

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

ASA 2021 Annual Meeting

Nathan I. Hoffmann, Sociology, UCLA
Kristopher Velasco, Sociology, Princeton

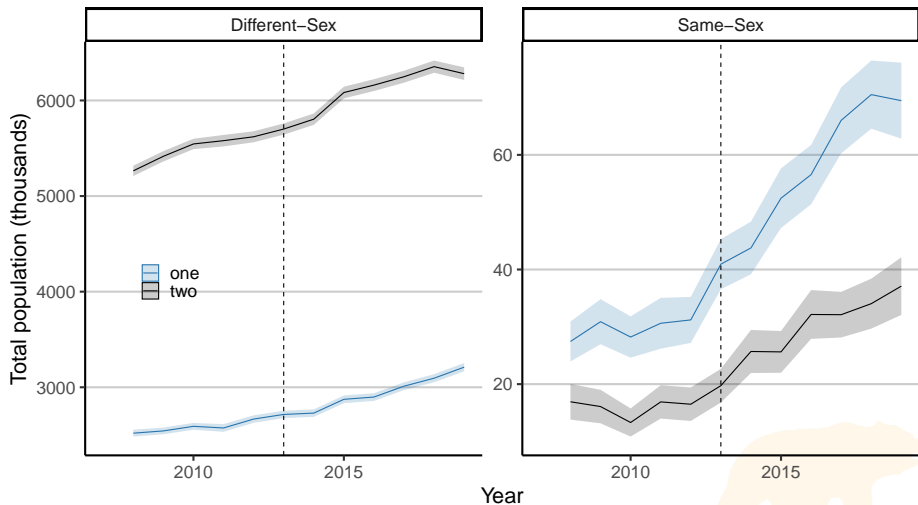


Introduction

- 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

- Incorporate an aspirations-capabilities framework (De Haas 2021)
- We argue that the state's regulation of sexuality influences migratory patterns through altering the aspirations and capabilities to migrate
- This population is particularly sensitive to changing policy
 - Same-sex relationships were not recognized by the U.S. government before the 2013 DOMA decision
 - Growing awareness of LGBTQ+ rights within global discourses increases the saliency of considering such policies to motivate migration
 - 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 7,011 immigrants in same-sex couples compared to 898,869 immigrants in different-sex couples



Variables

- Explanatory variables
 - Country of origin LGBT policy index (sum of 14 policies) (Velasco 2020)
 - U.S. state LGBT policy index (sum of 8 policies) (Movement Advancement Project 2020)
- 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
 - See paper for more details.

