

Word Embeddings Quantify 100 Years of Gender and Ethnic Stereotypes

Nikhil Garg
Stanford University
nkgarg@stanford.edu

Londa Schiebinger
Stanford University
schieb@stanford.edu

Dan Jurafsky
Stanford University
jurafsky@stanford.edu

James Zou
Stanford University
jamesz@stanford.edu

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Abstract

Word embeddings use vectors to represent words such that the geometry between vectors captures semantic relationship between the words. In this paper, we develop a framework to demonstrate how the temporal dynamics of the embedding can be leveraged to quantify changes in stereotypes and attitudes toward women and ethnic minorities in the 20th and 21st centuries in the United States. We integrate word embeddings trained on 100 years of text data with the U.S. Census to show that changes in the embedding track closely with demographic and occupation shifts over time. The embedding captures global social shifts – e.g., the women’s movement in the 1960s and Asian immigration into the U.S – and also illuminates how specific adjectives and occupations became more closely associated with certain populations over time. Our framework for temporal analysis of word embedding opens up a powerful new intersection between machine learning and quantitative social science.

1 Introduction

The study of gender and ethnic stereotypes is an important topic across many disciplines. Language analysis is a standard tool used to discover, understand, and demonstrate such stereotypes (Hamilton and Troler, 1986; Basow, 1992; Wetherell and Potter, 1992; Holmes and Meyerhoff, 2008; Coates, 2015). Previous literature broadly establishes that language both reflects and perpetuates cultural stereotypes. However, such studies primarily leverage human surveys (Williams and Best, 1977, 1990), dictionary and qualitative analysis (Henley, 1989), or in-depth knowledge of different languages (Hellinger and Bussmann, 2001). These methods often require time-consuming and expensive manual analysis and may not easily scale across types of stereotypes, time periods, and languages. In this paper, we propose using word embeddings, a commonly used tool in Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Machine Learning, as a new framework to measure, quantify, and compare trends in language over time. As a specific case study, we apply this tool to study the temporal dynamics of gender and ethnic stereotypes in the 20th and 21st centuries in the U.S.

In word embedding models, each word in a given language is assigned to a high-dimensional vector such that the geometry of the vectors captures semantic relations between the words – e.g. vectors being closer together has been shown to correspond to more similar words (Collobert et al., 2011). These models are typically trained automatically on large corpora of text, such as the collections of Google News articles or all of Wikipedia, and are known to capture relationships not found through simple co-occurrence analysis. For example, the vector for *France* is close to vectors for *Austria* and *Italy*, and the vector for *XBox* is close to that of *PlayStation* (Collobert et al., 2011). Beyond nearby neighbors, embeddings can also capture more global relationships between words. The difference between *London* and *England* – obtained by simply subtracting these two vectors – is parallel to the vector difference between *Paris* and *France*. This patterns allows embeddings to capture analogy relationships, such as *London* to *England* is as *Paris* to *France*.

Recent works in machine learning demonstrate that word embeddings also capture common stereotypes, as these stereotypes are likely to be present, even if subtly, in the large corpora of training texts (Bolukbasi et al., 2016;

Caliskan, Bryson, and Narayanan, 2017; Zhao et al., 2017; van Miltenburg, 2016). For example, the vector for adjective *honorable* would be close to the vector for *man*, whereas the vector for *submissive* would be closer to *woman*. These stereotypes are automatically learned by the embedding algorithm, and could be problematic if the embedding is then used for sensitive applications such as search rankings, product recommendations, or translations. An important direction of research is on developing algorithms to debias the word embeddings (Bolukbasi et al., 2016).

In this paper, we take a new approach. We use the word embeddings as a quantitative lens through which to study historical trends – specifically trends in the gender and ethnic stereotypes in the 20th and 21st centuries in the United States. We develop a systematic framework and metrics to analyze word embeddings trained over 100 years of text corpora. We show that temporal dynamics of the word embedding capture changes in gender and ethnic stereotypes over time. In particular, we quantify how specific biases decrease over time while other stereotypes increase. Moreover, dynamics of the embedding strongly correlate with quantifiable changes in U.S. society, such as demographic and occupation shifts. For example, major transitions in the word embedding geometry reveals changes in the descriptions of genders and ethnic groups during the women’s movement in the 1960-70s and Asian American population growth in the 1960s and 1980s.

We validate our findings on external metrics and show that our results are robust to the different algorithms for training the word embeddings. Our new framework reveals and quantifies how stereotypes toward women and ethnic groups have evolved in the United States.

Our results demonstrate that word embeddings are a powerful lens through which we can systematically quantify common stereotypes and other historical trends. Embeddings thus provide an important new quantitative metric which complements existing (more qualitative) linguistic and sociological analyses of biases. In Section 2, we validate that embeddings accurately capture sociological trends by comparing associations in the embeddings with census and other externally verifiable data. In Sections 3 and 4 we apply the framework to quantify the change in stereotypes of women and ethnic minorities. We further discuss our findings in Section 5 and provide additional details on the method and data in Section 6.

2 Overview of the embedding framework and validations

In this section, we briefly describe our methods and data and then validate our findings. We focus on showing that word embeddings are an effective tool to study historical biases and stereotypes by relating measurements from these embeddings to historical census data. The consistent replication of such historical data, both in magnitude and in direction of biases, validate the use of embeddings in such work. This section extends the analysis of Bolukbasi et al. (2016) and Caliskan, Bryson, and Narayanan (2017) in showing that embeddings can also be used as a *comparative* tool over time as a consistent metric for various biases.

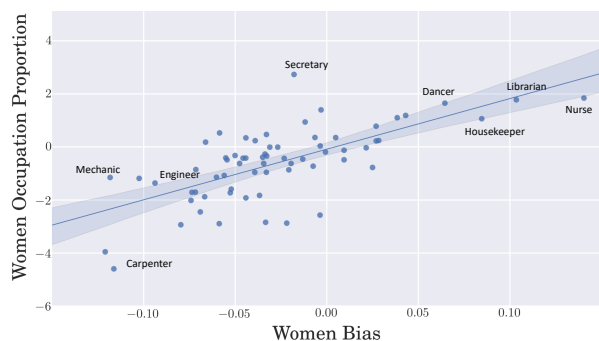
2.1 Summary of data and methods

We now briefly describe our datasets and methods, leaving details to Section 6 and in Appendix Section A.1. All of our code and embeddings are available publicly¹. For contemporary snapshot analysis, we use the standard *Google News word2vec Vectors* trained on the Google News Dataset (Mikolov et al., 2013a,b). For historical temporal analysis, we use previously trained *Google Books/COHA* embeddings, which is a set of 9 embeddings, each trained on a decade in the 1900s, using the Corpus of Historical American English and Google Books (Hamilton, Leskovec, and Jurafsky, 2016b). As additional validation, we train, using the GLoVe algorithm (Pennington, Socher, and Manning, 2014), embeddings from the *New York Times* Annotated Corpus (Sandhaus, 2008) for every year between 1988 and 2005. We then collate several word lists to represent each gender² (*men*, *women*) and ethnicity³ (*White*, *Asian*, and *Hispanic*), as well as *neutral* words (adjectives and occupations). For occupations, we use historical U.S. census data (Steven

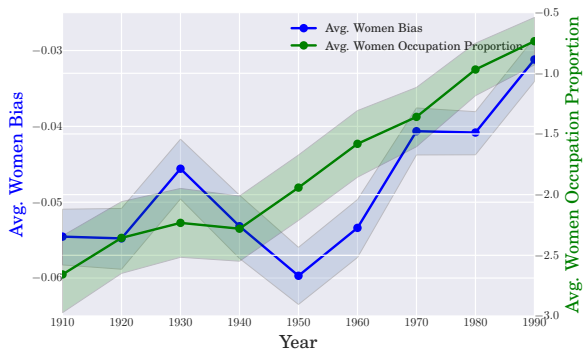
¹All of our own data and analysis tools are available on GitHub at <https://github.com/nikhgarg/EmbeddingDynamicStereotypes>. Census data is available through the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (Steven Ruggles et al., 2015). We link to the sources for each embedding used in Section 6.

²There is an increasingly recognized difference between sex and gender, and thus between the words *male/female* and *man/woman*, as well as non-binary categories. In this work we limit our analysis to the two major binary categories due to technical limitations, and we do use *male* and *female* as part of the lists of words associated with *men* and *women*, respectively, when measuring gender associations. Furthermore, we use results from Williams and Best (1977, 1990) which studies stereotypes associated with *sex*.

³In this work, when we refer to *Whites* or *Asians*, we specifically mean the *Non-Hispanic* subpopulation.



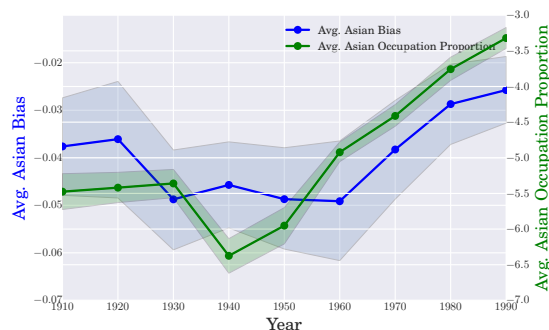
(a) Woman occupation proportion vs embedding bias in Google News vectors. More positive indicates more women biased on both axes. $p < 10^{-9}$, r-squared = .462.



(b) Average gender bias score over time in COHA embeddings in occupations vs the average log proportion. In blue is relative women bias in the embeddings, and in green is the average log proportion of women in the same occupations.

Hispanic	Asian	White
housekeeper	professor	smith
mason	official	blacksmith
artist	secretary	surveyor
janitor	conductor	sheriff
dancer	physicist	weaver
mechanic	scientist	administrator
photographer	chemist	mason
baker	tailor	statistician
cashier	accountant	clergy
driver	engineer	photographer

(c) The top ten occupations most closely associated with each ethnic group in the Google News embedding.



(d) Average ethnic (Asian vs White) bias score over time for occupations in COHA (blue) vs the average conditional log proportion (green).

Figure 1: Associations in embeddings, both in a single dataset and across time, that track with external metrics.

Ruggles et al., 2015) to extract the proportion of workers in each occupation that belong to each gender or ethnic group and compare it to the bias in the embeddings.

Bias in the embeddings, between two groups with respect to a neutral word list, is quantified by the *relative norm difference*, which is calculated as follows: (a) a representative *group* vector is created as the average of the vectors for each word in the given gender/ethnicity group; (b) the average l_2 norm of the differences between each representative group vector and each vector in the *neutral* word list of interest is calculated; (c) the relative norm difference is the difference of the average l_2 norms. This metric captures the relative distance (and thus relative strength of association) between the group words and the neutral word list of interest.

2.2 Validation of the embedding bias

To verify that the bias in the embedding accurately reflects sociological trends, we compare the trends in the embeddings with quantifiable demographic trends in the occupation participation. We use women’s participation statistics in different occupations as a benchmark because it is an objective metric of social changes. We show that the embedding accurately captures both gender and ethnic occupation proportion and consistently reflects historical changes.

Comparison with women occupation participation. We investigate how the gender bias of occupations in the word embeddings relates to the empirical proportion of women in each of these occupations in the U.S. Figure 1a shows, for each occupation, the relationship between the log proportion (of women) in the occupation in 2015 and the relative

norm distance between words associated with women and men in the Google News embeddings⁴. The relative distance in the embeddings significantly correlates with the occupation proportion ($p < 10^{-9}$ with $r^2 = .46$). It is interesting to note that the regression line goes through the origin: occupations that are close to 50-50 in its gender participation have no measurable embedding bias. This suggests that the embedding bias correctly matches the magnitude of the occupation frequency, not only which gender is more common in the occupation.

We ask whether the relationship between embedding and occupation proportion holds true for specific occupations. We perform the same embedding bias vs. occupation frequency analysis on a subset of occupations that are deemed ‘professional’ (e.g. *nurse, engineer, judge*; full list in Appendix Section A.3), and find nearly identical correlation. We further validate this association using different embeddings trained on Wikipedia and Common Crawl texts instead of Google News; see Appendix Section B.1 for details.

Google News embedding reveals one aggregate snapshot of the bias since it is trained over a pool of news articles. We would like to also validate that for a given historical period, the embedding bias accurately reflects occupation participation. To confirm this, we analyze the embedding of each decade of COHA from 1910 to 1990 separately. For each decade, the embedding gender bias is significantly correlated with occupation frequency ($p < .01$), and each line approximately intercepts the origin. Moreover these correlations are very similar over the decades, suggesting that the relationship between embedding bias score and ‘reality,’ as measured by occupation participation, is consistent over time. This consistency makes the interpretation of embedding bias more reliable. For example, a relative woman bias of $-.05$ corresponds to $\approx 12\%$ of the workforce in that occupation being woman, regardless of the embedding decade. See Appendix Section B.2 for details.

