Affirmative Action Policies and Interracial Marriage
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Abstract

- This paper examines the impact of state affirmative action policies on white/black interracial marriage for public-sector employees using the 2008-2017 American Community Survey.
- The empirical analysis uses triple-difference model and exploits time and state variations in initiating state affirmative action laws to estimate the implications of interracial marriage.
- The result suggests that state affirmative action laws improve race relations, but with gender and racial differences.

Institutional Background

- State affirmative action law (AA law) requires that affirmative action be planned by state employers. Such plans typically contain the following:
  1. Annually collect and report data on the share of women and minorities in the workforce.
  2. Numerically compares the percentage of minorities employed versus the percentage of total employees in the labor pool.
  3. Identify areas where there are “underutilization” of minorities and “specific problems” that the employers will take to correct that discrepancy (for example, goals and timetables).
- State affirmative action laws apply only to state and local government employees.
- 28 states have at some point passed affirmative action laws; some states have repealed since then.

Empirical Strategy and Results

Empirical Strategy:
Triple-difference model:
\[
I_{\text{diff}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times SE_{\text{diff}} + \beta_2 \times AA_{\text{diff}} + \beta_3 \times SE_{\text{diff}} \times \beta_4 \times X_{\text{diff}} + \gamma_1 + \lambda_m + \delta_t + \epsilon_{\text{diff}}
\]

- \( I_{\text{diff}} \): if individual \( i \) living in state \( s \) in year \( t \) who married in year \( m \) is married to a person of a different race.
- \( SE_{\text{diff}} = 1 \) if person \( i \) is a public-sector employee in state \( s \) in year \( t \).
- \( AA_{\text{diff}} = 1 \) if there was a state affirmative action law in place in state \( s \) in year \( m \).
- \( X_{\text{diff}} \): vector of control variables. The vector includes a series of age and education dummy variables, as well as the racial composition of the state.
- \( \delta_t \): state fixed effects, year of marriage fixed effects and survey year fixed effects, respectively.

Results:
- The likelihood that a white male working in the public sector has a black spouse increases by 0.12 percentage points if he married in a year when there was an affirmative policy in place in his state of residence.
- Suggests that affirmative action \( \rightarrow \) induces exposure to people of a different race \( \rightarrow \) improves race relations at least for some.
- State affirmative laws do not appear to impact the likelihood that white females marry a black husband. But they have an impact on marriage patterns of black males or females.

Table 1. Timeline of States that Initiate Affirmative Action Laws

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Year Initiated</th>
<th>Institutional Background</th>
<th>State Law Establishing AA</th>
<th>Responsible Agency</th>
<th>AA Ever</th>
<th>Later Replaced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>State Civil Code 2027, Chapter 12 added to Part 2 of Division 5 of Title 2 of the State Civil Code Relating to State Civil Service</td>
<td>State Personnel Board</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes (1996)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Public Act No. 75-536</td>
<td>Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Governor’s Executive Order 73-9</td>
<td>Department of Human Rights</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Governor’s Executive Order 73-9</td>
<td>Department of Human Rights</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Introduction

- Controversy in Affirmative Action Policies
  - Supporters believe that affirmative action helps enhance diversity and mitigate the effects of historical discrimination between groups.
  - Opponents argue that affirmative action implies unfair preferential treatment for underrepresented groups.
- Given the policies’ controversial nature, changes in affirmative action policies may affect personal relationships between people of different races. How do these policies affect the likelihood of entering an interracial marriage?
  - Increasing minority representation in the workforce:
    - Increasing exposure to people of a different race \( \rightarrow \) increasing interracial marriage.
    - Increasing animosity towards people of difference races \( \rightarrow \) decreasing interracial marriage.
- Kalmijn (1993); Emerson (2010); Jacobson and Johnson (2006); Perry (2010)
  - All suggest that increasing women and minorities in the workplace could achieve positive attitudes toward interracial marriage.
  - However, much of this literature is based on self-reports within surveys vs. actual choices and behaviors.
- This paper is the first that links affirmative action policy to interracial marriage to understand the changes in interpersonal relationships.
- This study is inspired by Kultulus (2013), which studies the impacts of state affirmative action bans on the employment of women and minorities in the public sector.

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Data and Sample Restrictions

Data:
- 2008-2017 American Community Survey (ACS)
Sample restriction:
- Married U.S.-born males and females who are either white or black.
- Individuals who report having a job.

Table 2. Triple Difference Estimation for the Impact of State Affirmative Action Policies on Interracial Marriage

Empirical Strategy and Results

References