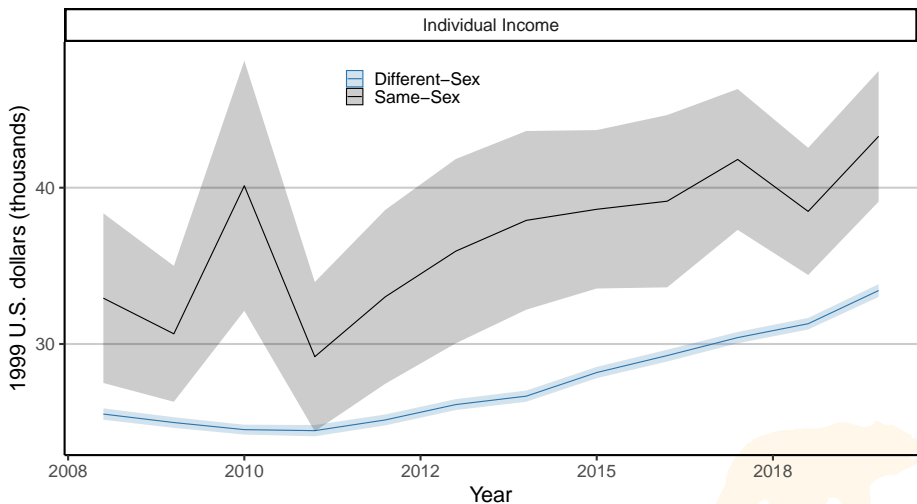


Results

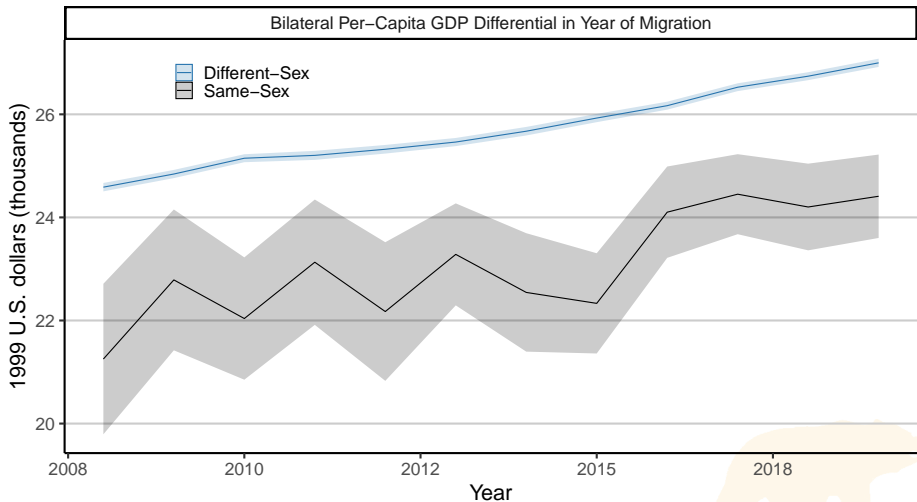
Results



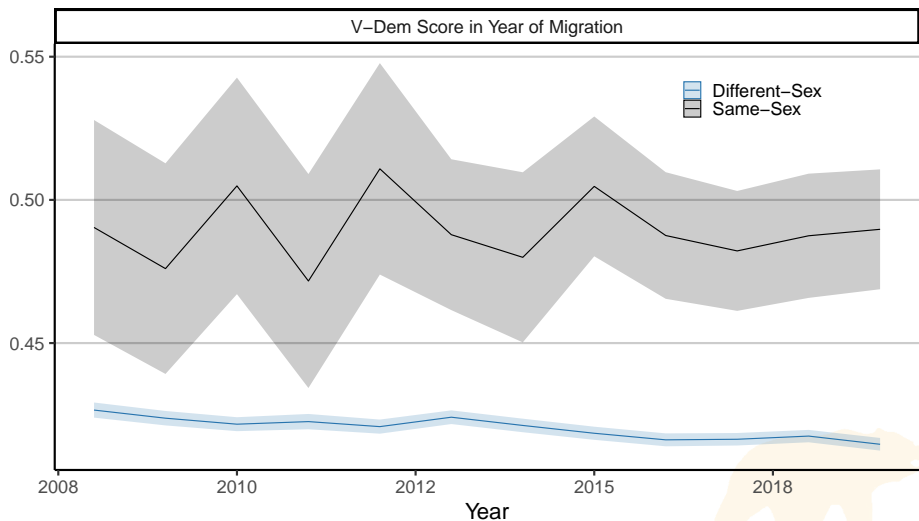
Descriptive Statistics



