



Crisis and Uncertainty: Did the Great Recession Reduce the Diversity of New Faculty?

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Abstract: The demographic composition of the U.S. professoriate affects student composition and, thus, the pipeline for professional and managerial jobs. Amid concern about the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the labor market, much remains unknown about how economic downturns affect faculty hiring and the demographic makeup of hires. We examine the effects of the Great Recession on faculty hiring. That crisis walloped the U.S. academic labor market. Tenure-track hires in four-year colleges and universities declined by 25 percent between 2007 and 2009, recovering slowly through 2015. Hires of black, Hispanic, and Asian American faculty declined disproportionately. Public institutions and research-oriented institutions, which faced the greatest resource challenges and uncertainty about the future, made the biggest cuts in the hiring of people of color. Our findings suggest that financial uncertainty led to a reversal in progress on faculty diversity. Faculty and administrators making hiring decisions in the years following the COVID-19 crisis should be aware of this pattern.

Keywords: recession; faculty hiring; workforce diversity; economic crisis; STEM

THE economic recession that began in December of 2007 saw the worst economic decline since the Great Depression. National unemployment peaked at 10.6 percent, and faculty furloughs, layoffs, and hiring freezes were widespread in U.S. colleges and universities (Carpenter 2009). We examine trends in the hiring of tenure-track faculty by race, ethnicity, and gender before, during, and after the Great Recession. Labor market research has shown that women and nonwhites are more likely to lose jobs and less likely to be hired in bad economic times. Do crises harm women and people of color in academic jobs as well? Understanding the effects of crises on the demographic makeup of new faculty is especially important in the present moment (Maas et al. 2020). Although the national movement for racial justice has flourished in the past year, the COVID-19 crisis has brought a sharp national rise in unemployment that has hit people of color hard.

We analyze trends in the hiring of tenure-track faculty between 1999 and 2015 using a population survey of four-year colleges and universities. We examine hiring across public and private institutions and across research- and teaching-oriented institutions. We find that reductions in faculty hiring precipitated by the Great Recession continued long after financial markets rebounded. We find that hiring of faculty of color declined disproportionately. And we find important differences across types of institutions that help us to understand the reductions in new faculty diversity.

What kinds of institutions made the largest cuts? We expect that declines in tenure-track hires were greater in public than in private institutions due to greater

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resource constraints and uncertainty. Public institutions had to cope with declining state appropriations, state and city hiring freezes, and university system hiring freezes. Total state appropriations to higher education declined by 17 percent between 2007 and 2011 (Danziger, Barr, and Turner 2013:181), in part because state constitutions prohibit deficit funding. As tax revenues slowly rebounded, states restored funding first to essential services and only later to higher education (Danziger et al. 2013). State spending on higher education continued to decline through 2013 and has not yet returned to 2008 levels (Murakami 2020). The federal government provided higher education support to states in 2010, but the boost was short-lived (Johnson, Oliff, and Williams 2011). Tuition increases, moreover, fell far short of replacing losses in state funding (Mitchell et al. 2018).

Private colleges and universities fared better. Tuition covers a greater proportion of costs there, and enrollment rose in many schools. Although endowment returns for elite private universities declined 23 percent (Zezima 2009), many schools had been spending less from their endowments than the law permitted (Conti-Brown 2011:719) and thus could increase endowment payouts. Equities markets, which account for the lion's share of endowment income, recovered by April of 2012. The crisis in public institutions was thus more pronounced than that in private institutions, and uncertainty about the future was greater.

We expect that declines in tenure-track hires were also greater in research-oriented than in teaching-oriented institutions. Research-oriented institutions are more dependent on government and foundation research grants (Snyder and Dillow 2013). Although stimulus money briefly boosted federal grant funding, fiscal austerity followed. Foundations cut grant funding significantly after 2007 as a result of endowment losses (Dietz et al. 2015). Thus, the crisis in research-oriented schools was more pronounced than that in teaching-oriented schools, and uncertainty about the future was greater there.

How do crises affect employer decisions about whom to hire and fire? We suggest that universities facing crisis will be less likely to hire people of color and women because uncertainty can activate stereotypes and network-based hiring and may lead to the deprioritization of marginalized departments. In the face of uncertainty, employers rely more on stereotypes about competence when hiring (Bianchi, Hall, and Lee 2018:1585; Sirola 2020:456), and banks rely more on stereotypes about competence when lending (Thébaud and Sharkey 2016). Colleges and universities may rely more on stereotypes about productivity when hiring faculty (Stewart and Valian 2018). When uncertainty is high, moreover, employers are more likely to rely on (majority-white) networks to identify candidates (Reskin and McBrier 2000; Roscigno and Wilson 2014; Tomaskovic-Devey and Avent-Holt 2019). Finally, when uncertainty is high, employers may be more likely to close marginalized units (staff rather than line functions, in corporations) with the most diverse workers (Kalev 2014). We expect that all three mechanisms operate in the academy.

The results of the effects of uncertainty have been seen in the wider economy. Downturns and financial uncertainty lead employers and evaluators to favor whites and men (Kalev 2014; Thébaud and Sharkey 2016). Thus during the Great Recession black and Hispanic unemployment rates rose disproportionately (Hoynes, Miller, and Schaller 2012). Asian Americans fared better than blacks and Hispanics, but

prejudice against Asian Americans rose significantly (Butz and Yogeewaran 2011), and highly educated Asian Americans were more likely to lose their jobs than similar whites (Kim 2012). The odds of losing a job increased disproportionately for blacks and Hispanics, and for blacks the odds of getting a new job also declined disproportionately (Couch, Fairlie, and Xu 2018; Yu and Sun 2019). Although the Great Recession hit male-dominated industries hardest, women who lost their jobs accepted poorer replacement jobs than men and took bigger pay cuts (Cha 2014; Hoynes et al. 2012). During the Great Recession, then, employers in the wider economy appear to have become more likely to favor whites and men.

