

# Making Migration Sexy: How State and National Policies Influence Migration of Same-Sex Couples

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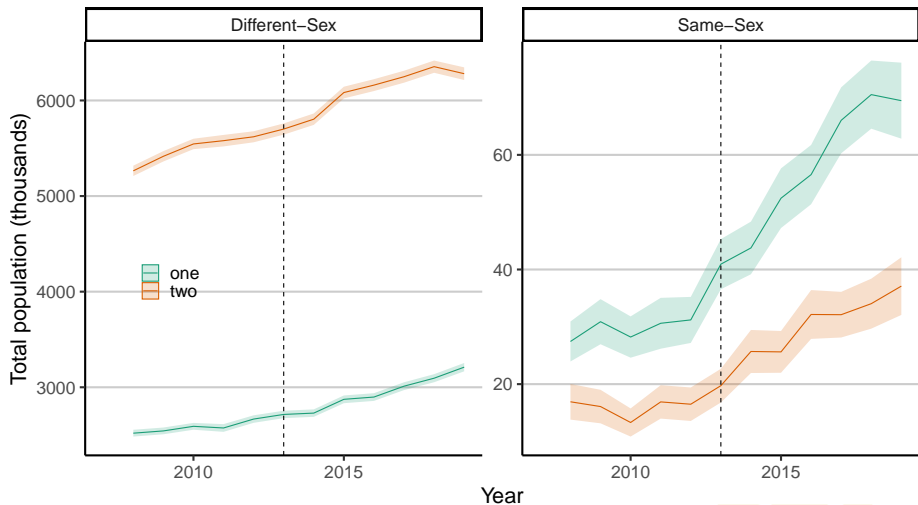


# Introduction

- In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the Defense of Marriage Act
- From 2013 to 2019, 76% increase in immigrant same-sex couples, compared to 13% for different-sex
- How has changing policy environment, both at country of origin and in U.S. states, contributed toward growth in immigrants in same-sex couples?
- How can understanding LGB migration help us better understand the links between migration, policy, and identity more broadly?



# Introduction



# Conventional Explanations

- Migration theory relies heavily on economic and network theories
- Recently, culture and social policy considered
- Little previous research applying migration theories to same-sex couples. Do they hold up?



# Our Intervention

- We argue that it is imperative to take sexuality, and the state's role in governing sexuality, into account for understanding migratory patterns
- This population is particularly sensitive to changing policy
  - Same-sex relationships were not recognized by the U.S. government before the 2013 DOMA decision
  - Policy may overpower traditional migration theories



# Our Intervention

- We consider policy at both country of origin and U.S. state
- Country of origin
  - Do LGB people choose to flee repressive policy contexts?
  - Or does progressive policy create the capacity for migration?
- U.S. state
  - Do immigrants in same-sex couples, like their U.S.-born counterparts, choose to live in more progressive states?



# Identifying Same-Sex Couples in the ACS

- 2008 to 2019 American Community Survey (ACS)
  - immigrated at age 18 or older post-1990
- Immigrants in same-sex couples are identified as foreign-born respondents who live with a same-sex married or unmarried partner
  - This necessarily excludes single and non-cohabiting LGB individuals
- Sample of 7,500 immigrants in same-sex couples compared to 947,227 immigrants in different-sex couples



# Variables

- Explanatory variables
  - Country of origin LGBT policy index (sum of 14 policies)
  - U.S. state LGBT policy index (sum of 8 policies)
- Controls
  - Factors from standard migration models, including country- and state-level economic, political, and demographic variables from the UN, U.S. government, and other sources
  - The relative size of the co-national immigrant population as a proxy for immigrant networks
  - Individual sociodemographic variables from ACS





# Methods

- **Analysis 1:** Country-level percentage of immigrants in same-sex couples, by country and year of immigration
  - OLS regression with country fixed effects
- **Analysis 2:** State-level percentage of immigrants in same-sex couples, by country and year of immigration
  - OLS regression with state and country fixed effects
- **Analysis 3:** Individual-level models predicting state policy environment
  - Ordered logistic regression with survey-year fixed effects