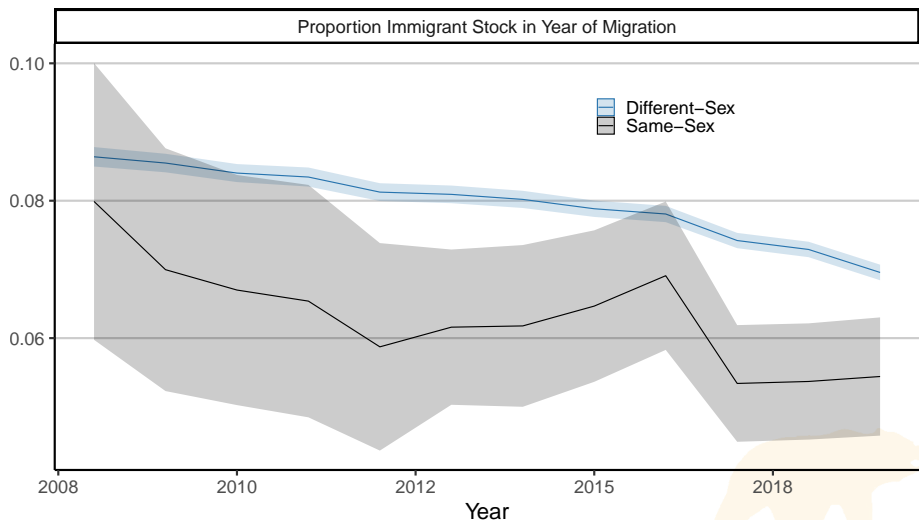
Descriptive Statistics



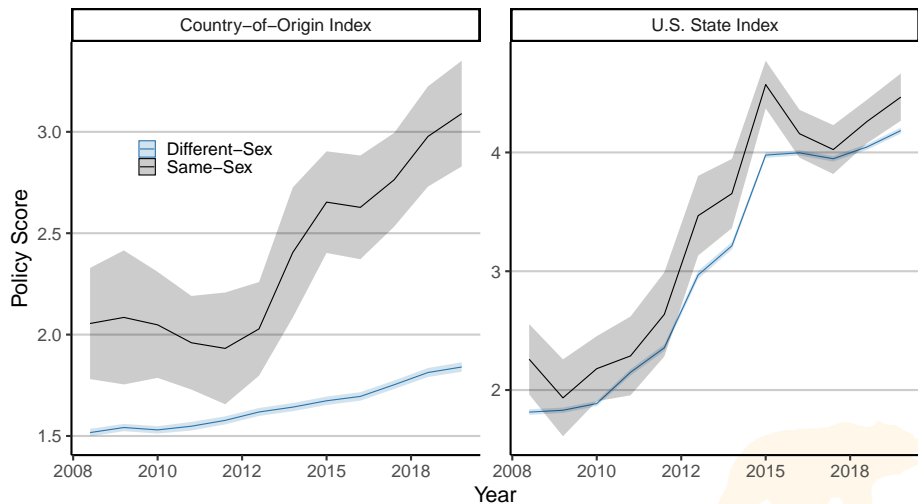
Descriptive Statistics



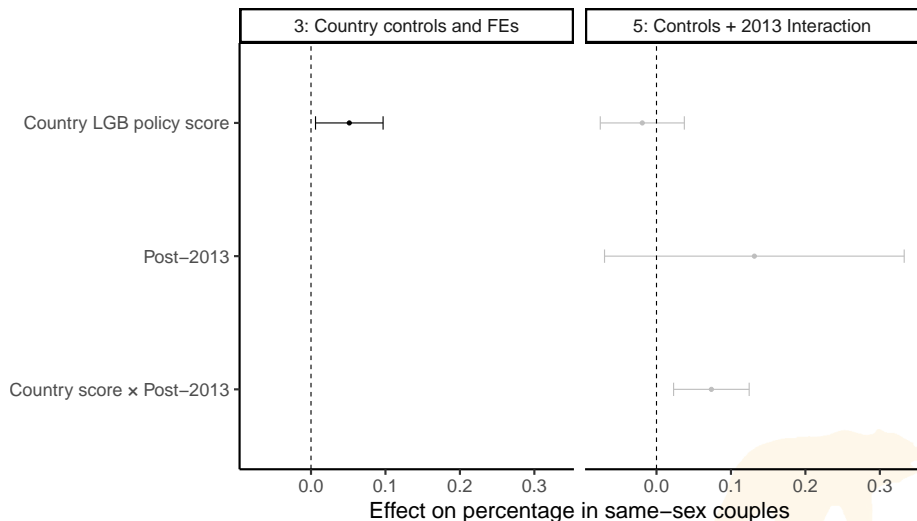