We make two predictions. First, although all schools were affected by the Great Recession, public and research-oriented schools faced greater immediate crises and greater uncertainty about the future. We expect that they reduced total faculty hiring more than private and teaching-oriented schools. Second, due to greater uncertainty, public and research-oriented schools were also more likely to reduce the diversity of new faculty than were private and teaching-oriented schools.

Data and Methods

We use data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. For every odd year, all higher education institutions that receive or apply for student aid grants are required to submit reports to the Department of Education covering student and employee demographics and other institutional characteristics. Data from these reports are available on the National Center for Educational Statistics website (<https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds>). From 1999 through 2015, the reports included consistent demographic information on new tenure-track hires, collected for the same reporting period each year. Below, we discuss the data and methods we use briefly, and we provide full detail in an online supplement.

We begin by plotting the number of hires made each year by public and private schools and by schools in three Carnegie groups: “very high research activity” doctorate (R1), “high research activity” doctorate and master’s (R2/MA), and baccalaureate (BA).

We then plot faculty hiring patterns by race, ethnicity, and gender across public and private institutions and present results from multivariate analyses of hiring by public versus private institutions before, during, and after the Great Recession. Finally, we plot faculty hiring patterns by gender, race, and ethnicity across R1, R2/MA, and BA institutions and present results from multivariate analyses of hiring by Carnegie classification over time.

In the plots, we examine all 1,349 public and private, nonprofit institutions that offer baccalaureate and higher degrees in the United States. Some institutions were excluded from the regression analyses because the models require that we observe at least two years of data, with at least one hire, for each institution. Due to mergers and closures, we observe some schools in only one year. Others did not hire more than once in the nine years we observe because they have few or no tenure-track faculty. We are left with 1,170 institutions in the multivariate analyses.

In the regression analyses, we estimate year spline models predicting the share (log odds) of each group among tenure-track hires by institution-year. We estimate

annual change rates, from the biennial data, for each of three periods: pre-recession (1999 to 2007), recession (2007 to 2011), and post-recession (2011 to 2015). We control for institutional revenues, total tenure-track hires, and total tenure-line faculty, and we include fixed effects for each institution to net out unobserved heterogeneities. We cluster standard errors by institution.

In the online supplement, we present results from additional analyses that examine the robustness of our main findings to alternative measures and model specifications. In these analyses we examine a three-way interaction between period, institutional control, and Carnegie classification. We then examine three different hinge locations of the year spline function and three different outcome measures, and we use a count model to predict the number of faculty hires from each group. The results of all these tests are consistent with the main analysis. We then move to examine whether there was a disproportionate decline in the scholars of color who looked for faculty jobs during the economic crisis (Reskin 1993), which may provide an alternative explanation to our results. Using the Survey of Earned Doctorates, an annual census of new doctorates from U.S. institutions, we plot trends in the number of new doctorates and their career destinations by gender, race, and ethnicity. We do not find evidence for such a decline. The online supplement provides detailed results of these additional analyses.

Results

The Contraction of Tenure-Track Hiring

Figure 1 presents biennial counts of tenure-track hires in public and private colleges and universities. The three dotted horizontal lines indicate pre-recession averages of the number of tenure-track hires in all institutions (top line), public institutions (middle line), and private institutions (bottom line). The dotted vertical line indicates the first observation after the start of the Great Recession in December of 2007.

Between 1999 and 2007, all tenure-track hires averaged 13,535 per year. Between 2007 and 2009, total hires declined 25 percent. Public institution hires declined 31 percent, whereas private institution hires declined 14 percent. Recovery was slow in both sectors. In the public sector, hiring was still down from 2007 by 11 percent in 2015. The hiring decline in the private sector remained virtually unchanged, down 15 percent in 2015. As expected, public institutions saw significantly larger decreases than private institutions, but neither sector fully rebounded during the period we observe.

Figure 2 presents counts of tenure-track hires in the three Carnegie classification groups, which capture the continuum from research to teaching intensity. In both “very high research activity” doctorate schools (R1) and “high research activity” doctorate plus master’s schools (R2/MA), tenure-track hiring declined between 2007 and 2009 by about 25 percent. In R1 schools, hiring bounced back relatively quickly; in 2015 it was off by only four percent from its 2007 level. In R2/MA schools, hiring was still down by 17 percent in 2015. In BA institutions hiring declined by 20 percent from 2007 to 2009 and remained down by about 18 percent

