

Research Statement

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1 Vision

My research addresses issues and policies that affect the economics of discrimination with a specific interest in LGBTQIA+ households and individuals. With the improvement of data sources used to identify these individuals, I can examine how these marginalized groups are affected by these major policies in ways researchers could not observe just a couple decades ago. Due to this, and improved methods of modern applied econometrics, we can create research and write papers that can effect future policy changes. I have conducted research pertaining to policy changes relating to Same-Sex Marriage (SSM) and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) using health data and labor data to look at family formation. I have also created and run an experiment to generate my own data to test the validity of employment protections for transgender individuals. All this in an effort to work towards my goal of making my research central to driving these evidence-based changes in these policies, and I plan to devote my future work to achieving similar outcomes.

2 Dissertation Research

2.1 Same-Sex Marriage and Birth Rates

Same-sex marriage has had substantial impacts on the composition of same-sex households. Due to difficulties in creating data that identifies these individuals and the small size of this community, researchers have struggled to examine fertility methods among this group. Using data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), manually linked across years, and data from the American Community Survey (ACS), I employ these sources to answer new questions using recently developed econometric methods, such as staggered timing difference-in-difference models. Two of my papers use these datasets and aim to fill this gap in the literature.

The first is my job market paper, “Another Baby Boom? How Same-Sex Marriage and the Affordable Care Act Increased Births in the U.S.” I use CDC data to investigate

the effects of same-sex marriage (SSM) and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) on Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) clinics. I find that the ACA caused sustained increases in frozen (cheaper) birth methods in states with insurance coverage mandates relative to states without these mandates. This increase is due to the expansion of that coverage to include Medicaid. Meanwhile, I find that SSM caused increases in frozen births that specifically use donated materials, driven by same-sex individuals increasing their use of ART after the policy change. This effect returns to zero due to an exhaustion of demand and the growth in the number of clinics after these policies. This suggests that any policy changes overturning either the ACA or SSM could lead to ART clinic closures due to reduced demand, along with decreases in the number of births resulting from these clinics.

This research was influenced by findings from my work on “Same-Sex Marriage Legalization and Adoptive Same-Sex Families.” In this paper, I use ACS data to identify and examine adoptive same-sex families and the effect that SSM has on family formation. Using a control group of opposite-sex households, I observe a decrease in the number of adoptive lesbian households after SSM but no change in adoptive gay households. This is coupled with large increases in household income in the bottom quartile of adoptive lesbian households and no changes in the number of children in same-sex households. Therefore, this is likely due to individuals in the bottom quartile viewing ART as a substitute for child adoption, leading them to leave the sample. This makes sense, as the spouse with the lower salary would be more likely to carry the child, while the higher-salaried individual is more likely to keep their job to support the family.

2.2 Transgender Discrimination

Due to the difficulties in collecting data to study same-sex individuals, it can often be beneficial to create an experiment to test hypotheses that represent these individuals without endangering them or requiring a sufficiently large sample. It also avoids issues where the individual may not be identifiable as same-sex in the scenario of interest. One research

method to address this is by conducting a resume audit study to test hiring discrimination while changing only one attribute of a resume. I use this approach to explore previously unanswered questions regarding transgender discrimination in the hiring process and to assess the efficacy of state-level protections in mitigating this discrimination.

My paper, “State-Level Protections for LGBT+ Individuals and Hiring Discrimination Against Non-Binary, Transgender Individuals,” uses the aforementioned resume audit study to attempt to answer three questions. The first is: What is the magnitude of discrimination against individuals who include pronouns on their resumes? The second is: Do individuals with non-binary pronouns experience greater discrimination than those with cis-gendered pronouns? The final and largest contribution is to examine whether state-level employment protections for LGBT+ individuals have a spillover effect on the hiring process for individuals who use pronouns, as these may serve as an identifier of a transgender identity. After conducting a power test in New Jersey, I calculated a necessary sample size of 3,200 resumes, sent in pairs of two to 1,600 jobs, with one resume containing pronouns and the other containing none. I began sending out resumes in April 2024, and I expect to have final results fully collected by December, with analysis completed over Winter 2024.

3 Future Research Directions

I plan to focus my future research primarily on LGBTQIA+ individuals and households, as well as other minority groups. I believe that we are finally collecting data on these populations that can provide valuable insights into the evolution of policies and events that affect them. In working with these groups, I plan to leverage my expertise in health, labor, and experimental economics to address questions that other economists have previously been unable to answer.