Three Essays on the Economics of Genders and Sexualities
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Abstract:

This dissertation centers the fluidity and conceptual richness of genders and sexualities in our economic life and in the economic literature. By using both quantitative and qualitative methods, I demonstrate that the labor market and the economy looks radically different from the perspective of gender and sexual minorities. Our understanding about the complexity and fluidity of gender and sexual identity has rapidly evolved in the last two decades, and it is time for economists to incorporate this new knowledge into our research framework, starting with collecting new data and creating new variable.

In the first chapter, I argue that heteronormativity plays a critical role in the social reproduction of capital and capitalist subjects. Under neoliberalism, progress for some queer subjects is achieved by assimilating into heteronormative institutions, but subjects who are unwilling or unable to assimilate continue to face exclusion and discrimination.

My second chapter explores how gender norms in the care economy are strongly linked to white, middle-class femininity. Using data from AddHealth, I show evidence of heterogenous association between femininity and working in care occupation. Increasing femininity is correlated with an increase in the likelihood of being a care worker.

In the third chapter, using an innovative experimental design, I investigate discrimination based on masculine and feminine gender expression for entry-level care service occupations. Using data collected from my experiment, I find that after controlling for workers’ characteristics and human capitals, Asian and Black workers receive significantly higher interview rates than White workers. However, there are meaningful differences based on gender expression, and the effects have same order of magnitude as having one additional year of experience.