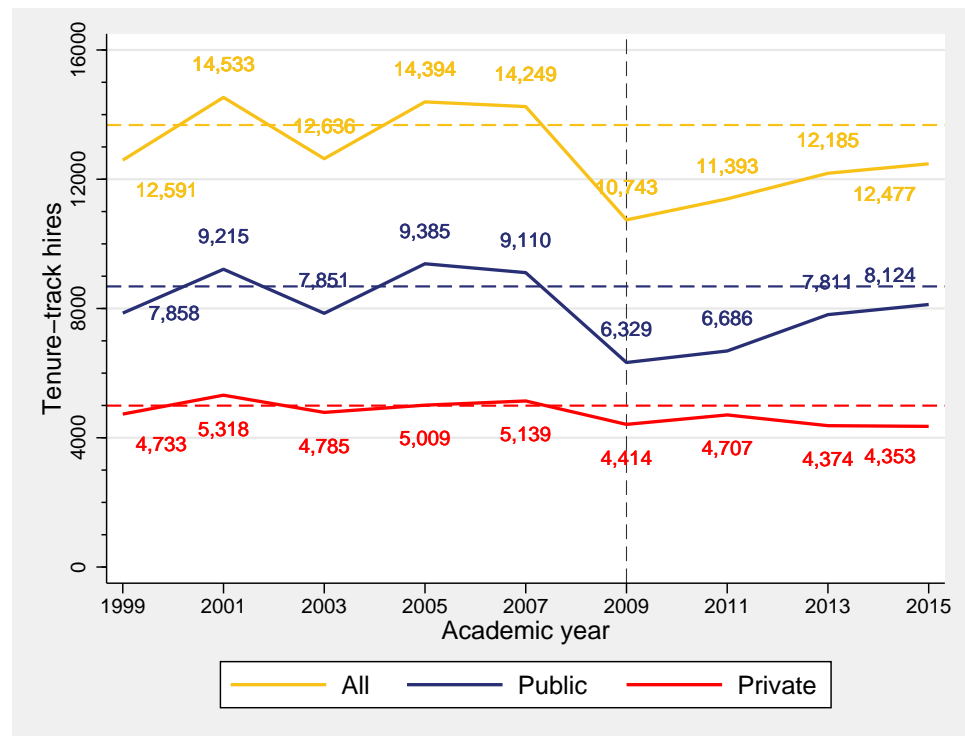


Figure 1: Tenure-track hires in public and private institutions. Dotted horizontal lines denote pre-recession (1999 to 2007) averages. Dotted vertical line denotes the year 2009, the first year that we see a contraction in new tenure-track hiring due to the Great Recession.

through 2015. As expected, research-oriented institutions (both R1 and R2/MA) saw the biggest declines when the recession hit.

Recession and New Faculty Diversity in Public and Private Institutions

Figure 3 presents total hires from each demographic group in public (blue) and private (red) schools. Dotted lines extend pre-recession trends, based on bivariate regressions, showing how many tenure-track hires there would have been if those trends had continued.

Figure 3 indicates that people of color were hit harder in public than in private institutions, as we predicted. Before the recession, in public institutions hiring of black, Hispanic, and Asian American men and women had been rising. Hires of white women were almost flat, and hires of white men had been declining. After 2007, hiring changed course sharply for people of color, especially for black men and women. If pre-recession trends had continued between 2007 and 2009, public institutions would have seen black men and women rise by three percent and five percent, respectively, and Hispanic men and women rise by four percent and six percent; instead black men and women declined by 45 percent and Hispanic

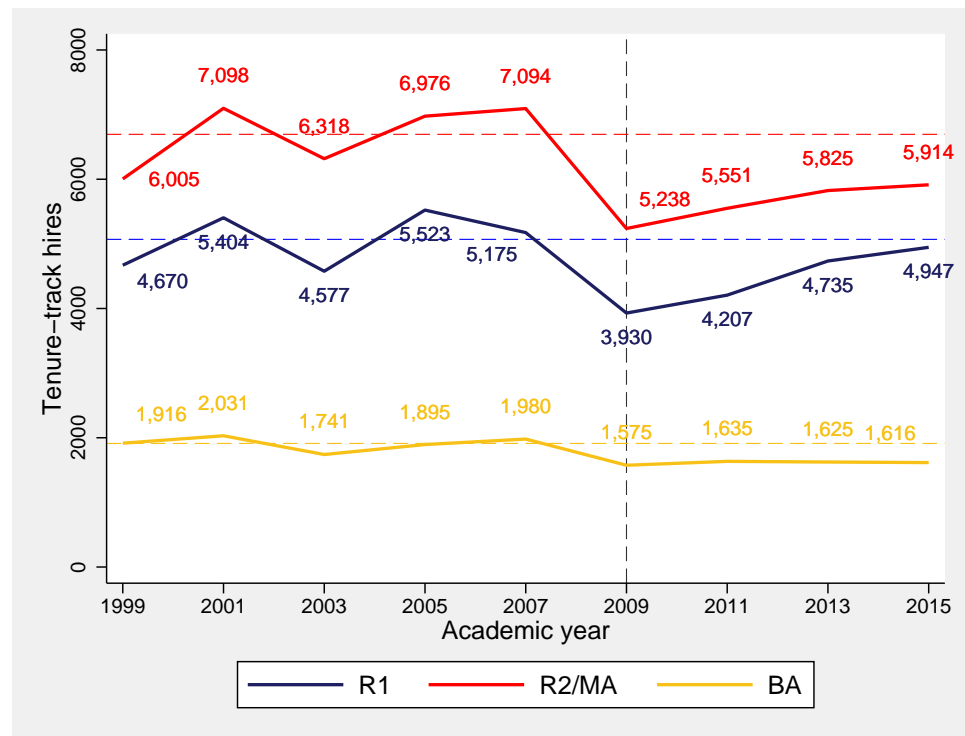


Figure 2: Tenure-track hires by Carnegie group. Dotted horizontal lines denote pre-recession (1999 to 2007) averages. Dotted vertical line denotes the year 2009, the first year that we see a contraction in new tenure-track hiring due to the Great Recession.

men and women declined by 35 percent. If trends had continued, Asian American women and men would have risen by 12 percent and seven percent; instead they declined by 23 percent and 35 percent, respectively. White women would have risen by one percent, and white men would have declined by three percent; instead both declined by about 31 percent.