Next, we ask whether the changes in embeddings over decades capture changes in the women’s occupation participation.

Figure 1b shows the average embedding bias over the occupations over time, overlaid with the average woman occupation log proportion over time⁵. The average bias closely tracks with the occupation proportions over time. The average bias is negative, meaning that occupations are more closely associated with men than with women. However, we see that the bias steadily moves closer to 0 from 1950s to 1990s, suggesting that the bias is decreasing. This trend tracks with the proportional increase in the woman participation in these occupations.

Comparison with ethnic occupation participation As in the case with gender, the embeddings capture externally validated ethnic bias. Table 1c shows the ten occupations that are the most biased toward Hispanic, Asian, and White last names⁶. The Asian American “model minority” (Osajima, 2005; Fong, 2002) stereotype appears predominantly; academic positions such as *professor, scientist, and physicist* all appear as among the top Asian biased occupations. Similarly, White and Hispanic stereotypes also appear in their respective lists⁷. As in the case with gender, the embedding bias scores are significantly correlated with the ethnic group’s proportion of the occupation as measured by the U.S. Census. For Hispanics, the bias score is a significant predictor of occupation percentage at $p < 10^{-5}$; for Asians, at $p < .05$. The corresponding scatter plots of embedding bias vs. occupation proportion is in Appendix Section C.1.

Similarly, as for gender, we track the occupation bias score over time and compare it to the occupation proportions; Figure 1d does so for Asian Americans, relative to Whites, in the COHA embeddings. The increase in occupation proportion across all occupations is well tracked by the bias in the embeddings.

More detail and a similar plot with Hispanic Americans is included in Appendix Section C.2.

3 Using embeddings to quantify historical gender stereotypes

Comparisons with Census data indicate that word embeddings can reliably capture stereotypes at a particular time as well as how the stereotypes evolve over time. We apply this framework to study trends in gender bias in society, both

⁴Occupations whose 2015 percentage is not available, such as midwife, are omitted. We further note that the Google News embedding is trained on a corpus over time, and so the 2015 occupations are not an exact comparison.

⁵We only include occupations for which census data is available for every decade and which are frequent enough in all embeddings. We use the linear regression mapping inferred from all the data across decades to align the scales for the embedding bias and occupation frequency (the two Y axes in the plot).

⁶We adapt the relative norm distance in Equation (5) for three groups. For each group, we compare the its norm bias with the average bias of the other groups, i.e. $\text{bias}(\text{group } 1) = \sum_w [\frac{1}{2}(\|w - v_2\| + \|w - v_3\|) - \|w - v_1\|]$. This method can lead to the same occupation being highly ranked for multiple groups, such as happens for *mason*.

⁷*Smith*, besides being an occupation, is a common last White-American last name. It is thus excluded from regressions, as are occupations such as *conductor*, which have multiple meanings (train conductors as well as music conductors)

historically and in modern times. We first show that language today, such as that in the Google News corpora, is even *more* biased than occupation data alone can account for. In addition, we show that bias, as seen through adjectives associated with men and women, has decreased over time and that the women’s movement in the 1960s and 1970s especially had a systemic and drastic effect in women’s portrayals in literature and culture.

3.1 Stereotype of women’s occupations

While women’s occupation proportion is highly correlated with embedding gender bias, we hypothesize that the embedding could reflect additional social stereotypes beyond what can be explained by occupation participation. To test this hypothesis, we leverage the gender stereotype scores of occupations, as labeled by people on Amazon Mechanical Turk and provided to us by the authors of (Bolukbasi et al., 2016)⁸. These crowdsource scores reflect aggregate human judgement as to whether an occupation is stereotypically associated with men or women⁹. Both the crowdsource scores and the occupation log proportion are significantly correlated with the embedding bias, with $r^2 = .66$ and $r^2 = .41$, respectively. We performed a joint regression, with the crowdsource scores and the occupation log proportions as covariates and the embedding bias as the outcome. The crowdsource scores remain significantly associated with the embedding bias while the occupation log proportions do not (at $p < 10^{-5}$, versus $p > .2$ for occupation log proportion). This result indicates that the embedding bias is more closely aligned with human stereotypes than with actual occupation participation.

We also conduct two separate regressions with occupation log proportion as the independent covariate and the embedding bias and stereotype scores as two outcomes. In these regressions, a positive (negative) residual indicates that the embedding bias or stereotype score is closer to words associated with women (men) than is to be expected given the gender proportion in the occupation. We find that the residuals between the two regressions correlate significantly (Pearson coefficient .65, $p < 10^{-5}$). This correlation suggests that the embedding bias captures the crowdsource human stereotypes beyond that can be explained by empirical differences in occupation proportions.

Where such crowdsourcing is not possible, such as in studying historical biases, word embeddings can thus further serve as an effective measurement tool. Even though the analysis in the previous section shows a strong relationship between census data and embedding bias, it is important to note that biases beyond census data also appear in the embedding.

3.2 Quantifying changing attitudes toward women with adjective embeddings

We now apply the insight that embeddings can be used to make comparative statements over time to study how the description of women – through adjectives – in literature and the broader culture has changed over time. Using word embeddings to analyze biases in adjectives could be an especially useful new approach because the literature is lacking systematic and quantitative metrics for adjective biases. We find that – as a whole – portrayals have changed dramatically over time, including for the better in some measurable ways. Furthermore, we find evidence for how the women’s movement in the 1960s and 1970s led to systemic change in such portrayals.

Analysis of how adjectives change over time. A difficulty in social science is the relative dearth of historical data to systematically quantify gender stereotypes, which highlights the value of our embedding framework as a quantitative tool but also makes it challenging to directly confirm our findings on adjectives. We leverage the best available data, which are the sex stereotype scores assigned to a set of 230 adjectives¹⁰ by human participants (Williams and Best, 1977, 1990). This human subject study was first performed in 1977 and then repeated in 1990. We compute the correlation between the adjective embedding biases in COHA 1970s and 1990s with the respective decade human-assigned scores. In each case, the embedding bias score is significantly correlated with the human-assigned scores (at $p < .0002$). Moreover, the regression lines nearly intersect the origin, meaning that adjectives that are rated by humans to be gender neutral also tend to be unbiased in the embeddings. Appendix B.2 contains details of the analysis. These analyses suggest that the embedding gender bias effectively captures both occupation frequencies as well as human stereotypes of adjectives.

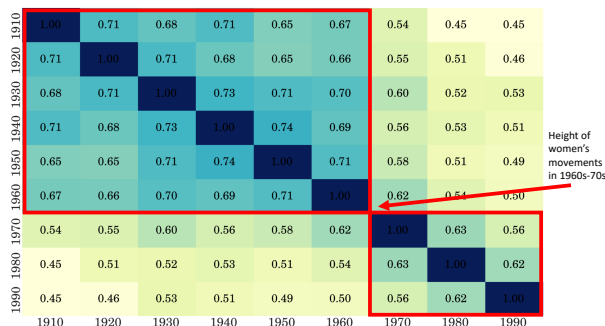
⁸List of occupations available in Appendix Section A.3. Note that the crowdsourcing experiment collected data for a larger list of occupations; we select the occupations for which both census data and embedding orientation is also available.

⁹A caveat here is that the U.S. based participants on Amazon Mechanical Turk may not represent the U.S. population.

¹⁰300 adjectives are in the original studies. 70 adjectives are discarded due to low frequencies in the COHA embeddings.

1910	1950	1990
charming	delicate	maternal
placid	sweet	morbid
delicate	charming	artificial
passionate	transparent	physical
sweet	placid	caring
dreamy	childish	emotional
indulgent	soft	protective
playful	colorless	attractive
mellow	tasteless	soft
sentimental	agreeable	tidy

(a) Top adjectives associated with women in 1910, 1950, and 1990 by relative norm difference in the COHA embedding.



(b) Pearson correlation in embedding bias scores for adjectives over time between embeddings for each decade. The phase shift in the 1960s-70s corresponds to the U.S. women’s movement.

Figure 2: How the association of women with certain adjectives has changed over time. Though significant, measurable change has occurred, the strongest associations in 1990 still indicate certain gender stereotypes, especially when compared to the top adjectives associated with men.

Using this insight, we consider a subset of the adjectives describing intelligence, such as *intelligent*, *logical*, and *thoughtful* (see Appendix A.3 for a full list of words). This group of words on average have increased in association with women over time (from strongly biased toward men to less so), especially after the 1960s (positive trend with $p < .005$). As a comparison, we also analyze a subset of adjectives describing physical appearance – e.g., *attractive*, *ugly*, and *fashionable* – and the bias of these words did not change significantly over time (null hypothesis of no trend not rejected with $p > 0.2$). We note that though these trends are encouraging, the top adjectives are still potentially problematic, as displayed in Table 2a.

Beyond specific adjectives, we hypothesize that comparing the embedding over time could reveal more global shifts in society. Figure 2b shows the Pearson correlation in embedding bias scores for adjectives over time between COHA embeddings for each pair of decades. As expected, the highest correlation values are near the diagonals; embeddings are most similar to those from adjacent decades. More strikingly, the matrix exhibits two clear blocks. There is a sharp divide between the 1960s and 1970s, the height of the women’s movement in the United States, during which there was a large push to end legal and social barriers for women in education and the workplace (Bryson, 2016; Rosen, 2013). This divide illustrates that the *intelligence vs appearance*-based adjectives example above is part of a larger language shift. We note that the effects of the women’s movement, including on inclusive language, are well documented (Thorne, 1983; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Rosen, 2000; Evans, 2010; Hellinger and Bussmann, 2001); this work provides a new, quantitative way to measure the rate and extent of the change. A potential extension and application of this work would be to study how various narratives and descriptions of women developed and competed over time.

Individual words whose biases changed over time. The embedding also reveals interesting patterns in how individual words evolve over time in their gender association. For example, the word *hysterical* used to be, until the mid 1900s, a catchall term for diagnosing mental illness in women but has since become a more general word (Tasca et al., 2012); such changes are clearly reflected in the embeddings, as *hysterical* fell from a top 5 woman-biased word in 1920 to not in the top 100 in 1990 in the COHA embeddings¹¹. On the other hand, *emotional* becomes much more strongly associated with women over time in the embeddings, reflecting its current status as a word that is largely associated with women in a pejorative sense (Sanghani, 2016).

These results together demonstrate the value and potential of leveraging embeddings to study biases over time. The embeddings capture subtle individual changes in association, as well as larger historical changes. Overall, they paint a picture of a society with decreasing but still significant gender biases.

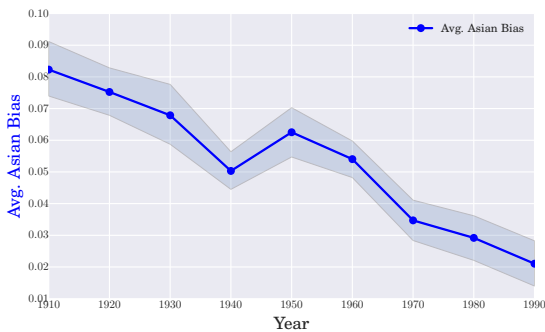
¹¹We caution that due to the noisy nature of word embeddings, dwelling on individual word rankings in isolation is potentially problematic. For example, *hysterical* is more highly associated with women in the Google News vectors than *emotional*. For this reason we focus on large shifts between embeddings.



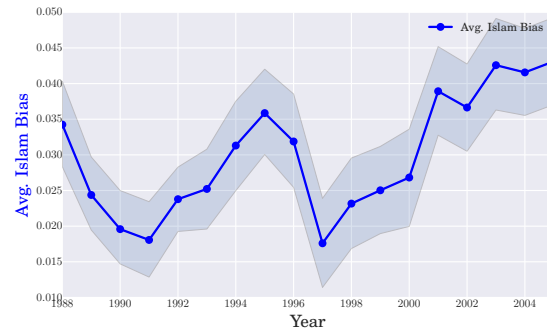
(a) Pearson correlation in embedding Asian bias scores for adjectives over time between embeddings for each decade.

1910	1950	1990
irresponsible	disorganized	inhibited
envious	outrageous	passive
barbaric	pompous	dissolute
aggressive	unstable	haughty
transparent	effeminate	complacent
monstrous	unprincipled	forceful
hateful	venomous	fixed
cruel	disobedient	active
greedy	predatory	sensitive
bizarre	boisterous	hearty

(b) Top Asian (vs White) Adjectives in 1910, 1950, and 1990 by relative norm difference in the COHA embedding.



(c) Asian bias score over time for words related to the outsiders in COHA data.



(d) Religious (Islam vs Christianity) bias score over time for words related to terrorism in New York Times data. Note that embeddings are trained in 3 year windows, so, for example, 2000 contains data from 1999-2001.

Figure 3: Ethnic bias in word embeddings across time.

