creating disputes, in a way that randomization would not.)

Since 2012, I am doing my small part to combat this bias, by requesting prospective co-authors to randomize order, and to add a footnote to joint work explaining the randomization. (I believe my own location in the alphabet puts me in a position to make this request without suspicion of self-interest.) Of course, randomization can sometimes lead back to alphabetical order as a result. Although most of my work has been sole-authored, I have consistently followed the same principle in sole-authored work by randomizing order of acknowledgments.

Most others I have talked to find this randomization request reasonable, but I have been surprised to find that some authors object strongly. A likely consequence is that I will produce some non-randomized work in the future. Accordingly, I am posting this statement publicly now, to make clear that my own position is consistent.

References

- [1] Georgios Efthymou (2008), “Alphabet Economics: The Link Between Names and Reputation,” *Journal of Socio-Economics* 37 (3), 1266–1285.
- [2] Liran Einav and Leeat Yariv (2006), “What’s in a Surname? The Effects of Surname Initials on Academic Success,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20 (1), 175–188.
- [3] Heather Sarsons (2015), “Gender Differences in Recognition for Group Work,” unpublished paper, Harvard University.
- [4] C. Mirjam van Praag and Bernard M.S. van Praag (2008), “The Benefits of Being Economics Professor A (rather than Z),” *Economica* 75 (300), 782–796.