In private institutions, recession declines were shallower. Before the recession, hires of black, Hispanic, and Asian American women and Asian American men were growing, whereas black and Hispanic men were declining. Between 2007 and 2009, black and Hispanic men continued to decline, whereas black and Hispanic women began to decline. The positive trend for Asian American men flattened, and the trend for Asian American women continued upward. The count data thus support our prediction that public institutions, which experienced larger financial cuts and greater uncertainty, saw bigger declines in the diversity of new faculty than private institutions.

Although Figure 3 shows annual hires in tenure-track jobs declining sharply for all groups in public institutions, it does not tell us how different groups fare relative to one another. Next, we use multivariate analyses of institution-level data to assess changes in hiring trends by group across public and private institutions. We take into account institutional revenues, total tenure-track hires, and total tenure-line faculty. We use spline regression models, with institution fixed effects, to calculate

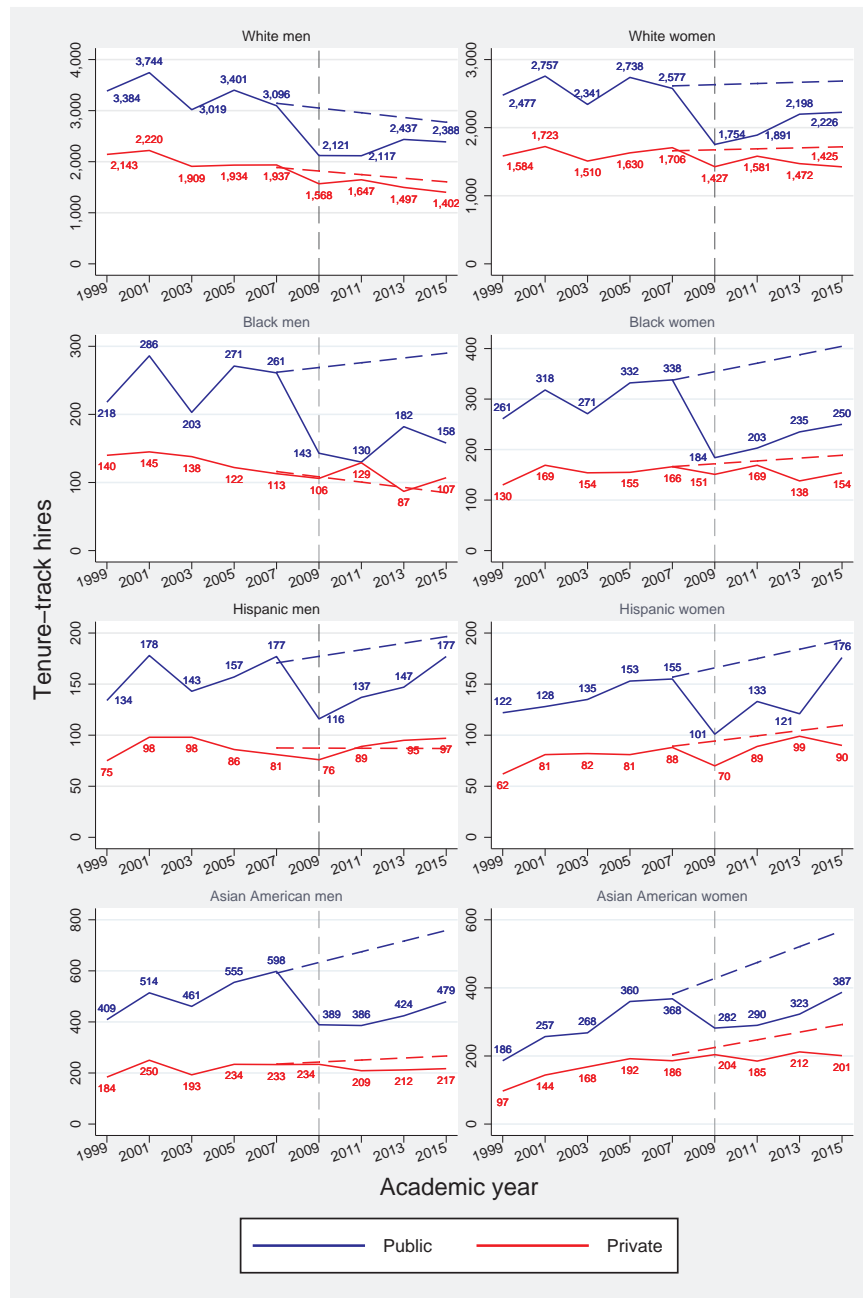


Figure 3: Tenure-track hires by demographic group in public and private institutions. Dotted lines extend pre-recession (1999 to 2015) trends based on bivariate regression estimates.

the annual rate of change in the share (odds) of white, black, Hispanic, and Asian American men and women among tenure-track hires, before (1999 to 2007), during (2007 to 2011), and after the recession (2011 to 2015). In Figure 4, we report the estimates for public and private institutions, based on analyses presented in Table S4 in the online supplement. Circles and triangles mark point estimates of the annual rate of change in hiring during the period, and vertical lines denote 95 percent confidence intervals. In Figure S1 in the online supplement we also report the estimates for all institutions, based on the baseline models presented in Table S3 in the online supplement.

Results confirm the pattern seen in Figure 3. Before the recession, in public and private schools alike, black and Hispanic men and women held their own as a proportion of new faculty and Asian American men and women were increasing. For blacks and Hispanics, in both public (top rectangle) and private (bottom rectangle) institutions, in the pre-recession period the point estimate for annual change in group share is at zero, or slightly positive. This indicates that the annual change in group representation was stable or slightly positive in the pre-recession years. For Asian Americans, in both public and private institutions pre-recession point estimates are above zero, indicating that the annual change in group representation among new tenure-track faculty was positive.