4 Using embeddings to quantify historical ethnic stereotypes

We now turn our attention to studying ethnic biases over time. In particular we show how immigration and broader 20th century trends broadly influenced how Asians were viewed in the U.S. We also show that embeddings can serve as effective tools to analyze finer grained trends by analyzing the portrayal of Islam in the New York Times from 1988 to 2005 in the context of terrorism.

4.1 Trends in Asian stereotypes

To study Asian stereotypes in the embeddings, we use common and distinctly Asian last names, identified through a process described in Section A.2. This process results in a list of 20 last names that are primarily but not exclusively Chinese last names. The embeddings illustrate a dramatic story of how Asian American stereotypes developed and changed in the 20th century. Figure 3a shows the Pearson correlation coefficient of adjective biases for each pair of embeddings over time. As with gender, the analysis shows how external events changed attitudes. There are two phase shifts in the correlation: in the 1960s, which coincides with a sharp increase in Asian immigration into the U.S. due to the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, and in the 1980s, when immigration continued and the 2nd-generation Asian-American population emerged (Zong and Batalova, 2016).

We extract the most biased adjectives toward Asians (when compared to Whites) to gain more insights into factors driving these global changes in the embedding. Table 3b shows the most Asian biased adjectives in 1910, 1950, and 1990. Before 1950, strongly negative words, especially those often used to describe outsiders, are among the words most associated with Asians: *barbaric*, *hateful*, *monstrous*, *bizarre*, and *cruel*. However, starting around 1950 and especially by 1980, with a rising Asian population in the United States, these words are largely replaced by

words often considered stereotypic of Asian-Americans today: *sensitive*, *passive*, *complacent*, *active*, and *hearty*, for example (Lee, 1994; Kim and Yeh, 2002; Lee, 2015). See Table 35 in the Appendix for the complete list of Top 10 most Asian associated words in each decade. Using our methods regarding trends, we can quantify this change more precisely: Figure 3c shows the relative strength of the Asian association for words used to describe outsiders over time. As opposed to the adjectives overall, which sees 2 distinct phase shifts in Asian association, the words related to outsiders steadily decrease in Asian association over time – including when little Chinese immigration occurred in western countries – indicating that broader globalization trends led to changing attitudes with regards to such negative portrayals. Overall, the word embeddings exhibit a remarkable change in adjectives and attitudes toward Asian Americans during the 20th century.

4.2 Trends in other ethnic and cultural stereotypes

Similar trends appear in other datasets as well. Figure 3d shows, in the New York Times over two decades, how words related to Islam (vs those related to Christianity) associate with terrorism-related words. Similar to how we measure occupation related bias, we create a list of words associated with terrorism, such as *terror*, *bomb*, and *violence*. We then measure how associated these words appear to be in the text to words representing each religion, such as *mosque* and *church*, for Islam and Christianity, respectively¹². Throughout the time period in the New York Times, Islam is more associated with terrorism than is Christianity. Furthermore, an increase in the association can be seen both after the 1993 World Trade Center bombings and 9/11. With a more recent dataset and using more news outlets, it would be useful to study how such attitudes have evolved since 2005.

We illustrate how word embeddings capture stereotypes toward other ethnic groups. For example, Figure 34 in the Appendix, with Russian names, shows a dramatic shift in the 1950s, the start of the Cold War, and a minor shift during the initial years of the Russian Revolution in the 1910s-1920s. Furthermore, Figure 33 in the Appendix, the correlation over time plot with Hispanic names, serves as an effective control group. It shows more steady changes in the embeddings rather than the sharp transitions found in Asian and Russian associations. This pattern is consistent with the fact that numerous events throughout the 20th century influenced the story of Hispanic immigration into the United States, with no single event playing too large a role (Gutierrez, 2012).

These patterns demonstrate the usefulness of our methods to study ethnic as well as gender bias over time; similar analyses can be performed to examine shifts in the attitudes toward other ethnic groups, especially around significant global events.

5 Discussion

In this work, we investigate how the geometry of word embeddings, with respect to gender and ethnic stereotypes, evolves over time and tracks with empirical demographic changes in the U.S. We apply our methods to analyze word embeddings trained over 100 years of text data. In particular, we quantify the embedding biases for occupations and adjectives. Using occupations allows us to validate the method when the embedding associations are compared to empirical participation rates for each occupation. We show that both gender and ethnic occupation bias in the embeddings significantly tracks with the actual occupation frequencies. We also showed that adjective associations in the embeddings provide insight on how different groups of people are viewed over time.

As in any empirical work, the robustness of our results depends on the data sources and the metrics we choose to represent bias or association. We choose the relative norm difference metric for its simplicity, though many such metrics are reasonable. Caliskan, Bryson, and Narayanan (2017) and Bolukbasi et al. (2016) leverage alternate metrics, for example. Our metric agrees with other possible metrics – both qualitatively through the results in the snapshot analysis for gender, which replicates prior work, and quantitatively as the metrics correlate highly one another, as shown in Appendix Section A.5.

Another potential concern may be the dependency on our results on the specific word lists used, and that the *recall* of our methods in capturing human biases may not be adequate. We take extensive care to reproduce similar results with other word lists and types of measurements to demonstrate recall. For example – in the Appendix, we repeat the static occupation analysis using only *professional* occupations and reproduce an identical Figure to 1a. Furthermore, the plots themselves contain bootstrapped confidence intervals, i.e., the coefficients for random subsets of the occupations/adjectives, and the intervals are tight. Similarly, for adjectives, we use two different lists – one list

¹²Full word lists are available in the Appendix Section A.1.

from Williams and Best (1977, 1990) for which we have labeled stereotype scores, and then a larger one for the rest of the analysis where such scores are not needed. We note that we do not tune either the embeddings or the word lists, instead opting for the largest/most general publicly available data. For reproducibility, we share our code and all word lists in a repository. That our methods replicate across many different embeddings and types of biases measured suggests its generalizability.

A common challenge in historical analysis is that the written text in, say 1910, may not completely reflect the popular social attitude of that time. This is an important caveat to consider in interpreting the results of the embeddings trained on these earlier text corpora. The fact that the embedding bias for gender and ethnic groups does track with census proportion is a positive control that the embedding is still capturing meaningful patterns despite possible limitations in the training text. Even this control may be limited in that the census proportion does not fully capture gender or ethnic associations, even in the present day. However, the written text does serve as a window to the attitudes of the day as expressed in popular culture, and this work allows for a more systematic study of such text.

Another limitation of our current approach is that all the embeddings used are fully black-box, where the dimensions have no inherent meaning. In order to provide a more causal explanation of how the stereotypes appear in language, and to understand how they function, future work can leverage more recent embedding models in which certain dimensions are designed to capture various aspects of language, such as the polarity of a word or its parts of speech (Rothe and Schtze, 2016). Similarly, structural properties of words – beyond their census information or human-rated stereotypes – can be studied in the context of these dimensions. One can also leverage recent Bayesian embeddings models and train more fine-grained embeddings over time, rather than a separate embedding per decade as done in this work (Rudolph et al., 2017; Rudolph and Blei, 2017). These approaches can be used in future work.

We view the main contribution of our work as introducing a new framework for *exploring* the temporal dynamics of stereotypes through the lens of word embeddings. Our framework enables the computation of simple but quantitative measures of bias as well as easy visualizations. It is important to note that our goal is quantitative exploratory analysis rather than pinning down specific causal models of how certain stereotypes arise, though the analysis in Section 3.1 makes headway on the latter and suggests that the bias found in language is *more* biased than one would expect based on external, objective metrics. We believe our approach sharpens the analysis of large cultural shifts in U.S. history, e.g., the women’s movement of the 1960s correlates with a sharp shift in the encoding matrix (Figure 2b) as well as changes in the biases associated with specific occupations and gender-biased adjectives (e.g., *hysterical* vs *emotional*). In standard quantitative social science, machine learning is used as a *tool* to analyze data. Our work shows how the artifacts of machine learning (word embeddings here) can themselves be interesting objects of sociological analysis. We believe this paradigm shift can lead to many fruitful studies.

6 Data & Methods

In this section we describe the datasets, embeddings and word lists used, as well as how bias is quantified. More detail, including descriptions of additional embeddings and the full word lists, are in Appendix Section A.1. All of our data and code is available on GitHub¹³, and we link to external data sources as appropriate.

6.1 Embeddings

This work uses several pre-trained word embeddings publicly available online; refer to the respective sources for in-depth discussion of their training parameters. These embeddings are among the most commonly used English embeddings, vary in the datasets on which they were trained, and between them cover the best known algorithms to construct embeddings. One finding in this work is that, though there is some heterogeneity, gender and ethnic bias is generally consistent across embeddings. Here we restrict descriptions to embeddings used in the main exposition. For consistency, only single words are used, all vectors are normalized by their l_2 norm, and words are converted to lowercase.

Google News word2vec Vectors Vectors trained on about 100 billion words in the Google News Dataset (Mikolov et al., 2013a,b). Vectors available at <https://code.google.com/archive/p/word2vec/>.

¹³<https://github.com/nikhgarg/EmbeddingDynamicStereotypes>

Google Books/COHA Trained on a combined corpus of genre-balanced Google books and the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) (Davies, 2010) by Hamilton, Leskovec, and Jurafsky. For each decade, a separate embedding is trained from the corpus data corresponding to that decade. The dataset is specifically designed to enable comparisons across decades, and the creators take special care to avoid selection bias issues. The vectors are available at <https://nlp.stanford.edu/projects/histwords/>, and we limit our analysis to the Singular Value Decomposition (SVD) and Skip-gram with Negative Sampling (SGNS, also known as word2vec) embeddings in the 1900s. Note that the Google Books data may include some non-American sources and the external metrics we use are American. However, this does not appreciably affect results. In the main text, we exclusively use SGNS embeddings; results with SVD embeddings are in the appendix and are qualitatively similar to the SGNS results. Unless otherwise specified, *COHA* indicates these embeddings trained using the SGNS algorithm.

New York Times We train embeddings over time from The New York Times Annotated Corpus (Sandhaus, 2008), using 1.8 million articles from the New York Times between 1988 and 2005. We use the GLoVe algorithm (Pennington, Socher, and Manning, 2014), and train embeddings over three year windows¹⁴.

6.2 Related Works

Word embedding was developed as a framework to represent words as a part of the AI and natural language processing pipeline (Mikolov et al., 2013b). (Bolukbasi et al., 2016) demonstrated that word embeddings capture gender stereotypes, and (Caliskan, Bryson, and Narayanan, 2017) additionally verified that the embedding accurately reflects human biases by comparing the embedding results with that of the Implicit Association Test. While these two papers analyzed the bias of the static Google News embedding, our paper is the first to investigate the *temporal changes* in word embeddings and study how embeddings over time capture historical trends. Our paper is also the first to study attitudes toward women and ethnic minorities by quantifying the embedding of adjectives. The focus of (Bolukbasi et al., 2016) is to develop algorithms to reduce the gender stereotype in the embedding, which is important for sensitive applications of embeddings. In contrast, our aim is not to debias, but to leverage the embedding bias to study historical changes that are otherwise challenging to quantify. (Caliskan, Bryson, and Narayanan, 2017) shows that embeddings contain each of the associations commonly found in the Implicit Association Test. For example, European-American names are more similar to pleasant (vs unpleasant) words than are African-American names, and male names are more similar to career (vs family) words than are female names. Similarly, they show that, in the Google News embeddings, that census data corresponds to bias in the embeddings for gender.

The study of gender and ethnic stereotypes is a large focus in linguistics and sociology, and is too extensive to be surveyed here Hamilton and Troler (1986); Basow (1992); Wetherell and Potter (1992); Holmes and Meyerhoff (2008); Coates (2015). Our main innovation is the use of word embeddings which provides a new lens to measure and quantify biases. Another related field in linguistics studies how language changes over time and has also recently employed word embeddings as a tool Ullmann (1962); Blank (1999); Kulkarni et al. (2015). However, this literature primarily studies *semantic* changes, such as how the word *gay* used to primarily mean *cheerful* and now means predominantly means *homosexual* Hamilton, Leskovec, and Jurafsky (2016a,b), and does not investigate bias.

6.3 Word Lists and External Metrics

Two types of word lists are used in this work: *group* words and *neutral* words. *Group* words represent groups of people, such as each gender and ethnicity. *Neutral* words are those that are not intrinsically gendered or ethnic¹⁵; relative similarities between neutral words and a pair of groups (such as men vs women) are used to measure the strength of the association in the embeddings. In this work, we use occupations and various adjective lists as neutral words.

Gender For gender, we use noun and pronoun pairs (such as *he/she*, *him/her*, etc).

¹⁴So the 2000 embeddings for example contains articles from 1999-2001.

¹⁵For example, *fireman* or *mailman* would be gendered occupation titles and so are excluded.

