

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Economics

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Welcome!

My talk today

In economic surveys, the gender of individual participants is almost always categorized as “male” or “female.” In this talk, I discuss the limitations that arise from this categorization for how economists can understand economic processes and outcomes, and consider what economists could better understand if individual-level data were not constrained by these static and binary categories. I further offer a (slowly growing) list of data sources that contain information on the economic circumstances of transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex individuals. Finally, I offer some thoughts on how economics might better conceptualize gender.

Who are you?

- ▷ Economists working on economics of SO/GI
- ▷ LGBTQI+ economists
- ▷ The overlap

Goals of this talk

Discuss data issues - on big level (“macro” level of analysis)
(How) can economics deal with sexual orientation & gender identity?



Can economics understand issues of SO/GI? (1/2)

We do know some stuff!

- ▶ Gay men earn less; lesbians earn more (“kind of”). Bi people do badly in terms of income and health. Trans people face discrimination and have low income.
- ▶ In context of standard economic theory: discrimination (experiments – but measuring SO effects or effect of being out?), human capital, assortative mating, household labor supply, division of labor.

Can economics understand issues of SO/GI? (2/2)

But we don't know, *really*, about how SO/GI affect economic lives.

- ▶ Economic opportunities; human capital choices; occupational segregation; wealth, savings, and retirement; household formation and decision making; economic ideology, risk preferences, investment confidence...; time use; consumption, expenditures; relevant “appropriate” traits and competencies; ... (socialization);
- ▶ Not unique to issues of sexual orientation! Same is true of race, of nationality, of gender, of migration background - though degrees differ
- ▶ So do we just keep keeping on, doing what we can do, and saying it's enough?

Sex: “Males” and “females” (1/4)

Precisely LGBTQI+ community who can recognize the shortcoming here.

- ▶ Not everyone identifies as one of these two groups; categories are not truly static
- ▶ Analyses using them do not capture economic processes & experiences
- ▶ Trans people confirm different treatment of “men” and “women”
- ▶ This issue goes way beyond trans, gender non-conforming, and intersex people...

Sex: “Males” and “females” (2/4)

Precisely LGBTQI+ community who can best understand these issues

- ▷ LGBTQI+ economists, who want to understand how the economy works, will have to be the agents of change
- ▷ LGBTQI+ community has always been the forefront of social change
- ▷ This is NOT the idea of this group (will be lots of standard labor papers etc.!) but for a first meeting it's good food for thought ;)

Sex: “Males” and “females” (3/4)

What does it all mean? If economics is about understanding the economy...

- ▷ Open up methodological tool-kit
- ▷ Do better with theoretical frameworks
 - ▷ e.g. epistemological starting point of social constructivism
 - ▷ the *real* gender problem in economics
- ▷ Embrace normativity? *The Public Professor*

Sex: “Males” and “females” (4/4)

- ▷ Part of an ERC grant proposal
- ▷ This group will be great for cooperating on European-specific grants

Some data we do have (1/4)

Great overviews:

- ▶ [LGBTdata.com](https://lgbtdata.com) - not a lot on economics
- ▶ European Commission Report: “Data collection in relation to LGBTI People”
- ▶ European Commission Report: “Legal gender recognition in the EU. The journeys of trans people towards full equality”

Some data we do have (2/4)

Large international data sets

- ▶ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) - covers all current member states
 - ▶ “Being Trans in the EU”
 - ▶ “EU LGBT Survey”
 - ▶ Online survey, 93,000 individuals across Europe
 - ▶ Questions on discrimination, violence, verbal abuse or hate speech on the grounds of SO/GI.
- ▶ Eurobarometer surveys on discrimination
 - ▶ 2012 -> adds GI on top of SO
 - ▶ 2015 -> dedicated set of questions relating to LGBT people – widest and most exhaustive set of data on social acceptance of LGBT people in the European Union available to date
- ▶ ESS: since 2001 people can say if they have faced discrimination based on “sexuality”

Some data we do have (3/4)


Trans-specific data

- ▶ 2008 California Transgender Economic Health Survey (incl. information on economic status and employment)
- ▶ 2015 US transgender survey
 - ▶ 27,715 respondents
 - ▶ Personal and household income, education, employment
- ▶ <https://www.census2011.co.in/transgender.php> - the first census in India to collect details on transgender population along with education/literacy, caste, and employment
- ▶ National Survey on Social Attitudes towards Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression in China, which was conducted in 2015 - 2016 by UNDP

Some data we do have (4/4)

Studies

- ▶ Mizok, L. & Hopwood, R. (2017). "Economic Challenges Associated With Transphobia and Implications for Practice With Transgender and Gender Diverse Individuals." *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*.
<https://psycnet.apa.org/fulltext/2017-52620-001.pdf>
 - ▶ interviews/case study
- ▶ Davis, M., & Wertz, K. (2010). "When laws are not enough: A study of the economic health of transgender people and the need for a multidisciplinary approach to economic justice." *Seattle Journal for Social Justice* 8, 467–495.
- ▶ Grant, Jaime M., Lisa A. Mottet, Justin Tanis, Jack Harrison, Jody L. Herman, and Mara Keisling. "Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey." Washington: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011.
 - ▶ 6,450 trans and gender non-conforming people

Comments very welcome! Now and at
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