During the recession, in public institutions all six groups of people of color lost ground. We see this by comparing the point estimates within each rectangle for the pre-recession and recession periods. Private institutions saw very small changes in the share of jobs going to black and Hispanic men and women and saw pre-recession growth in Asian American men and women eliminated. By comparing change in point estimates between the top and bottom rectangles for each group, we see that hiring patterns changed much more dramatically in public than in private institutions for all six groups of people of color.

Next we translate the annual changes in log odds to percentage shifts. In public institutions, stable before the recession, black men's and women's share of hires declined at roughly 2.5 percent annually during the recession and increased at 0.8 percent and 1.9 percent after. The pattern for Hispanics is similar, with smaller swings. Hispanic men's and women's shares declined at 1.0 percent and 0.8 percent annually during the recession and increased at 1.4 percent and 1.6 percent after the recession. Growing before the recession, Asian American men and women saw the biggest recession period changes. Their shares, respectively, rose at 1.8 percent and 3.0 percent annually before the recession and declined at 3.9 percent and 1.9 percent during the recession. Both saw their shares rise again after the recession at an annual rate of 2.5 percent.

In private institutions, there was virtually no change for black men and Hispanic women. Hispanic men saw an annual increase of 0.4 percent during and 0.5 percent after the recession. Small annual pre-crisis increases were halted for black women and Asian American men. The biggest change was for Asian American women, whose pre-recession annual growth rate of 1.6 percent was wiped out when the recession hit.

Whites fared comparatively well. For white women in public institutions a 1.0 percent annual pre-recession decline in their share of hires was stopped by the

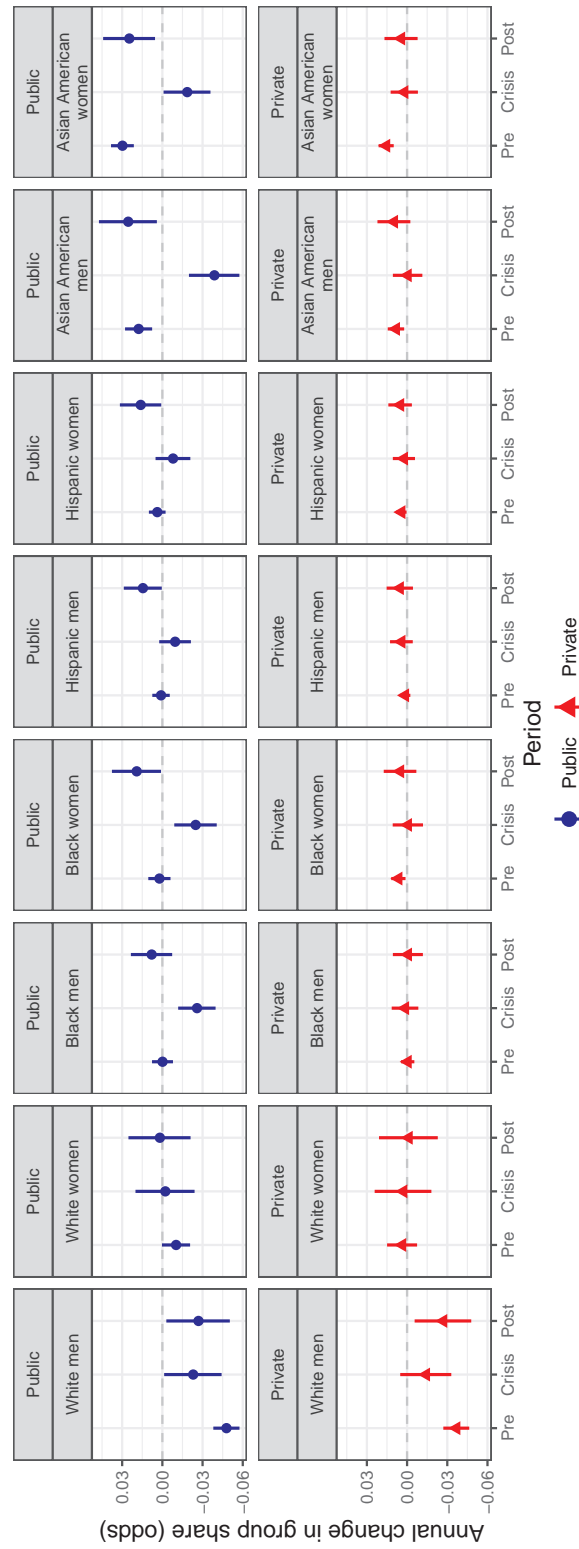


Figure 4: Predicted annual change in the share of each demographic group among tenure-track hires before (“Pre,” 1999 to 2007), during (“Crisis,” 2007 to 2011), and after (“Post,” 2011 to 2015) the Great Recession, in public and private institutions. Circles and triangles denote coefficients, and the vertical lines around them denote 95 percent confidence intervals.

recession and turned into a very small increase after the recession. In private institutions they grew at about 0.3 percent annually both before and during the recession, and then growth dropped to zero. For white men, significant pre-recession annual declines were attenuated during the crisis in both public and private institutions. In both, the annual declines grew in magnitude after the recession but remained smaller than they were before the recession.

These analyses suggest that public institutions reduced the proportion of tenure-track jobs going to black, Hispanic, and Asian American men and women during the Great Recession. In private institutions changes in hiring shares were modest. The proportion of jobs going to black men and Hispanic men and women changed little, but black women and Asian American men and women saw small positive pre-recession trends disappear. White men and women saw declining shares of new jobs in public institutions before the recession, and these declines attenuated during the recession. In private institutions white men saw a similar pattern, but hires of white women were not declining before the recession and remained stable during it. These findings support the patterns observed in Figure 3, which plotted the number of new faculty hired from each group. They also support our prediction that under uncertainty, academic institutions may favor whites and men.