Race/Ethnicity To distinguish various ethnicities, we leverage the fact that the distribution of last names in the United States differs significantly by ethnicity, with the notable exception of White and Black last names. Starting with a breakdown of ethnicity by last name compiled by Chalabi and Flowers, we identify 20 last names for each ethnicity as detailed in Appendix Section A.2. Our procedure, however, produces almost identical lists for White and Black Americans (with the names being mostly White by percentage), and so the analysis does not include Black Americans.

Occupation Census Data We use occupation words for which we have gender and ethnic subgroup information over time. Group occupation percentages are obtained from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, part of the University of Minnesota Historical Census Project (Steven Ruggles et al., 2015). Data coding and pre-processing are done as described in (Levanon, England, and Allison, 2009), which studies wage dynamics as women enter certain occupations over time. The IPUMS dataset includes a column, OCC1950, coding occupation census data as if it would have been coded in 1950, allowing accurate inter-year analysis. We then hand-map the occupations from this column to single-word occupations¹⁶, and hand-code a subset of the occupations as *professional*. In all plots containing occupation percentages for gender, the log proportion in Equation (1) rather than raw percentages is used, as in (Levanon, England, and Allison, 2009).

$$\text{log-prop}(p) = \log \frac{p}{1-p} \quad (1)$$

where $p = \%$ of women in occupation

For ethnicity, when comparing the occupation associational strength between two groups, the conditional log proportion in Equation (2) is used.

$$\text{cond-log-prop}(\text{group 1, group 2}) = \log \frac{p}{1-p} \quad (2)$$

$$\text{where } p = \frac{\% \text{ of group 1}}{\% \text{ of group 1} + \% \text{ of group 2}}$$

Note that in both cases, a log proportion of 0 indicates a balanced ratio in the occupation.

Occupation Gender Stereotypes For a limited set of occupations, we use gender stereotype scores collected from users on Amazon Mechanical Turk by Bolukbasi et al.. These scores are compared to embedding gender association.

Adjectives To study associations with adjectives over time, several separate lists are used. To compare adjective embedding bias to external metrics, we leverage a list of adjectives labeled by how stereotypically associated with men or women they are, as determined by a group of subjects in 1977 and 1990 (Williams and Best, 1977, 1990). For all other analyses using adjectives, a larger list of adjectives is used, primarily from (Gunkel, 1987). Except when otherwise specified, *adjectives* is used to refer to this larger list.

6.4 Metrics

Given two vectors, their similarity can be measured either by their negative difference norm, as in Equation (3), or by their cosine similarity, as in Equation (4). The denominators are omitted because all vectors have norm 1.

$$\text{neg-norm-dif}(u, v) = -\|u - v\|_2 \quad (3)$$

$$\text{cos-sim}(u, v) = u \cdot v \quad (4)$$

The association between the group words and neutral words is calculated as follows: construct a group vector by averaging the vectors for each word in the group; then calculate the similarity between this average vector and each word in the neutral list as above.

The relative norm distance, which captures the relative strength of association of a set of neutral words with respect to two groups, is as described in Equation (5), where M is the set of neutral word vectors, v_1 is the average vector for

¹⁶e.g., *chemical engineer* and *electrical engineer* both become *engineer*, and *chemist* is counted as both *chemist* and *scientist*.

group one, and v_2 is the average vector for group two. The more positive (negative) that the relative norm distance is, the more associated the neutral words are toward group two (one). In this work, when we say that a word is *biased* toward a group with respect to another group, we specifically mean in the context of the relative norm distance. *Bias score* also refers to this metric.

$$\text{relative norm distance} = \sum_{v_m \in M} \|v_m - v_1\|_2 - \|v_m - v_2\|_2 \quad (5)$$

We can also use cosine similarity rather than the 2-norm. Appendix Section A.5 shows that the choice of similarity measure is not important; the respective metrics using each similarity measure correlate highly with one another (Pearson coefficient $> .95$ in most cases). In the main text, we exclusively use the relative norm.

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Appendix A Data

This section contains information on the additional embeddings used in this supplement and the various word lists used. These lists will also be provided in a public repository alongside code to reproduce our results.

A.1 Additional Embeddings

Wikipedia 2014+Gigaword 5 GloVe

Trained on Wikipedia data from 2014 and newswire data from the mid 1990s through 2011 (Parker et al., 2011) using GloVe (Pennington, Socher, and Manning, 2014). Available online at <https://nlp.stanford.edu/projects/glove/>. We refer to these vectors as the Wikipedia vectors.

Common Crawl GloVe

Trained on Common Crawl using GloVe (Pennington, Socher, and Manning, 2014). Also available online at <https://nlp.stanford.edu/projects/glove/>. We refer to these vectors as the Common Crawl vectors.

A.2 Group words

Man words *he, son, his, him, father, man, boy, himself, male, brother, sons, fathers, men, boys, males, brothers, uncle, uncles, nephew, nephews*

Woman words *she, daughter, hers, her, mother, woman, girl, herself, female, sister, daughters, mothers, women, girls, femen, sisters, aunt, aunts, niece, nieces*

White last names *harris, nelson, robinson, thompson, moore, wright, anderson, clark, jackson, taylor, scott, davis, allen, adams, lewis, williams, jones, wilson, martin, johnson*

Hispanic last names *ruiz, alvarez, vargas, castillo, gomez, soto, gonzalez, sanchez, rivera, mendoza, martinez, torres, rodriguez, perez, lopez, medina, diaz, garcia, castro, cruz*

Asian last names *cho, wong, tang, huang, chu, chung, ng, wu, liu, chen, lin, yang, kim, chang, shah, wang, li, khan, singh, hong*

Russian last names *gurin, minsky, sokolov, markov, maslow, novikoff, mishkin, smirnov, orloff, ivanov, sokoloff, david-off, savin, romanoff, babinski, sorokin, levin, pavlov, rodin, agin*

Islam words *allah, ramadan, turban, emir, salaam, sunni, koran, imam, sultan, prophet, veil, ayatollah, shiite, mosque, islam, sheik, muslim, muhammad*

Christianity words *baptism, messiah, catholicism, resurrection, christianity, salvation, protestant, gospel, trinity, jesus, christ, christian, cross, catholic, church*

Starting with a breakdown of ethnicity by last name compiled by Chalabi and Flowers¹⁷, we identify 20 last names for each Whites, Asians, and Hispanics as follows: 1) Start with list of top 50 last names by percent of that ethnicity, conditioned on being top 5000 surnames overall, as well as the top 50 last names by total number in that ethnicity (i.e., multiplied count of that last name by percent in that ethnicity). 2) Choose the 20 names that appeared most on average in the Google Books/COHA vectors over time (with a minimum number for each time period). This second step ensures that an accurate ethnicity vector is identified each time period, with minimal distortions. Russian last names are collated from various sources online.

A.3 Neutral Words

Occupations *janitor, statistician, midwife, bailiff, auctioneer, photographer, geologist, shoemaker, athlete, cashier, dancer, housekeeper, accountant, physicist, gardener, dentist, weaver, blacksmith, psychologist, supervisor, mathematician, surveyor, tailor, designer, economist, mechanic, laborer, postmaster, broker, chemist, librarian, attendant, clerical, musician, porter, scientist, carpenter, sailor, instructor, sheriff, pilot, inspector, mason, baker, administrator, architect, collector, operator, surgeon, driver, painter, conductor, nurse, cook, engineer, retired, sales, lawyer, clergy, physician, farmer, clerk, manager, guard, artist, smith, official, police, doctor, professor, student, judge, teacher, author, secretary, soldier*

Professional Occupations¹⁸ *statistician, auctioneer, photographer, geologist, accountant, physicist, dentist, psychologist, supervisor, mathematician, designer, economist, postmaster, broker, chemist, librarian, scientist, instructor, pilot, administrator, architect, surgeon, nurse, engineer, lawyer, physician, manager, official, doctor, professor, student, judge, teacher, author*

Occupations with Human Stereotype Scores from (Bolukbasi et al., 2016) *teacher, author, mechanic, broker, baker, surveyor, laborer, surgeon, gardener, painter, dentist, janitor, athlete, manager, conductor, carpenter, housekeeper, secretary, economist, geologist, clerk, doctor, judge, physician, lawyer, artist, instructor, dancer, photographer, inspector, musician, soldier, librarian, professor, psychologist, nurse, sailor, accountant, architect, chemist, administrator, physicist, scientist, farmer*

Adjectives from (Williams and Best, 1977, 1990) *headstrong, thankless, tactful, distrustful, quarrelsome, effeminate, fickle, talkative, dependable, resentful, sarcastic, unassuming, changeable, resourceful, persevering, forgiving, assertive, individualistic, vindictive, sophisticated, deceitful, impulsive, sociable, methodical, idealistic, thrifty, outgoing, intolerant, autocratic, conceited, inventive, dreamy, appreciative, forgetful, forceful, submissive, pessimistic, versatile, adaptable, reflective, inhibited, outspoken, quitting, unselfish, immature, painstaking, leisurely, infantile, sly, praising, cynical, irresponsible, arrogant, obliging, unkind, wary, greedy, obnoxious, irritable, discreet, frivolous, cowardly, rebellious, adventurous, enterprising, unscrupulous, poised, moody, unfriendly, optimistic, disorderly, peaceable, considerate, humorous, worrying, preoccupied, trusting, mischievous, robust, superstitious, noisy, tolerant, realistic, masculine, witty, informal, prejudiced, reckless, jolly, courageous, meek, stubborn, aloof, sentimental, complaining, unaffected, cooperative, unstable, feminine, timid, retiring, relaxed, imaginative, shrewd, conscientious, industrious, hasty, commonplace, lazy, gloomy, thoughtful, dignified, wholesome, affectionate, aggressive, awkward, energetic, tough, shy, queer, careless, restless, cautious, polished, tense, suspicious, dissatisfied, ingenious, fearful, daring, persistent, demanding, impatient, contented, selfish, rude, spontaneous, conventional, cheerful, enthusiastic, modest, ambitious, alert, defensive, mature, coarse, charming, clever, shallow, deliberate, stern, emotional, rigid, mild, cruel, artistic, hurried, sympathetic, dull, civilized, loyal, withdrawn, confident, indifferent, conservative, foolish, moderate, handsome, helpful, gentle, dominant, hostile, generous, reliable, sincere, precise, calm, healthy, attractive, progressive, confused, rational, stable, bitter, sensitive, initiative, loud, thorough, logical, intelligent, steady, formal, complicated, cool, curious, reserved, silent, honest, quick, friendly, efficient, pleasant, severe, peculiar, quiet, weak, anxious, nervous, warm,*

¹⁷available <https://raw.githubusercontent.com/fivethirtyeight/data/master/most-common-name/surnames.csv>

¹⁸These were hand-coded from the overall list of occupations; follow-on work should study this more systematically.

slow, dependent, wise, organized, affected, reasonable, capable, active, independent, patient, practical, serious, understanding, cold, responsible, simple, original, strong, determined, natural, kind