Descriptive Statistics



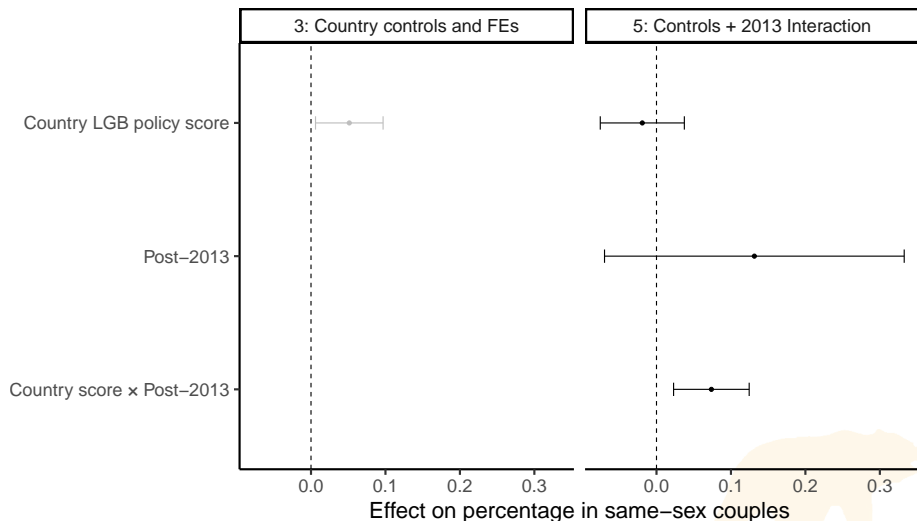
Descriptive Statistics



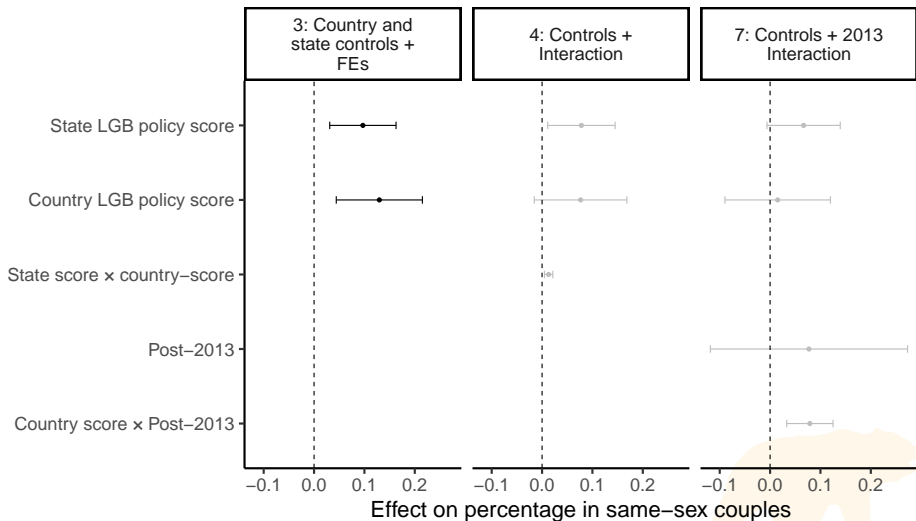
Model Results: Country-of-Origin Effects (Table 3)



