

I am an applied Microeconomist with research interests in labor, health, and education Economics. I am interested in topics on discrimination, race, identity, mental health, immigration, and education. I aim to answer research questions that could influence policy decisions to improve the well-being of minorities and improve people's labor, educational, and health outcomes.

Published Work

In *The Effect of Racial and Ethnic Attitudes on Hispanic Identity in the U.S.*—conditionally accepted at the *Southern Economic Journal*—I study how the social environment a person lives in could affect their self-reported identity. I apply this question to investigate the relationship between bias and the self-reported identity of Hispanic immigrants in the United States. I construct a dataset of an 'objectively' Hispanic sample using their own, their parents', and grandparents' birthplaces. I then investigate how people's attitudes in a state correlate with their self-reported identity as Hispanic—how they answer the question "Are you Hispanic/Latino." I find that more bias in a state leads to significantly less self-reported Hispanic identity.

Research Papers

In my job market paper, titled *Peer Effects in Adolescent Mental Health*, I study the spillover effects of friends' mental illnesses on risky behaviors, academic achievements, and labor market outcomes. Peer effects in mental health is an understudied topic and there is not much causal research on it. I instrument the state of mental health of friends by the mental health of friends-of-friends. I find a significant short-run effect on academic achievement, socialization, and risky behavior related to drug use. The spillover effect of mental illness is stronger among females and students who have a large network of friends. I find that a one standard deviation increase in the mental health index of friends is associated with a 0.73 standard deviation increase in one's own mental health. I find no long-run spillover effect of mental illness of friends on labor market and educational outcomes. Additionally, the paper reveals significant negative effects of peer mental health on academic achievement, physical health, and risky behavior. Overall, this research highlights the importance of understanding peer effects in mental health and its implications for adolescent well-being.

In *The Impact of Hispanic Last Names and Identity on Educational and Labor Market Outcomes*, I study the effect of having a Hispanic last name and Hispanic identity on labor market and educational outcomes. I use an innovative method that compares the children of inter-ethnic marriages to each other—those with a Hispanic father-White mother and White father-Hispanic mother. This is an important question, because it could indicate that comparable Hispanics face discrimination in the labor and education markets based on ethnic name signals. People born to Hispanic fathers and White mothers receive 0.3 years of education less than those born to White fathers and Hispanic mothers. While males with a Hispanic last name born to Hispanic father-White mothers earn less than those without a Hispanic last name—born to White father-Hispanic mothers—the gap could be explained entirely by educational differences. I also study the effect of identifying as Hispanic on earnings. I find that men that identify as Hispanic earn significantly less than those that do not, even after controlling for educational differences.

Works in Progress

I am working on three audit studies, one of which is *Sexual Orientation and Racial Discrimination in Mortgage Lending: An Audit Correspondence Field Experiment* with Patrick Button, David Schwegman, Javiera Selman, and Tran Nguyen-Phuong, and Cathy Balfe (two former undergraduate student RAs) that is currently in the field. We aim to quantify discrimination against same sex couples

in the mortgage market. Our research question is: Do mortgage loan originators (MLOs) discriminate against credit-worthy individuals based on their sexual orientation and/or their parental status? We have collected a dataset of MLOs using publicly posted email addresses from various websites (individual bank websites, Yellow Pages, Better Business Bureau, and LinkedIn). In our experiment, each mortgage loan originator (MLO) will receive two emails, two weeks apart, in random order:

1. one email from a same-gender couple (randomized to be either female or male) , one email from a different-gender couple (randomized so that the email sender is either female or male).
2. independently and randomly assigned, one email from a white couple (both individuals with white-sounding names) and a second email from either an African American couple or another white couple. The order of these emails is also randomly assigned.

In *Parent's Choice or School's Choice? Discrimination Against Students in Admission to Private, Charter, and Traditional Public Schools* with Patrick Button, Douglas Harris, and Barbara Lundebjerg, we aim to quantify discrimination in access to education. Using the National Longitudinal School Database (NLSD)—a database including a sample of all schools in the US, encompassing private schools—we will send two emails to each school that was randomly chosen from the NLSD. We will quantify discrimination on the basis of: Race/ethnicity (White, Black, Hispanic, and Arab), LGBTQ+ (gay/lesbian vs. (presumed) straight, transgender vs. (presumed) cis), Disability (learning disability, severe autism, none), Academic background (high, low), Disciplinary issues (yes, no), and Socio-economic status (SES)/Income. After which we will compare discrimination in access to education between public, private, and charter schools. This project was invited for a full proposal by the Russell Sage Foundation for a grant of \$120,647.

In *Auditing Crisis Pregnancy Centers: Racial biases, misinformation, and the misallocation government resources* with Patrick Button, Clare Daniel, Julie Hernandez, Mirya Holman, and Anna Mahoney, we aim to quantify discrimination against Hispanic and Black individuals in access to healthcare, specifically sexual and reproductive healthcare. We will send emails to crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) in the United States. We will quantify how CPCs respond to Hispanic and Black individuals, compared to White individuals, in need of sexual and reproductive healthcare. We will compare the response rate and the quality of the response between Hispanic and Black individuals compared to White individuals.

In *Effects of Gun Control Laws on Suicide*, my co-author Gael Compta and I study the effect of waiting periods on suicides using the advances in the staggered difference-in-differences literature. Using restricted death records from 1959 to 2019 and a panel of gun control laws, we exploit differences in treatment and timing of treatment across and within states using a staggered difference-in-differences method. Introducing waiting periods for the purchase of pistols significantly reduces both suicides and firearm suicides.

Future Work

I look forward to continuing to research racial and ethnic discrimination, in addition to mental health, and educational topics. An increase in interest by policymakers and economists on identity, immigrant assimilation, and mental health issues will give researchers like me the possibility of pursuing topics on a plethora of groups that make up the diverse population in the United States. An idea that I would like to follow in the future is investigating the effect of prejudice against Asian, LGBTQ+, and Arab populations, how they identify, and their geographical location decisions. Finally, I hope to research the impact of mental illness on schooling and labor market outcomes.