Larger adjective list, mostly from (Gunkel, 1987) *disorganized, devious, impressionable, circumspect, impassive, aimless, effeminate, unfathomable, fickle, unprincipled, inoffensive, reactive, providential, resentful, bizarre, impractical, sarcastic, misguided, imitative, pedantic, venomous, erratic, insecure, resourceful, neurotic, forgiving, profligate, whimsical, assertive, incorruptible, individualistic, faithless, disconcerting, barbaric, hypnotic, vindictive, observant, dissolute, frightening, complacent, boisterous, pretentious, disobedient, tasteless, sedentary, sophisticated, regimental, mellow, deceitful, impulsive, playful, sociable, methodical, willful, idealistic, boyish, callous, pompous, unchanging, crafty, punctual, compassionate, intolerant, challenging, scornful, possessive, conceited, imprudent, dutiful, lovable, disloyal, dreamy, appreciative, forgetful, unrestrained, forceful, submissive, predatory, fanatical, illogical, tidy, aspiring, studious, adaptable, conciliatory, artful, thoughtless, deceptive, frugal, reflective, insulting, unreliable, stoic, hysterical, rustic, inhibited, outspoken, unhealthy, ascetic, skeptical, painstaking, contemplative, leisurely, sly, mannered, outrageous, lyrical, placid, cynical, irresponsible, vulnerable, arrogant, persuasive, perverse, steadfast, crisp, envious, naive, greedy, presumptuous, obnoxious, irritable, dishonest, discreet, sporting, hateful, ungrateful, frivolous, reactionary, skillful, cowardly, sordid, adventurous, dogmatic, intuitive, bland, indulgent, discontented, dominating, articulate, fanciful, discouraging, treacherous, repressed, moody, sensual, unfriendly, optimistic, clumsy, contemptible, focused, haughty, morbid, disorderly, considerate, humorous, preoccupied, airy, impersonal, cultured, trusting, respectful, scrupulous, scholarly, superstitious, tolerant, realistic, malicious, irrational, sane, colorless, masculine, witty, inert, prejudiced, fraudulent, blunt, childish, brittle, disciplined, responsive, courageous, bewildered, courteous, stubborn, aloof, sentimental, athletic, extravagant, brutal, manly, cooperative, unstable, youthful, timid, amiable, retiring, fiery, confidential, relaxed, imaginative, mystical, shrewd, conscientious, monstrous, grim, questioning, lazy, dynamic, gloomy, troublesome, abrupt, eloquent, dignified, hearty, gallant, benevolent, maternal, paternal, patriotic, aggressive, competitive, elegant, flexible, gracious, energetic, tough, contradictory, shy, careless, cautious, polished, sage, tense, caring, suspicious, sober, neat, transparent, disturbing, passionate, obedient, crazy, restrained, fearful, daring, prudent, demanding, impatient, cerebral, calculating, amusing, honorable, casual, sharing, selfish, ruined, spontaneous, admirable, conventional, cheerful, solitary, upright, stiff, enthusiastic, petty, dirty, subjective, heroic, stupid, modest, impressive, orderly, ambitious, protective, silly, alert, destructive, exciting, crude, ridiculous, subtle, mature, creative, coarse, passive, oppressed, accessible, charming, clever, decent, miserable, superficial, shallow, stern, winning, balanced, emotional, rigid, invisible, desperate, cruel, romantic, agreeable, hurried, sympathetic, solemn, systematic, vague, peaceful, humble, dull, expedient, loyal, decisive, arbitrary, earnest, confident, conservative, foolish, moderate, helpful, delicate, gentle, dedicated, hostile, generous, reliable, dramatic, precise, calm, healthy, attractive, artificial, progressive, odd, confused, rational, brilliant, intense, genuine, mistaken, driving, stable, objective, sensitive, neutral, strict, angry, profound, smooth, ignorant, thorough, logical, intelligent, extraordinary, experimental, steady, formal, faithful, curious, reserved, honest, busy, educated, liberal, friendly, efficient, sweet, surprising, mechanical, clean, critical, criminal, soft, proud, quiet, weak, anxious, solid, complex, grand, warm, slow, false, extreme, narrow, dependent, wise, organized, pure, directed, dry, obvious, popular, capable, secure, active, independent, ordinary, fixed, practical, serious, fair, understanding, constant, cold, responsible, deep, religious, private, simple, physical, original, working, strong, modern, determined, open, political, difficult, knowledge, kind*

Intellectual Adjectives¹⁹ *precocious, resourceful, inquisitive, sagacious, inventive, astute, adaptable, reflective, discerning, intuitive, inquiring, judicious, analytical, luminous, venerable, imaginative, shrewd, thoughtful, sage, smart, ingenious, clever, brilliant, logical, intelligent, apt, genius, wise*

Physical Appearance Adjectives²⁰ *alluring, voluptuous, blushing, homely, plump, sensual, gorgeous, slim, bald, athletic, fashionable, stout, ugly, muscular, slender, feeble, handsome, healthy, attractive, fat, weak, thin, pretty, beautiful, strong*

Terrorism related words *terror, terrorism, violence, attack, death, military, war, radical, injuries, bomb, target, conflict, dangerous, kill, murder, strike, dead, violence, fight, death, force, stronghold, wreckage, aggression, slaughter*

¹⁹ mostly from <https://www.e-education.psu.edu/writingrecommendationletteronline/node/151>, <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/thesaurus-category/american/words-used-to-describe-intelligent-or-wise-people>

ter, execute, overthrow, casualties, massacre, retaliation, proliferation, militia, hostility, debris, acid, execution, militant, rocket, guerrilla, sacrifice, enemy, soldier, terrorist, missile, hostile, revolution, resistance, shoot

“Other” Adjectives *devious, bizarre, venomous, erratic, barbaric, frightening, deceitful, forceful, deceptive, envious, greedy, hateful, contemptible, brutal, monstrous, calculating, cruel, intolerant, aggressive, monstrous*

A.4 Embedding Quality

Here we show that the quality of the average vector constructed for each group does not appreciably change over time and thus cannot explain the overtime trends.

Figure 5 shows the average frequency of words in each list across time in the COHA embeddings. Counts in general increase for all lists throughout time as datasets get larger. However, vector quality remains about the same; Figure 5 shows the average variance on each dimension across time for each group. Except for Russian names (which are used for a plot in the appendix), these variances remain relatively steady throughout time, with small potential decreases as the size of the training datasets increase, indicating that average vector quality does not change appreciably.

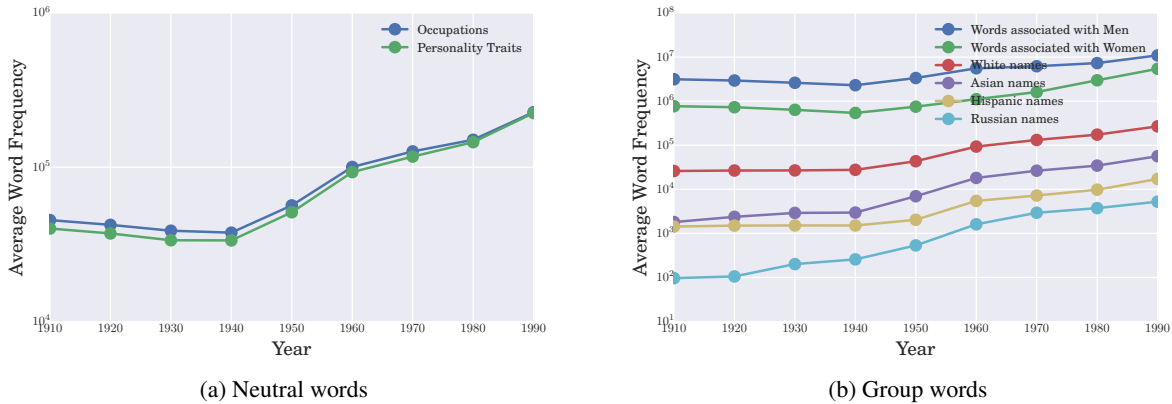


Figure 4: Average counts of words in a list in the COHA embeddings over time

²⁰mostly from <http://usefulenglish.ru/vocabulary/appearance-and-character>, <http://www.sightwordsgame.com/parts-of-speech/adjectives/appearance/>, <http://www.stgeorges.co.uk/blog/physical-appearance-adjectives-the-bald-and-the-beautiful>

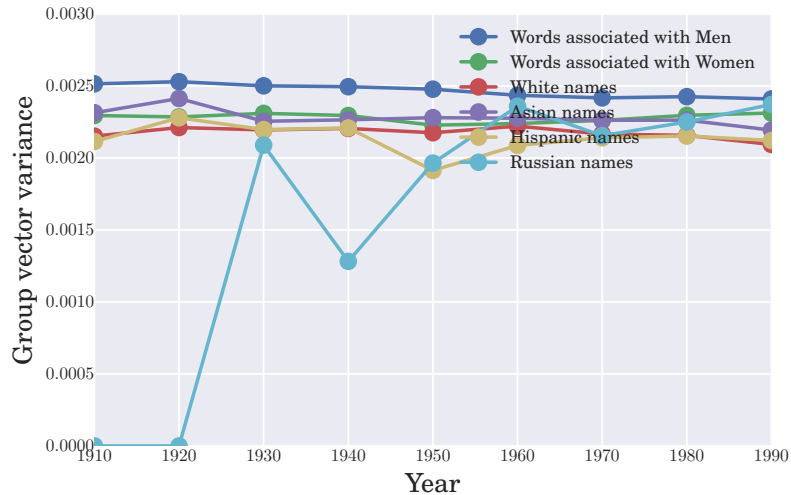


Figure 5: Average variance in each embedding dimension over time for each group in the COHA embeddings

A.5 Similarity metrics

In the main exposition, we use the relative norm bias metric, $\sum_{v_m \in M} \|v_m - v_1\|_2 - \|v_m - v_2\|_2$. Using relative cosine similarity instead, $\sum_{v_m \in M} v_m \cdot v_2 - v_m \cdot v_1$, makes no difference – the metrics have Pearson correlation $> .95$ in general (note that Pearson correlation of 1 is a perfectly linear relationship). The following table shows their correlation for a few embedding/neutral word/group combinations, and the pattern holds generally.

Table 6: Pearson correlation of two possible bias metrics

Embedding	Neutral Words	Groups	Pearson correlation
Google News	Occupations	Men, Women	.998
Google News	Personality Traits	Men, Women	.998
SGNS 1990	Occupations	Men, Women	.997
SGNS 1990	Personality Traits	Men, Women	.994
Google News	Occupations	Whites, Asians	.973
Google News	Personality Traits	Whites, Asians	.993
SGNS 1990	Occupations	Whites, Asians	.991
SGNS 1990	Personality Traits	Whites, Asians	.999

We thus primarily report results using only the relative norm difference bias metric.

Appendix B Gender analysis

B.1 Additional Validation Analysis

We validate that the COHA embeddings over time are consistent with the change in bias over time. First, we show that the relationship between the embedding bias score and woman occupation proportions is approximately consistent over time, i.e. that a given embedding bias score corresponds to the *same* occupation proportion regardless of decade. For example, a relative woman bias of $-.05$ corresponds to $\approx 12\%$ of the workforce in that occupation being woman, regardless of the embedding decade. Given that the occupation proportions themselves shift considerably over time as women enter the work force, the mapping from embedding bias to occupation proportion is remarkably consistent over time. When a single model is trained across all years with COHA embeddings, the embedding bias score alone (without year information) is a significant predictor of occupation proportion at $p < 10^{-37}$.

Occupations		Adjectives	
Man	Woman	Man	Woman
carpenter	nurse	honorable	maternal
mechanic	midwife	ascetic	romantic
mason	librarian	amiable	submissive
blacksmith	housekeeper	dissolute	hysterical
retired	dancer	arrogant	elegant
architect	teacher	erratic	caring
engineer	cashier	heroic	delicate
mathematician	student	boyish	superficial
shoemaker	designer	fanatical	neurotic
physicist	weaver	aimless	attractive

Table 7: Top occupations and adjectives by gender in the Google News embedding.

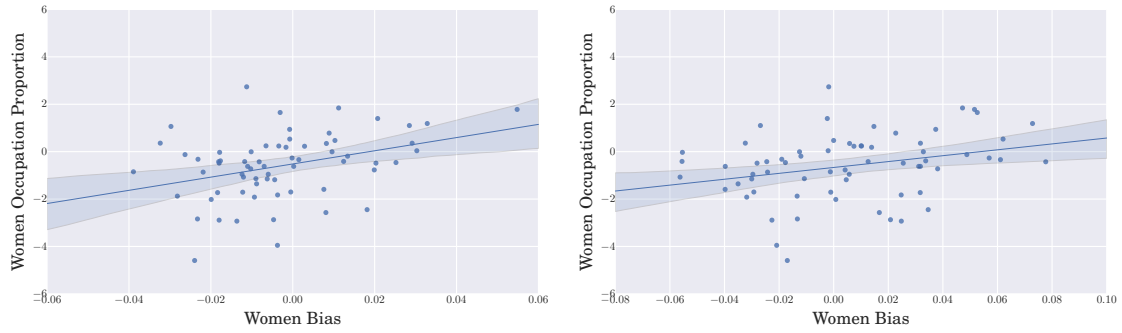
This single model performs similarly to individual models trained for each decade’s embedding. Table 21 in the Appendix, for example, illustrates that the Mean Squared Error for each decade in the aggregate model is within about 10% of that in the individual models. The r-squared values of the embedding bias vs. occupation correlation in each decade are also similar to that of the aggregate correlation. Furthermore, the trained models are themselves similar: as Appendix Table 20 shows, there is considerable overlap in the coefficient confidence intervals for embedding bias in each individual model over time.

Table 7 shows the top occupations and adjectives by gender in the Google News embedding.

Below, we first show the regression table corresponding to Figure 1a, and then show the same plot for other embeddings, as well as the subset of occupations corresponding to “professional” occupations.

Dep. Variable:	Woman Occupation Proportion	R-squared:	0.462		
Model:	OLS	Adj. R-squared:	0.453		
Method:	Least Squares	F-statistic:	54.85		
Date:	Fri, 08 Sep 2017	Prob (F-statistic):	3.59e-10		
Time:	07:50:06	Log-Likelihood:	-94.098		
No. Observations:	66	AIC:	192.2		
Df Residuals:	64	BIC:	196.6		
Df Model:	1				
	coef	std err	t	P> t 	[95.0% Conf. Int.]
Relative Woman Similarity	19.0754	2.576	7.406	0.000	13.930 24.221
const	-0.0853	0.144	-0.593	0.555	-0.373 0.202
Omnibus:	3.174	Durbin-Watson:	2.346		
Prob(Omnibus):	0.205	Jarque-Bera (JB):	2.821		
Skew:	-0.147	Prob(JB):	0.244		
Kurtosis:	3.969	Cond. No.	20.5		

Table 8: OLS Regression Results corresponding to Figure 1a, regressing woman occupation log proportion with word vector relative distance in Google News vectors in 2015.



