

Research Statement

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My research interests are concentrated in the fields of Labor economics and Macroeconomics. Much of my research is related to the labor market outcomes of specific demographic groups such as immigrants and youths. Notably, my dissertation assesses the importance of occupation-specific characteristics and access to U.S. government safety net programs on immigrants' wages. I also investigate the response of advanced and emerging market economies to U.S. monetary policy decisions.

Explaining the intra-occupational native-immigrant earnings gap in the U.S. (*Job Market Paper*)

Understanding the wage differential between natives and observationally identical immigrants is an important area in the economics of immigration. This paper addresses the question of whether various features of an occupation affect the wages of workers in that occupation. I leverage information on the variation in the English language skill requirement of an occupation as well as the ethnic and nativity concentration in a given occupation and year to explain the native-immigrant wage differences within occupations, the intra-occupational wage gap. I show that the fraction of immigrants in an occupation plays an important role in explaining this wage gap in the U.S.. Furthermore, the nature of this fraction, whether immigrants are conationals or from a different birthplace, has a salient effect on the magnitude of the gap. Notably, across state labor markets, a one percent increase in the fraction of immigrant men in the workforce of a given occupation leads to an increase in the wage gap in that occupation by about 20 percentage points on average. On the other hand, if this fraction is from the same birthplace, the within occupation wage gap narrows substantially by about 32 percentage points.

SNAPing to the Beat: Assessing the Impact of Immigrants' Food Stamp Eligibility on Household Income

The Food Stamp program is currently one of the largest safety net programs in the U.S. However, causal effects on the labor costs of the program is limited, due to the lack of variation in federal program design and policy rules. However, the federal welfare reform in 1996 changed Food Stamp eligibility between natives and immigrants. Subsequent policies restored eligibility at different times that varied across states and I take advantage of this variation to estimate the effect of changing immigrants' eligibility on their wages and household income. Using a difference-in-difference framework, I find that access to SNAP reduces immigrants wages and household income by over 40 percentage points. I also investigate the mechanisms driving this large wage response of immigrants. The analysis adds to a handful of studies that examine the causal effects of the modern Food Stamp program on wages for a vulnerable and growing demographic group in the U.S.

Monetary policy states and foreign exchange rates, with Steven P. Cassou and M. Iqbal Ahmed

This project is motivated by the Federal Reserve's recent suite of unconventional monetary policy tools and the more robust financial market reactions that have ensued relative to conventional tools. Given the established link between the U.S. and the global financial market, the Federal Reserve's policy decisions appear to have a greater influence on asset prices and interest rates, not only for advanced economies, but also for emerging market economies. This project aims to empirically assess the transmission channel of the Federal Reserve's monetary policy to international exchange rates and bond yields during the quantitative easing (QE) and non-QE periods. We identify the transmission channels by decomposing the 10-year U.S. treasury bond into its expected short-term and term premium components and generate two shocks around the Federal Reserve announcement dates within the one day window. We find stronger spillover effects to emerging market economies through the term premium channel, which has a negative impact on foreign exchange rates.

Future Work

I have several works in progress, which examine the effects of oil shocks on a range of labor market outcomes as well as on the human capital accumulation of young men. In the near- to medium-term, I plan to extend my analysis of occupation-specific characteristics on the native-immigrant earnings gap by estimating an occupational choice model that accounts for the role of ethnic network effects in immigrants' job search. I also plan on strengthening the analysis of my third chapter by acquiring intra-day futures market data to examine spillover effects of the Federal Reserve's policy announcement during narrow event windows. I hope to broaden my expertise in spatial analysis techniques to further understand the spillover effects of monetary and immigration policies.