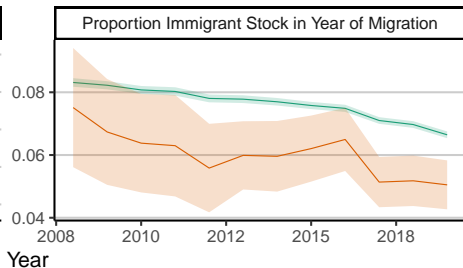
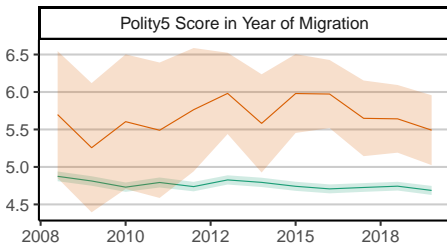
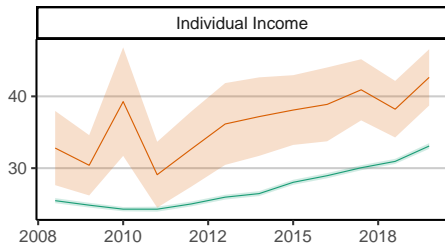
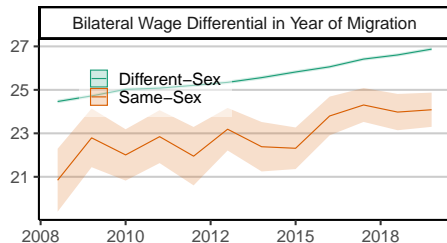


# Results

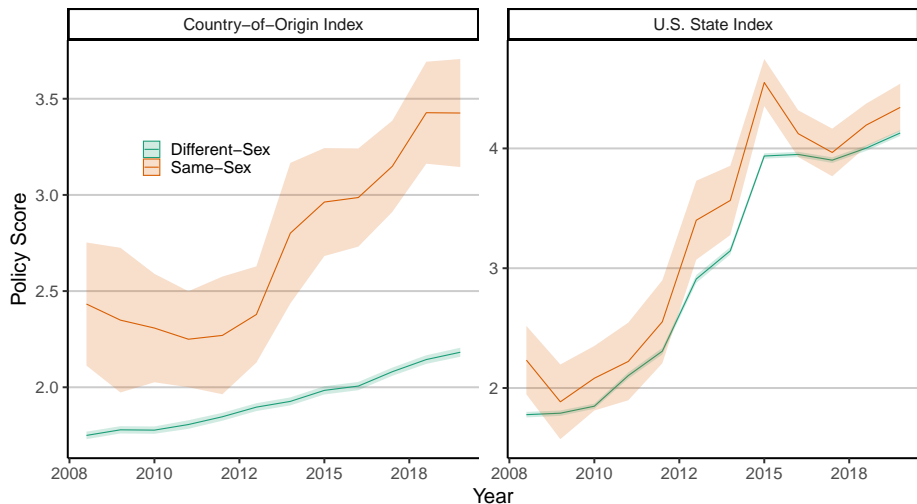
## Results



# Descriptive Statistics



# Descriptive Statistics



# Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Sending countries ranked by proportion immigrant couples with same-sex partners

Rank	Country of origin	Proportion same-sex	Mean policy score
1	Belgium	2.98 %	6.30
2	Australia	2.72 %	5.08
3	Netherlands	2.60 %	9.24
4	Malaysia	2.55 %	-0.90
5	Bahamas	2.43 %	0.85
6	Mongolia	2.41 %	2.26
7	Zimbabwe	2.38 %	-0.96
8	New Zealand	2.37 %	6.99
9	Finland	2.35 %	5.67
10	Singapore	2.34 %	0.10

Source: American Community Survey 2008-2019. Authors' calculations.

# Descriptive Statistics

Table 2: States ranked by proportion immigrant couples with same-sex partners

Rank	State	Proportion same-sex	Mean policy score
1	Vermont	2.10 %	5.26
2	Maine	1.51 %	4.86
3	Montana	1.47 %	0.94
4	Missouri	1.11 %	1.96
5	Massachusetts	1.10 %	4.80
6	New York	1.08 %	4.90
7	Florida	0.99 %	1.00
8	New Hampshire	0.95 %	4.40
9	Minnesota	0.92 %	4.67
10	New Mexico	0.92 %	4.80

*Source:* American Community Survey 2008-2019. Authors' calculations.