(a) Common Crawl GloVe. $p < .005$, r-squared= .127. (b) Wikipedia GloVe. $p < .02$, r-squared= .085.

Figure 9: Percent woman in an occupation vs relative norm distance from occupations to the respective gender words in Common Crawl and Wikipedia. We note that for these datasets, there seems to be a slight systemic shift away from the origin, in contrast to the SGNS and Google News embeddings.

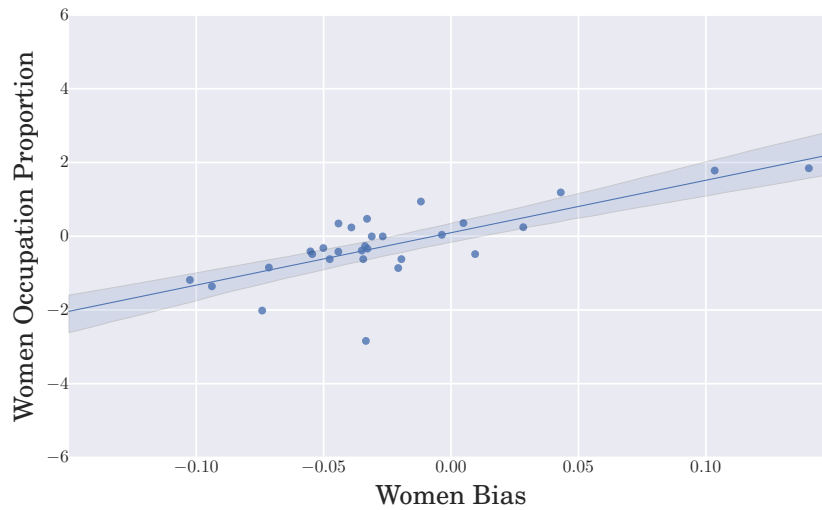


Figure 10: Percent woman in an occupation vs relative norm distance from *professional* occupations in Google News vectors. $p < 10^{-5}$, r-squared= .548. Note that there is little difference in model from all occupations.

Table 11: Most Man and Woman *residuals* when regressing embedding bias vs occupation gender proportion. The more Woman (Man) a residual the more biased the embedding is toward Women (Men) above what occupation proportions would suggest.

Man	Woman
secretary	nurse
mechanic	housekeeper
musician	gardener
architect	clerk
janitor	librarian
carpenter	sailor
broker	judge
geologist	artist
accountant	dancer
economist	painter

B.2 Dynamic Analysis

This section contains additional information for gender bias associated with the “dynamic” or over-time analysis. We first show the occupations and adjectives most associated with men and women, respectively, for each decade. Then we present additional information such as regression tables and plots with SVD embeddings for robustness.

Tables with top occupations and adjectives for each gender

This subsection contains the top occupations and adjectives for each gender for each decade. We caution that due to the noisy nature of embeddings, these tables must be analyzed in the aggregate rather than focusing on individual associations.

1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
mathematician	accountant	engineer	surveyor	architect	lawyer	architect	architect	architect
soldier	surveyor	architect	architect	engineer	architect	engineer	auctioneer	mathematician
architect	architect	lawyer	engineer	mathematician	surveyor	judge	judge	surveyor
surveyor	lawyer	surveyor	smith	lawyer	soldier	economist	surveyor	engineer
administrator	mathematician	manager	sheriff	sheriff	engineer	soldier	sheriff	pilot
lawyer	sheriff	pilot	lawyer	postmaster	pilot	author	author	lawyer
judge	engineer	author	scientist	surveyor	scientist	surveyor	engineer	author
scientist	statistician	scientist	author	scientist	economist	administrator	broker	judge
author	mason	mathematician	economist	author	author	mason	inspector	soldier
economist	scientist	accountant	mason	soldier	mason	mathematician	police	blacksmith

Table 12: Most Man occupations in each decade in the SGNS embeddings.

1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
nurse	nurse	nurse	nurse	nurse	nurse	nurse	nurse	nurse
attendant	housekeeper	housekeeper	attendant	housekeeper	attendant	dancer	dancer	housekeeper
housekeeper	attendant	attendant	janitor	attendant	dancer	housekeeper	attendant	midwife
cashier	dancer	dancer	housekeeper	dancer	housekeeper	attendant	housekeeper	dentist
cook	teacher	janitor	midwife	cook	photographer	conductor	midwife	student
bailiff	supervisor	midwife	dentist	gardener	midwife	dentist	statistician	dancer
porter	cook	clerical	cook	cashier	dentist	statistician	student	supervisor
operator	doctor	dentist	clerical	midwife	janitor	baker	conductor	bailiff
supervisor	dentist	cook	clergy	musician	cook	clerical	dentist	physician
clergy	mechanic	teacher	sailor	sailor	porter	sailor	supervisor	doctor

Table 13: Most Woman occupations in each decade in the SGNS embeddings.

1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
honorable	regimental	honorable	honorable	knowledge	gallant	honorable	honorable	honorable
gallant	honorable	trusting	conservative	gallant	honorable	wise	loyal	regimental
regimental	stoic	courageous	ambitious	honorable	sage	knowledge	petty	unreliable
skillful	political	gallant	shrewd	directed	regimental	gallant	gallant	skillful
disobedient	sage	confident	regimental	regimental	knowledge	insulting	lyrical	gallant
faithful	ambitious	adventurous	knowledge	efficient	wise	trusting	honest	honest
wise	reserved	experimental	destructive	sage	conservative	honest	faithful	loyal
obedient	progressive	efficient	misguided	wise	honest	providential	obedient	wise
obnoxious	unprincipled	predatory	gallant	faithful	adventurous	modern	wise	directed
steadfast	shrewd	modern	petty	creative	efficient	regimental	hostile	courageous

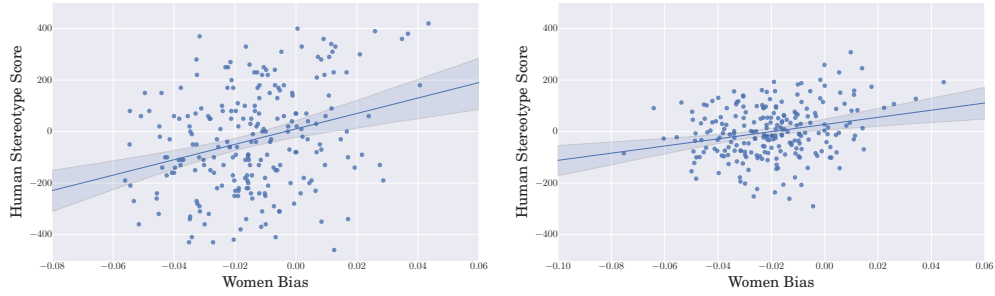
Table 14: Most Man adjectives in each decade in the SGNS embeddings.

1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
charming	charming	charming	delicate	delicate	sweet	attractive	maternal	maternal
placid	relaxed	delicate	placid	sweet	charming	maternal	attractive	morbid
delicate	delicate	soft	sweet	charming	soft	charming	masculine	artificial
passionate	amiable	hysterical	gentle	transparent	relaxed	sweet	impassive	physical
sweet	hysterical	transparent	soft	placid	attractive	caring	emotional	caring
dreamy	placid	sweet	warm	childish	placid	venomous	protective	emotional
indulgent	soft	relaxed	charming	soft	delicate	silly	relaxed	protective
playful	gentle	shy	childish	colorless	maternal	neat	charming	attractive
mellow	attractive	maternal	irritable	tasteless	indulgent	delicate	naive	soft
sentimental	sweet	smooth	maternal	agreeable	gentle	sensitive	responsive	tidy

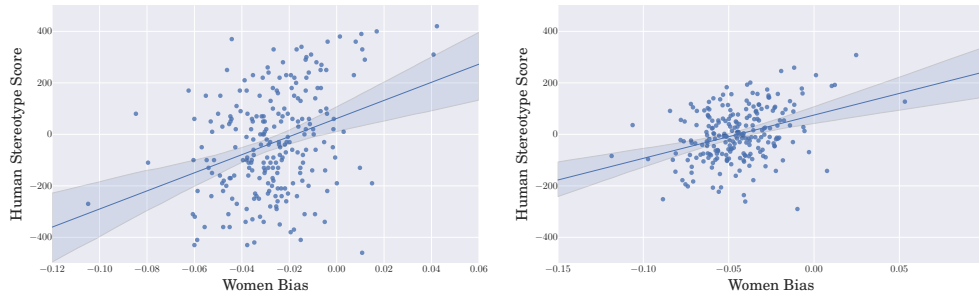
Table 15: Most Woman adjectives in each decade in the SGNS embeddings.

Adjectives

This subsection contains the supplementary material related to adjectives. In particular, we show the scatter plots and fit information corresponding the stereotype scores from (Williams and Best, 1977) and (Williams and Best, 1990) to the SGNS and SVD embeddings from the respective decades.



(a) 1990 SGNS vectors woman bias vs subjective scores from (Williams and Best, 1990). $p < 10^{-5}$, r-squared= .086. (b) 1970 SGNS vectors woman bias vs subjective scores from (Williams and Best, 1977). $p < .0002$, r-squared= .062.



(c) 1990 SVD vectors woman bias vs subjective scores from (Williams and Best, 1990). $p < 10^{-6}$, r-squared= .113. (d) 1970 SVD vectors woman bias vs subjective scores from (Williams and Best, 1977). $p < 10^{-7}$, r-squared= .127.

Figure 16: Human stereotype score vs relative norm distance from adjectives to the respective gender words in 1970 and 1990, using both SGNS and SVD vectors

Note the stereotype scores used in the plots are linear transformations of the scores reported in the original papers, done to standardize figures. Given a score r from 1990 (Williams and Best, 1990), the transformed score $r' = 500 - 10r$. Given a score from 1970 (Williams and Best, 1977), the transformed score $r' = 500 - r$.

Supplementary for gender time dynamical analysis, SGNS embeddings

Here, we provide regression tables and compare models trained for each year to the single model trained over all years.

Dep. Variable:	Woman Occupation Proportion	R-squared:	0.235
Model:	OLS	Adj. R-squared:	0.233
Method:	Least Squares	F-statistic:	190.4
Date:	Fri, 08 Sep 2017	Prob (F-statistic):	5.71e-38
Time:	14:16:19	Log-Likelihood:	-1271.6
No. Observations:	623	AIC:	2547.
Df Residuals:	621	BIC:	2556.
Df Model:	1		

	coef	std err	t	P> t	[95.0% Conf. Int.]
Relative Woman Similarity	36.0112	2.610	13.798	0.000	30.886 41.136
const	0.0561	0.149	0.377	0.706	-0.236 0.348

Omnibus:	2.527	Durbin-Watson:	2.064
Prob(Omnibus):	0.283	Jarque-Bera (JB):	2.603
Skew:	-0.048	Prob(JB):	0.272
Kurtosis:	3.302	Cond. No.	35.0

Table 17: Regression table for Figure 19.

Dep. Variable:	Woman Occupation Proportion	R-squared:	0.072
Model:	OLS	Adj. R-squared:	0.060
Method:	Least Squares	F-statistic:	5.972
Date:	Sun, 10 Sep 2017	Prob (F-statistic):	2.15e-07
Time:	14:18:53	Log-Likelihood:	-1331.6
No. Observations:	623	AIC:	2681.
Df Residuals:	614	BIC:	2721.
Df Model:	8		

	coef	std err	t	P> t	[95.0% Conf. Int.]
const	-1.5611	0.075	-20.923	0.000	-1.708 -1.415
yr-1910.0	-0.9255	0.241	-3.839	0.000	-1.399 -0.452
yr-1920.0	-0.6298	0.238	-2.648	0.008	-1.097 -0.163
yr-1930.0	-0.5559	0.227	-2.444	0.015	-1.003 -0.109
yr-1940.0	-0.7718	0.246	-3.134	0.002	-1.255 -0.288
yr-1950.0	-0.2511	0.232	-1.084	0.279	-0.706 0.204
yr-1960.0	-0.0236	0.230	-0.103	0.918	-0.476 0.428
yr-1970.0	0.2040	0.230	0.886	0.376	-0.248 0.656
yr-1980.0	0.5712	0.233	2.450	0.015	0.113 1.029
yr-1990.0	0.8214	0.233	3.523	0.000	0.363 1.279

Table 18: Regression for occupation proportion with the decade as a categorical independent variable. This table formalizes the understanding that average Woman occupation proportion has changed considerable over time.