Recession and New-Hire Diversity by Research and Teaching Intensity

Next we conduct parallel analyses to those presented in Figures 3 and 4, by research versus teaching intensity. We categorize schools in three groups: “very high research activity” doctorate institutions (R1), “high research activity” doctorate and master’s institutions (R2/MA), and teaching-oriented (BA) institutions. Figure 2, above, indicates that total tenure-track hires declined most sharply in R2/MA institutions, followed closely by R1 and then BA institutions. Figure 5 indicates that people of color saw the biggest numerical declines in hiring in R2/MA institutions, followed by R1 and BA institutions. But the spline models, which take into account changes in total revenues, hiring, faculty size, and institution fixed effects, show that the greatest proportional declines in the diversity of new tenure-track faculty were in R1 institutions, followed by R2/MA schools, with almost no change in BA institutions. The results are consistent with our theory that research-oriented schools faced greater uncertainty than teaching-oriented schools and thus were more likely to reduce hiring of women and people of color.

Figure 5 presents the number of tenure-track hires by demographic group for R1 (blue), R2/MA (red), and BA (yellow) schools. Dotted lines extend pre-recession trends based on bivariate regressions.

Before the Great Recession, all groups of people of color were gaining in all institution types, with two exceptions. Black men were flat everywhere, and Hispanic men were declining slightly in BA institutions. White women were gaining in R2/MA institutions and were flat in R1 and BA schools. White men were declining in all institution types.

R2/MA schools saw the largest numerical declines in the hiring of women and people of color after 2007 and the slowest recoveries. R1 schools saw smaller numer-

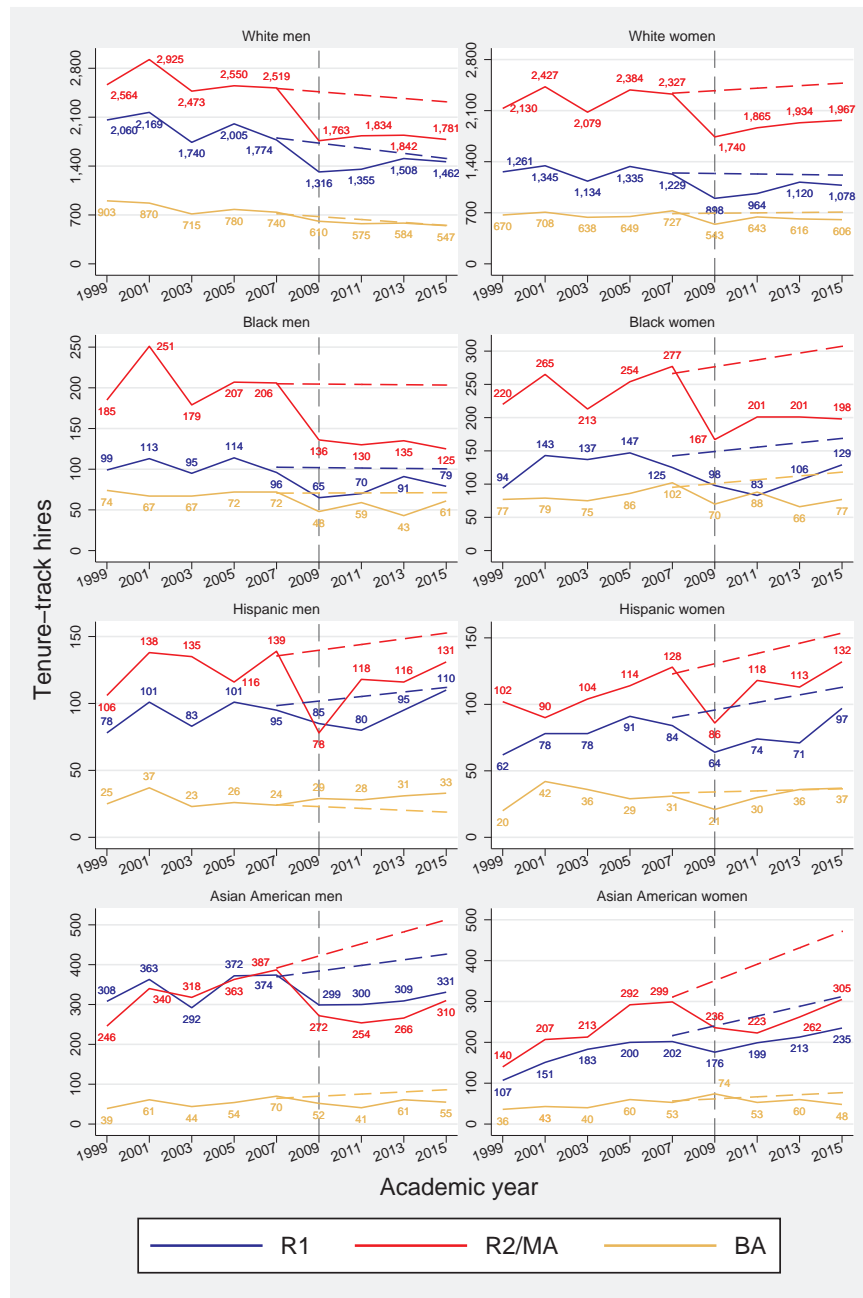


Figure 5: Tenure-track hires by demographic group and Carnegie group. Dotted lines extend pre-recession (1999 to 2015) trends based on bivariate regression estimates.

ical declines in new faculty from those groups, and teaching-oriented institutions (BA) saw the smallest declines. White women saw similar declines across institution types. After the recession, movement back toward pre-recession trends was slower in R2/MA institutions than in either R1 or BA institutions. With four exceptions, by 2015 hiring was not back to pre-recession trajectories. Only Hispanic men and women in BA institutions, and white men in BA and R1 institutions, were back on track, as indicated by the dotted lines.