# Model Results: Country-of-Origin Effects

Table 3: Percent of immigrants in same-sex couples by year of immigration and country of origin.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>				
	Percent in same-sex couples by country-year				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Country LGBT policy score	0.037*** (0.004)	0.036*** (0.005)	0.021*** (0.005)	−0.006 (0.005)	−0.015* (0.006)
Polity5 democracy score		0.003 (0.002)	−0.002 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)
Post-2013				0.310*** (0.022)	0.250*** (0.034)
Country score × Post-2013					0.026** (0.010)
Country controls?	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Country FEs?	no	no	yes	yes	yes
Observations	30,078	30,078	30,078	30,078	30,078

Note: †p<0.1; \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001

# Model Results: State Effects

Table 4: Percent same-sex in by country of origin, U.S. state, and survey year.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Percent in same-sex couples by state-country-year					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
State LGBT policy score	0.063*** (0.016)	0.058*** (0.016)	0.026 (0.035)	0.015 (0.035)	−0.002 (0.035)	0.002 (0.036)
Country LGBT policy score		0.078*** (0.009)	0.071*** (0.009)	0.120** (0.038)	0.090* (0.039)	−0.007 (0.047)
Post-2013					0.240*** (0.068)	0.110 (0.077)
Country score × Post-2013						0.075*** (0.021)
State controls and FEs?	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Country controls and FEs?	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes
Observations	35,636	35,636	35,636	35,636	35,636	35,636

Note: †p<0.1; \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001



# Model Results: Individual Analysis

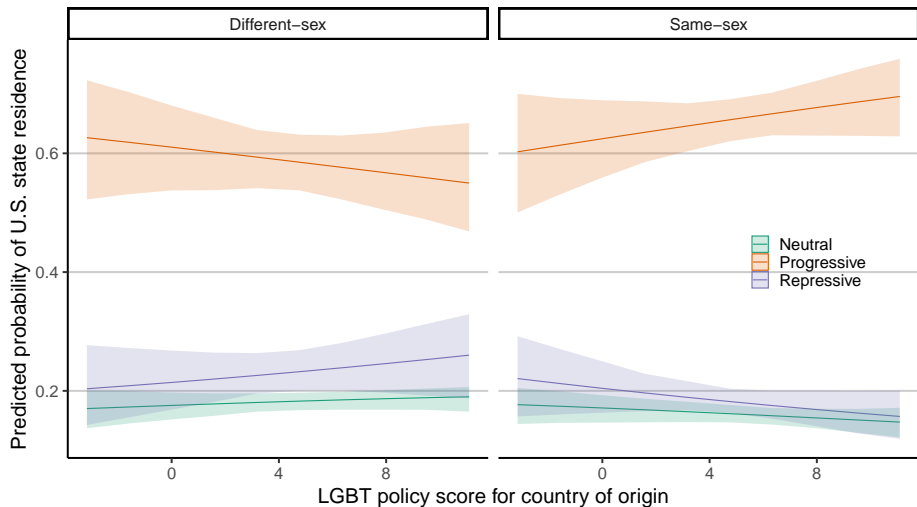
Table 5: Individual ordered logit analysis of three-category state policy score.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Binned state LGBT policy score		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Same-sex	0.190*** (0.025)	0.110** (0.035)	21.000*** (0.0004)
Country LGBT policy score		-0.044*** (0.003)	-0.030*** (0.003)
Same-sex × country score		0.041*** (0.009)	0.051*** (0.009)
Survey year FEs?	yes	yes	yes
Individual controls?	no	no	yes
Observations	107,500	107,500	107,500

Note: †p<0.1; \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001

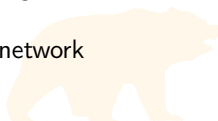


# Model Results: Individual Analysis



# Discussion

- Immigrants in same-sex couples have higher income, occupational prestige, and education than those in different-sex couples, and they come from countries with smaller wage and unemployment gaps with the U.S.
- Progressive countries send higher proportions of immigrants in same-sex couples
  - Contrary to existing, mostly qualitative scholarship on queer migration
- Mixed evidence that immigrants in same-sex couples reside in more progressive U.S. states
- Policies not explicitly related to migration may shape migration flows
  - Importance of migration scholars studying the state's governance of identity
  - Need to move beyond the traditional economic and network explanations of migration



# Thank You

- Nathan I. Hoffmann (nathanihoff@ucla.edu)
- Kristopher Velasco (krisvelasco@utexas.edu)
- Full paper on SocArXiv: <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/hxjkt/>