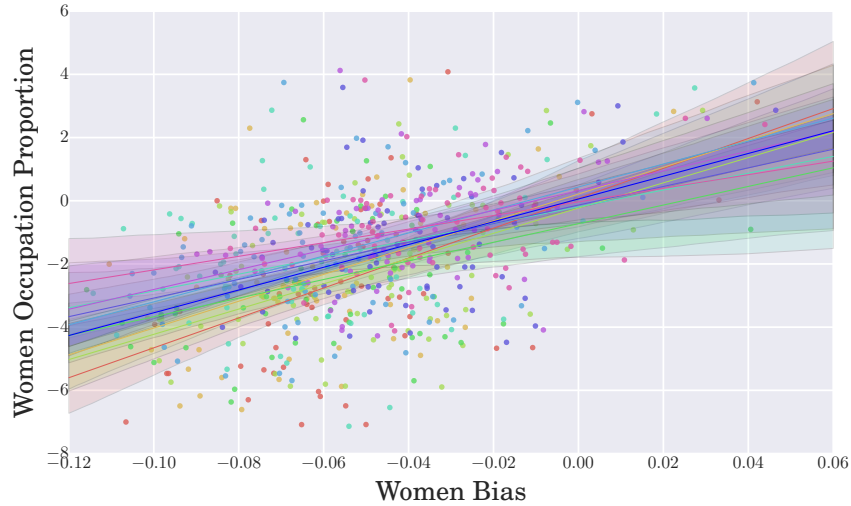


Figure 19: Scatter plot for occupation proportion vs embedding bias all years of SGNS embeddings, with individually trained models. Note that the regression coefficients (in Table 20) are similar, especially for adjacent decades, and there is little loss training a single model for all years as opposed to individual per-year models.

Table 20: Regression coefficients for each individually trained model.

Year	coefficient \pm std	p-value
1910	47.32 \pm 9.86	0.000010
1920	42.42 \pm 8.03	0.000002
1930	39.95 \pm 7.48	0.000001
1940	29.46 \pm 7.29	0.000152
1950	26.62 \pm 8.20	0.0018
1960	36.35 \pm 7.82	0.000015
1970	29.43 \pm 8.75	0.00125
1980	31.27 \pm 8.09	0.00025
1990	21.52 \pm 7.52	0.0056

Table 21: Model performance (occupation proportion vs embedding bias) for individual models trained on each decade compared to a single model trained for all decades. Note that the r-squared value for the combined model is .235.

Year	r-squared with individual model	MSE with individual model	MSE with combined model
1910	0.268	4.73	5.18
1920	0.301	3.85	3.93
1930	0.284	3.51	3.75
1940	0.214	3.31	3.53
1950	0.133	3.77	3.95
1960	0.236	3.41	3.54
1970	0.139	2.89	2.92
1980	0.180	2.17	2.40
1990	0.107	1.94	2.19

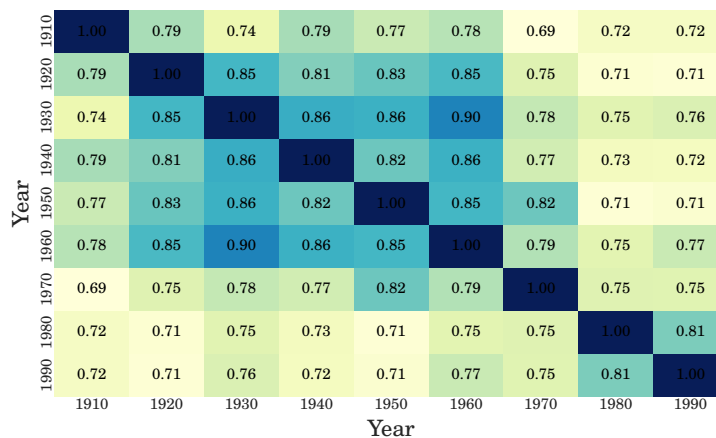


Figure 22: Pearson correlation in embedding bias scores for occupations over time between embeddings for each decade.

Supplementary for gender time dynamical analysis, SVD embeddings

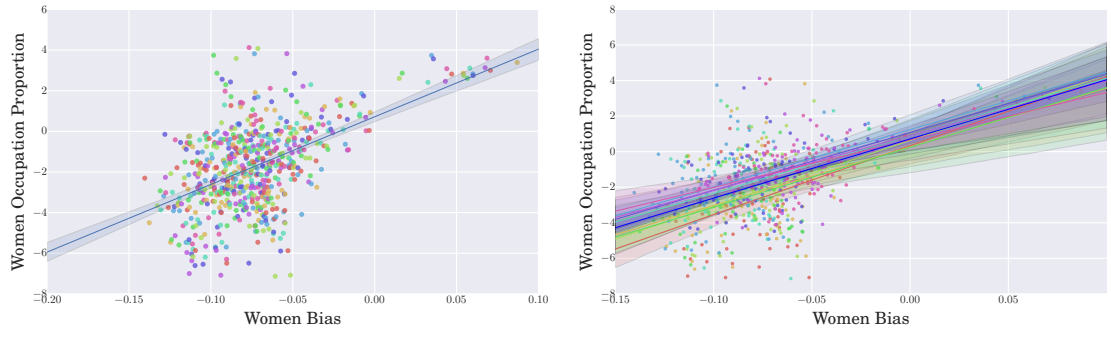
In this section we repeat entire gender time dynamical analysis, using SVD embeddings, as a robustness check.

Dep. Variable:	Woman Occupation Proportion	R-squared:	0.266
Model:	OLS	Adj. R-squared:	0.265
Method:	Least Squares	F-statistic:	225.1
Date:	Sun, 10 Sep 2017	Prob (F-statistic):	1.23e-43
Time:	12:31:40	Log-Likelihood:	-1258.6
No. Observations:	623	AIC:	2521.
Df Residuals:	621	BIC:	2530.
Df Model:	1		

	coef	std err	t	P> t	[95.0% Conf. Int.]
Relative Woman Similarity	33.3034	2.220	15.002	0.000	28.944 37.663
const	0.7163	0.178	4.022	0.000	0.367 1.066

Omnibus:	7.552	Durbin-Watson:	1.920
Prob(Omnibus):	0.023	Jarque-Bera (JB):	11.040
Skew:	0.031	Prob(JB):	0.00401
Kurtosis:	3.649	Cond. No.	30.5

Table 23: Regression table for Figure 24a



(a) Single model trained for all time (b) Separate model trained for each decade

Figure 24: Scatter plot for occupation proportion vs embedding bias all years of SVD embeddings, along with individually trained regression lines.

Table 25: Regression coefficients for each individually trained model.

Year	coefficient \pm std	p-value
1910	38.72 ± 8.61	0.000030
1920	32.96 ± 7.00	0.000014
1930	36.96 ± 6.91	$9.95e-07$
1940	33.73 ± 6.89	0.000008
1950	32.40 ± 6.84	0.000011
1960	32.36 ± 6.71	0.000008
1970	32.60 ± 5.74	$2.84e-07$
1980	30.71 ± 6.48	0.000012
1990	26.71 ± 5.81	0.000019

Table 26: Model performance (occupation proportion vs embedding bias) for individual models trained on each decade compared to a single model trained for all decades. Note that the r-squared value for the combined model is .266.

Year	r-squared with individual model	MSE with individual model	MSE with combined model
1910	0.243	4.89	5.52
1920	0.254	4.10	4.28
1930	0.284	3.51	3.65
1940	0.285	3.01	3.27
1950	0.246	3.28	3.35
1960	0.249	3.35	3.72
1970	0.316	2.30	2.47
1980	0.248	1.99	2.12
1990	0.237	1.66	1.77

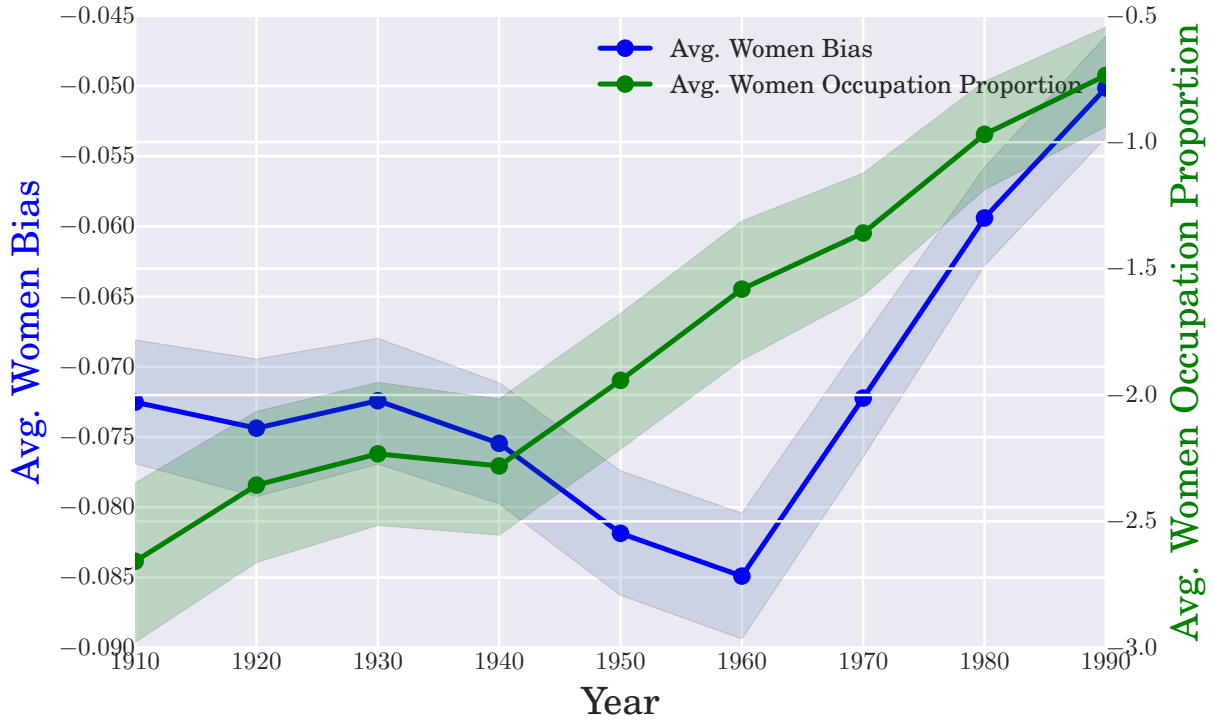
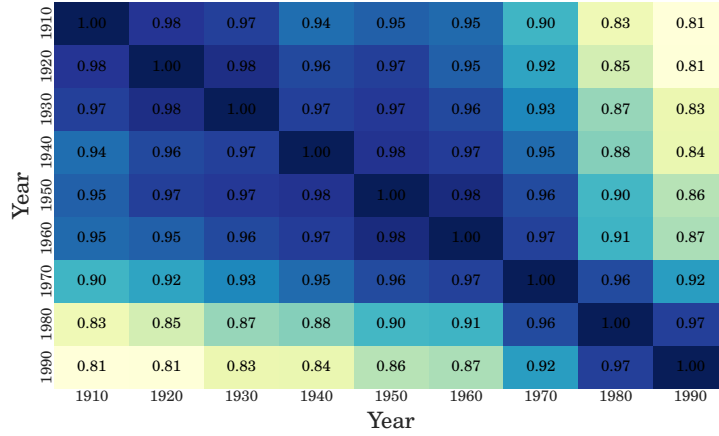
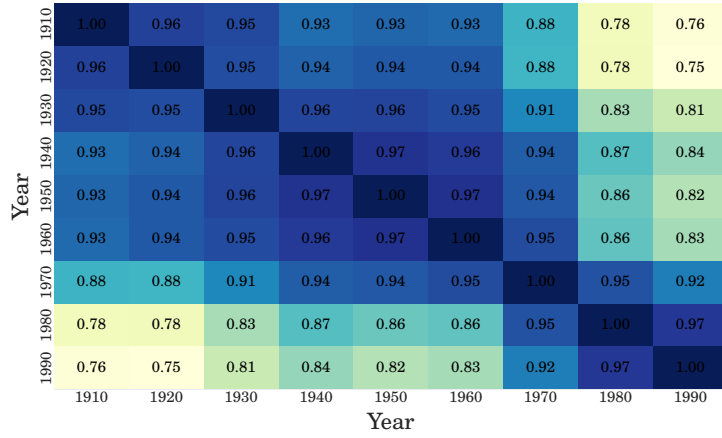


Figure 27: Gender bias over time in COHA dataset in occupations vs the average log proportion. In blue is the woman bias in the SVD embeddings, while the in green is the average log proportion of women in the occupation.



(a) Pearson correlation in SVD embedding bias scores for occupations over time between embeddings for each decade.