As was the case in our comparison of public and private institutions, the raw numbers in Figure 5 tell us that in some institution types, all groups saw significant declines in new tenure-track positions. In this case, each group saw the biggest decline in R2/MA schools. But how did groups fare relative to one another? Figure 6 presents estimates of annual changes in the share of hires, by group, based on spline models similar to those used for Figure 4 (see Table S5 in the online supplement). R1 schools faced the biggest revenue losses and greatest uncertainty at the start of the Great Recession, due to their dependence on endowment returns, federal grants, and private foundation grants. That uncertainty appears to have adversely affected people of color. During the recession, all six minority groups—black, Hispanic, and Asian American men and women—saw the biggest proportional declines in hiring in R1 schools, where white women and men saw the biggest gains.

Before the recession, all minority groups but black men saw annual increases in their share of tenure-track faculty hires among R1 schools. Annual growth ranged from 0.5 to 0.9 percent for Hispanic men and women and black women to 1.4 percent for Asian American men and 4.3 percent for Asian American women. During the recession all groups of people of color saw declines in their share of hires. Black men declined at 2.5 percent annually, black women at 5.5 percent, Hispanic men and women at about two percent, Asian American men at 3.4 percent, and Asian American women at 0.3 percent. After the recession, all six groups saw annual growth, with black men rising at 0.7 percent, black women at 4.6 percent, Hispanic men and women at about three percent, Asian American men at 3.8 percent, and Asian American women at 2.5 percent.

Trend changes were smaller in R2/MA and BA schools. Asian American men and women saw the largest fluctuations. In R2/MA schools, the share of jobs going to Asian American men and women rose at 1.2 percent and 2.2 percent annually before the recession, fell at 2.0 percent and 1.5 percent during the recession, and then returned to pre-recession growth rates. In BA schools, Asian American men and women rose at 1.1 percent and 1.2 percent before the recession. During the recession, growth of Asian American men stopped, and the share of Asian American women declined slightly. After the recession, Asian American men rose at 0.8 percent, and Asian American women declined at 0.8 percent. Black men and women also saw small recession declines in R2/MA schools. Otherwise, minority shares in BA and R2/MA schools were almost unchanged.

Pre-recession declines in the share of whites slowed during the recession. White men's R1 share fell at six percent annually before, 1.5 percent during, and 2.9 percent after the recession. Their R2/MA share fell at four percent annually before and at 2.2 percent during and after the recession. Their BA share fell at 3.6 percent annually before, 0.5 percent during, and 2.9 percent after the recession. White women's share