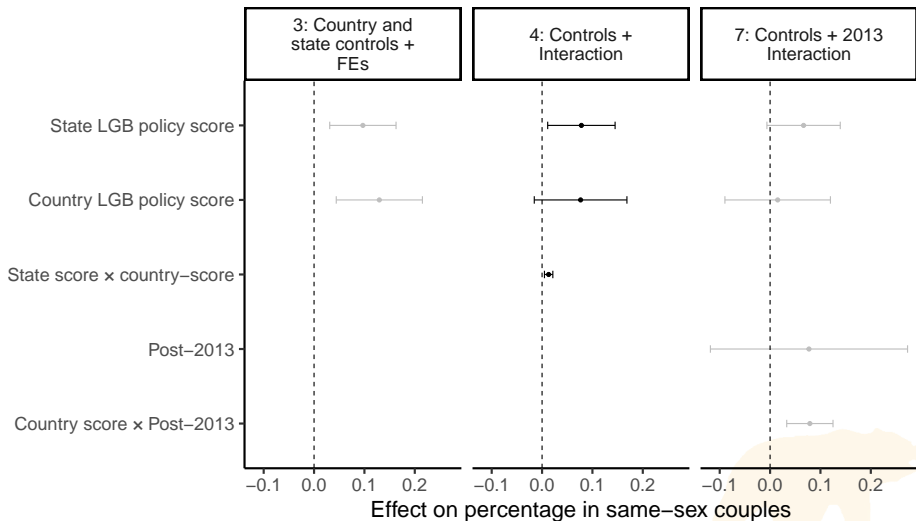
Model Results: Country-of-Origin Effects (Table 3)



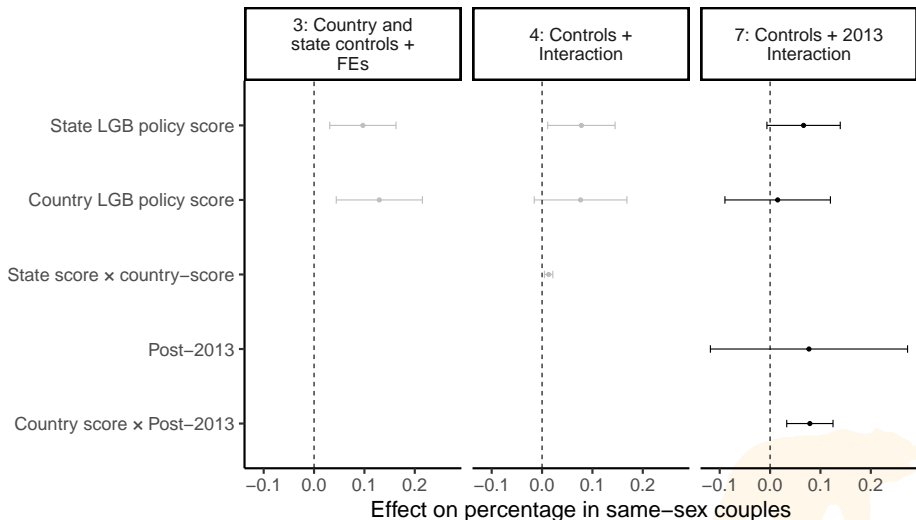
Model Results: State Effects (Table 4)



Model Results: State Effects (Table 4)

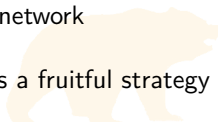


Model Results: State Effects (Table 4)



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
 - Patterns hold across one-immigrant and two-immigrant couples
- 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
 - Incorporating an aspirations-capabilities framework is a fruitful strategy moving forward (De Haas 2021)



Thank You

- Nathan I. Hoffmann (nathanihoff@ucla.edu)
- Kristopher Velasco (kvelasco@princeton.edu)
- Full paper on SocArXiv: <https://tinyurl.com/hoffmann-velasco/>



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 %	5.38
2	Australia	2.73 %	4.56
3	Netherlands	2.61 %	7.20
4	Malaysia	2.56 %	-1.01
5	Mongolia	2.41 %	2.15
6	Zimbabwe	2.38 %	-1.07
7	Finland	2.37 %	4.42
8	Singapore	2.34 %	-0.02
9	Cyprus	2.30 %	0.66
10	Spain	2.27 %	6.33

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 %	5.25
2	Maine	1.51 %	4.85
3	Montana	1.47 %	0.93
4	Missouri	1.11 %	1.96
5	Massachusetts	1.10 %	4.80
6	New York	1.08 %	4.89
7	Florida	0.99 %	1.00
8	New Hampshire	0.95 %	4.40
9	Minnesota	0.92 %	4.66
10	New Mexico	0.92 %	4.80

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

Model Results: Individual Analysis (Table 5)