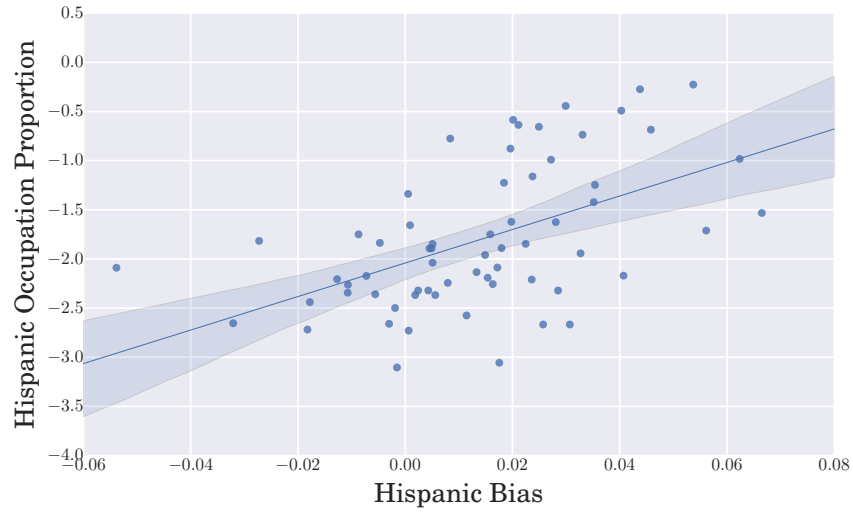
(b) Pearson correlation in SVD embedding bias scores for adjectives over time between embeddings for each decade.

Appendix C Ethnic groups

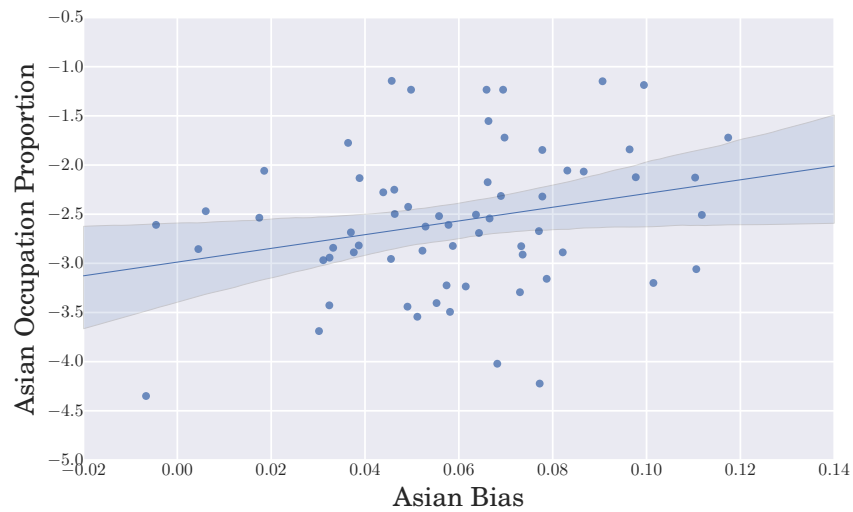
This section provides additional information and figures related to Section 4

C.1 Snapshot Analysis

This section contains supplementary material associated with “snapshot” analysis of ethnic bias.



(a) Conditional Log Proportion of Hispanics (compared to Whites) in an occupation vs relative norm distance from occupations to the respective gender words in Google News vectors. More positive indicates more Hispanic associated, for both proportion of occupations and for relative distance. $p < 10^{-5}$ and with r-squared= .277.



(b) Conditional Log Proportion of Asians (compared to Whites) in an occupation vs relative norm distance from occupations to the respective gender words in Google News vectors. More positive indicates more Asian associated, for both proportion of occupations and for relative distance. $p < .05$ and with r-squared= .069.

Dep. Variable:	Hispanic Occupation Proportion	R-squared:	0.277
Model:	OLS	Adj. R-squared:	0.266
Method:	Least Squares	F-statistic:	23.81
Date:	Sat, 09 Sep 2017	Prob (F-statistic):	7.77e-06
Time:	19:58:08	Log-Likelihood:	-59.188
No. Observations:	64	AIC:	122.4
Df Residuals:	62	BIC:	126.7
Df Model:	1		

	coef	std err	t	P> t	[95.0% Conf. Int.]
Relative Hispanic Similarity	17.0433	3.493	4.880	0.000	10.062 24.025
const	-2.0415	0.091	-22.357	0.000	-2.224 -1.859

Omnibus:	2.268	Durbin-Watson:	2.273
Prob(Omnibus):	0.322	Jarque-Bera (JB):	1.562
Skew:	0.152	Prob(JB):	0.458
Kurtosis:	2.297	Cond. No.	45.1

Table 30: Regression table corresponding to Figure 29a

Dep. Variable:	Asian Occupation Proportion	R-squared:	0.069
Model:	OLS	Adj. R-squared:	0.054
Method:	Least Squares	F-statistic:	4.595
Date:	Sat, 09 Sep 2017	Prob (F-statistic):	0.0360
Time:	19:58:06	Log-Likelihood:	-68.506
No. Observations:	64	AIC:	141.0
Df Residuals:	62	BIC:	145.3
Df Model:	1		

	coef	std err	t	P> t	[95.0% Conf. Int.]
Relative Asian Similarity	6.9750	3.254	2.144	0.036	0.471 13.479
const	-2.9873	0.212	-14.073	0.000	-3.412 -2.563

Omnibus:	0.012	Durbin-Watson:	1.911
Prob(Omnibus):	0.994	Jarque-Bera (JB):	0.079
Skew:	-0.025	Prob(JB):	0.961
Kurtosis:	2.835	Cond. No.	36.4

Table 31: Regression table corresponding to Figure 29b

C.2 Dynamic Analysis

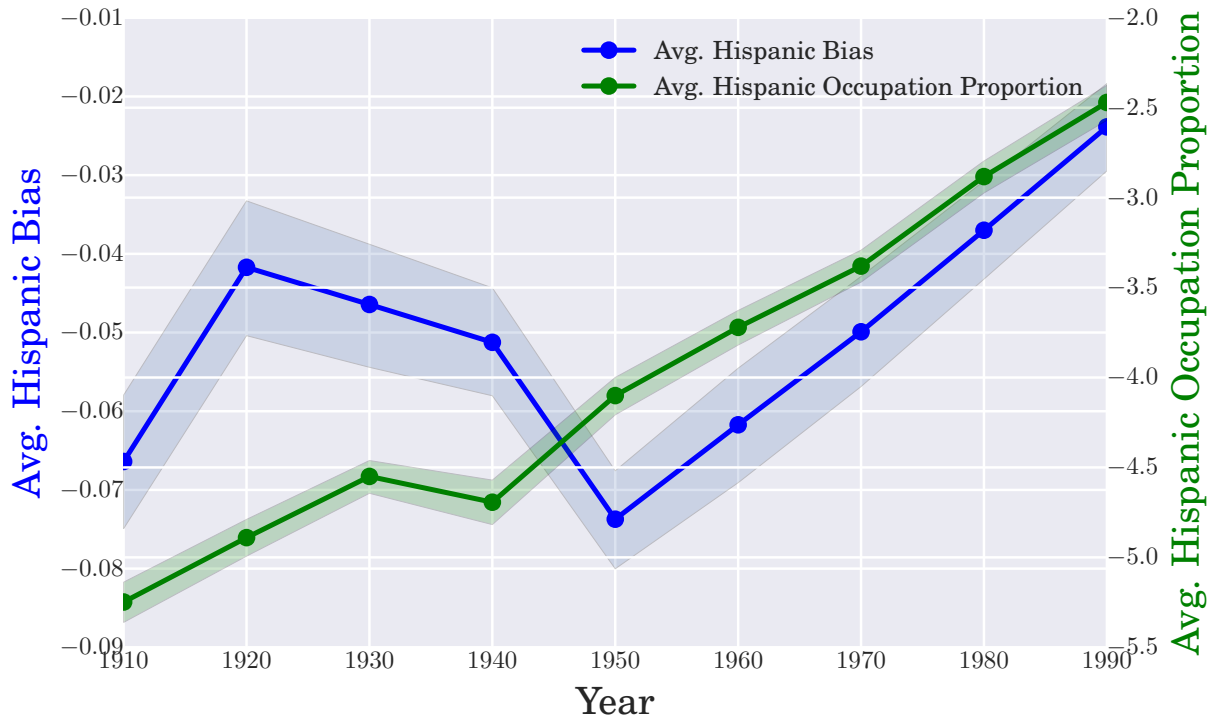


Figure 32: Ethnic (Hispanic vs White) bias over time in COHA dataset in occupations vs the average log proportion. In blue is the relative Hispanic bias in the SGNS embeddings, while in green is the average conditional log proportion of Hispanic in the occupation.

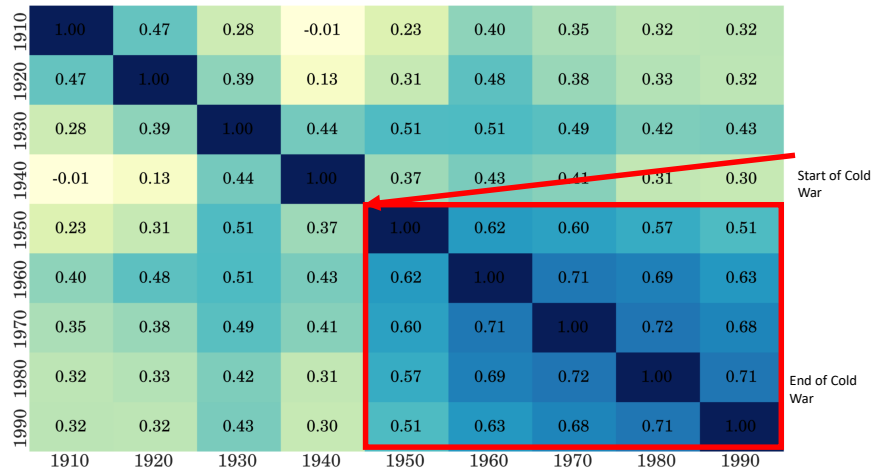


Figure 33: Pearson correlation in SGNS embedding Russian bias scores for adjectives over time between embeddings for each decade.

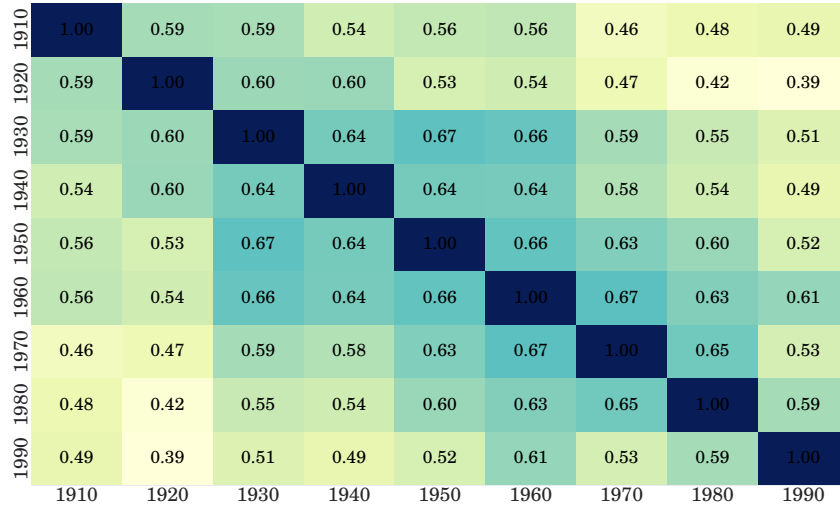


Figure 34: Pearson correlation in SGNS embedding Hispanic bias scores for adjectives over time between embeddings for each decade.

1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
irresponsible	mellow	hateful	solemn	disorganized	imprudent	cynical	superstitious	inhibited
envious	relaxed	unchanging	reactive	outrageous	pedantic	solemn	upright	passive
barbaric	haughty	oppressed	outrageous	pompous	irresponsible	mellow	providential	dissolute
aggressive	tense	contemptible	bizarre	unstable	inoffensive	discontented	unstable	haughty
transparent	hateful	steadfast	fanatical	effeminate	sensual	dogmatic	forceful	complacent
monstrous	venomous	relaxed	assertive	unprincipled	venomous	aloof	appreciative	forceful
hateful	stubborn	cruel	unprincipled	venomous	active	forgetful	dry	fixed
cruel	pedantic	disorganized	barbaric	disobedient	inert	dominating	reactive	active
greedy	transparent	brutal	haughty	predatory	callous	disconcerting	fixed	sensitive
bizarre	compassionate	intolerant	disconcerting	boisterous	inhibited	inhibited	sensitive	hearty

Table 35: Top Asian (vs White) Adjectives over time by relative norm difference.