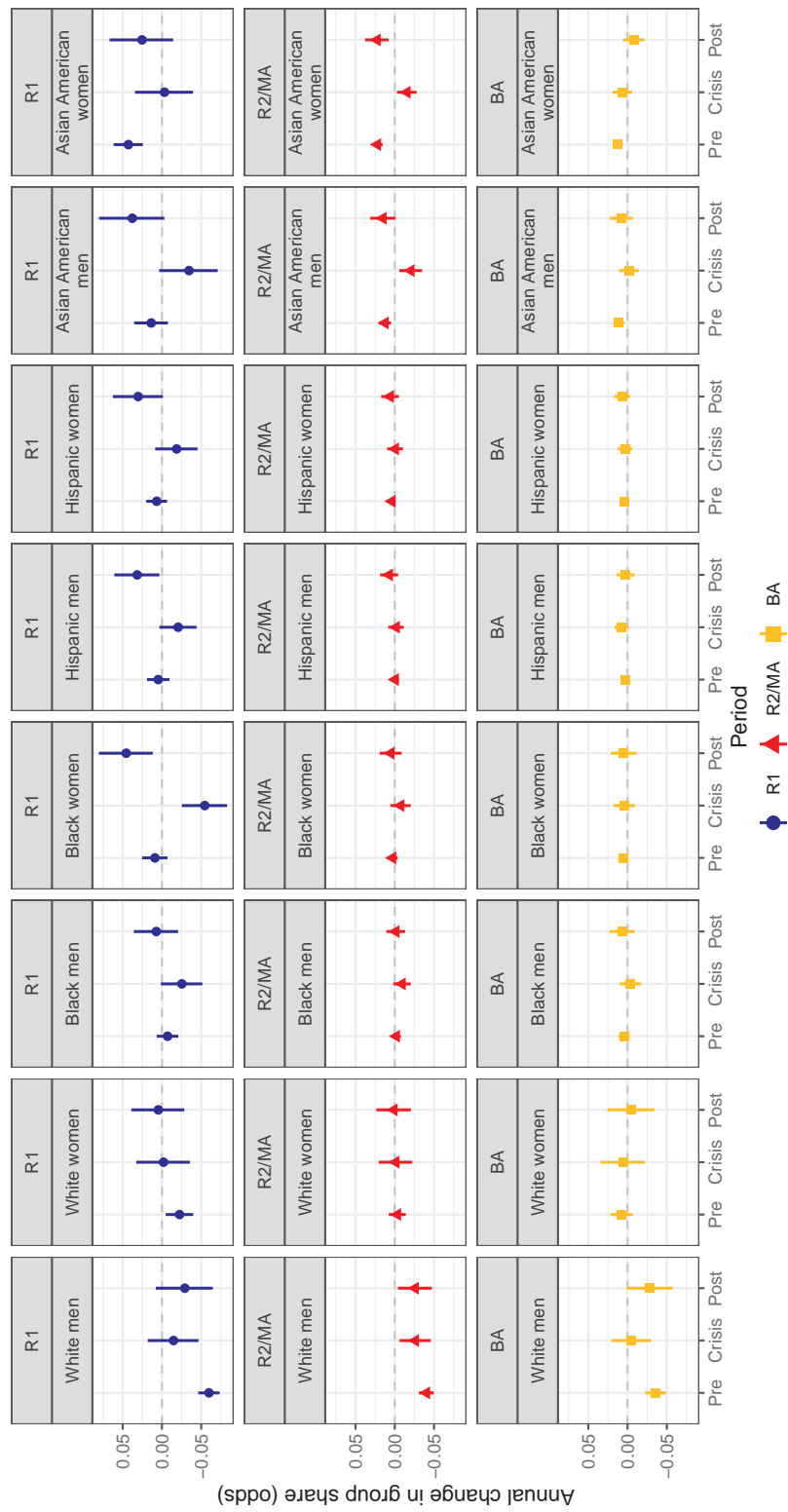


Figure 6: Predicted annual change in the share of each demographic group among tenure-track hires before (“Pre,” 1999 to 2007), during (“Crisis,” 2007 to 2011), and after (“Post,” 2011 to 2015) the Great Recession, by Carnegie group. Circles and triangles denote coefficients, and the vertical lines around them denote 95 percent confidence intervals.

was decreasing annually at 2.2 percent before the recession in R1 schools, and that decrease was wiped out during and after the crisis. Their share of jobs was flat in both BA and R2/MA schools before the recession and changed little.

In sum, the onset of the Great Recession brought the sharpest trend changes in R1 schools. Changes were positive for whites and negative for people of color. For people of color, recovery was also quickest in R1 schools. This pattern is consistent with our prediction that the recession induced the greatest financial uncertainty in research-oriented universities and that uncertainty is at the root of the decline in the hiring of women and people of color.

Discussion

The Great Recession reduced tenure-track hires made by U.S. colleges and universities by 25 percent. By 2015, hiring had not recovered. We have shown not only that cohorts shrank but also that the share of jobs going to people of color declined disproportionately. Why did diversity among new tenure-track faculty decline? Sociological theory and research connect uncertainty to in-group favoritism (DiTomaso 2013; Thébaud and Sharkey 2016). Studies show that during periods of financial uncertainty employers are more likely to lay off women and people of color and less likely to hire them.

Our findings of differences across school types suggest that financial uncertainty may affect diversity in faculty hiring as well. Public institutions and research-oriented institutions, which faced the greatest resource challenges and the greatest uncertainty about the future, cut overall hiring most and cut the share of people of color among new hires most. Uncertainty may have led faculties to rely more on (majority-white) academic networks to identify job candidates and to rely more on stereotypes about academic productivity when choosing new colleagues. Uncertainty may, as well, have led institutions to cut hiring for programs and departments deemed dispensable, in fields with more people of color.

The Great Recession turned back the clock on the trend toward diversifying the faculty. There were stark differences between racial groups. Within race and ethnic groups, the patterns by gender were broadly similar, which suggests that uncertainty shaped hiring patterns by race and ethnicity more than by gender. But two gender differences stand out. First, in R1 schools, black women fared significantly worse during the recession than black men. Second, white men were losing ground before the crisis. In the aggregate, only white men saw their pre-recession trend improve significantly during the recession.

Will the COVID-19 crisis have similar effects? On the one hand, like the Great Recession, it has occasioned a sharp decline in advertised jobs and hiring in the short run and expectations of reduced hiring for years to come to make up for COVID-19–related financial losses due to reduced enrollment, gearing up for online instruction, and virus mitigation (Bodin 2020; Woolston 2020). Uncertainty in the present moment may have similar effects to uncertainty after 2007. However, the COVID-19 recession may have very different effects on men and women due to childcare and school closures, virtual schooling, and the disproportionate impact of these changes on women in academia, due to the continuing gendered division of

household labor. Early findings from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that the national unemployment rate for women increased 2.9 percentage points more than that for men (Alon et al. 2020). In academia, women scholars have reported higher levels of stress from caregiving and insufficient time for research since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (Myers et al. 2020:19).

That hires of faculty of color declined during the Great Recession may have gone unnoticed by administrators struggling to keep the ship afloat. Provosts and deans facing the COVID-19 crisis should take note that institutions facing uncertainty may reduce new-hire diversity unwittingly. It may be that public and research-oriented institutions will again face the greatest uncertainty over the next few years and will again see the greatest declines in the diversity of new faculty. But the contours of the current crisis are different, and it is difficult to predict which schools will suffer most. Many teaching-oriented institutions, for instance, were facing uncertainty about the future before the COVID-19 crisis due to projections of sharp declines in cohort sizes, and they saw a steep drop-off in first-year enrollment in the fall of 2020 (Sedmak 2020). The contours of the current crisis are also different because police violence in communities of color and the heavy toll the pandemic has taken on those communities have fueled a revival of the Black Lives Matter movement. The movement may focus attention on the issue of faculty diversity. But if colleges and universities respond to the challenge as they have in the past, with diversity initiatives that do nothing to change hiring routines, crisis-induced uncertainty may again lead to reductions in the diversity of new faculty.

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