Faculty in the Media

**Wall Street Journal**

Len Lopoo and former CPR graduate student, Kerri Raissian’s co-authored article, “*Washington Is Biased Against Babies,*” was published in the *Wall Street Journal.*

**Newsweek**

Shannon Monnat was interviewed for the *Newsweek* article, “Exclusive: The National Strategy to Increase Life Expectancy Bill Introduced to Congress Today.”

**Mathematica Policy Research**


**Bloomberg Business Week**

Len Burman’s work was mentioned in the *Bloomberg Business Week* article “Five Reasons Trump’s Trial Balloon on Capital Gains Taxation Should Sink.”

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Alfonso Flores-Lagunes: The Differential Incidence and Severity of Food Insecurity by Racial, Ethnic, and Immigrant Groups over the Great Recession in the United States
(Co-authored with Hugo Jales, Judith Liu, and Norbert L. Wilson)

This paper documents the differences in food insecurity incidence and severity by race/ethnicity and immigrant status over the Great Recession. We show that the disadvantaged groups with a higher incidence of food insecurity do not necessarily have a higher severity of food insecurity, which underscores the importance of examining both the extensive and intensive margins of food insecurity. Our decomposition analysis indicates that the contribution of compositional and structural factors to the observed differences in exposure to food insecurity is heterogeneous across these groups and over the Great Recession. Finally, SNAP does not seem to fundamentally change the patterns documented.


Sarah Hamersma: Business Cycles, Medicaid Generosity, and Birth Outcomes
(Co-authored with Yilin Hou, Yusun Kim, and Douglas Wolf)

Birth outcomes influence many aspects of later life health and wellbeing, making healthcare access during pregnancy a policy priority. Low-income mothers often depend on Medicaid, for which eligibility is determined by their income relative to state eligibility thresholds. The prevalence of adverse birth outcomes is known to exhibit cyclical variation, due in part to changes in the composition of women giving birth in response to changing economic conditions. However, cyclical variation in adverse birth outcomes also varies with respect to Medicaid eligibility thresholds. Our analysis uses birth-records data for 2000 through 2013, aggregated into 173,936 county-by-quarter observations and linked to county-level unemployment rates and state-level parental Medicaid thresholds. Using fixed-effects negative binomial models, we examine the role of Medicaid generosity in influencing birth outcomes across business cycles. We test for interactions between Medicaid and unemployment, hypothesizing that the negative effects of recessions are worse where Medicaid thresholds are more restrictive. We find that higher Medicaid generosity dampens the negative effects of recessions on birth outcomes. The extent to which Medicaid interacts with unemployment also varies according to the age and race composition of mothers; in particular, Black mothers are both most affected by unemployment and most responsive to Medicaid generosity. Given current concerns about racial gaps in both infant and maternal mortality, our findings suggest that Medicaid may be
an important feature of a strategy to close gaps in the prevalence of adverse birth outcomes across racial
groups, especially during bust years.

Hugo Jales: Measuring the Role of the 1959 Revolution on Cuba's Economic Performance
( Co-authored with Thomas H. Kang, Guilherme Stein, and Felipe Garcia Ribeiro)

This paper quantitatively measures the impact of the 1959 Cuban revolution on the country's GDP per capita and exports. We use various policy evaluation methods to obtain a valid counterfactual of Cuba's GDP per capita after the revolution using other Latin American countries as control candidates. We find evidence that regarding both outcomes, the overall impact of the revolution was negative. We also document a negative effect of the economic embargo imposed by the United States and a sizable, positive effect of Cuba's trade agreement with the Soviet Union.


This paper estimates the impact of a transitory reduction in hours during physicians’ early career on their long-term labor supply. I exploit the work-hour regulations that limit the maximum workweek by residents as the source of exogenous variation. The results show that exposure to the regulations significantly decreases practicing physicians’ labor supply by about four hours per week on average, with female physicians being more responsive to a given reduction in early career hours. Distributional results using a changes-in-changes model confirm that the regulations primarily affect the upper end of the work hours distribution. To reveal potential mechanisms of these effects, I find that the reform increases the probabilities of marriage and having a child, as well as the total number of children, for female physicians. In contrast, it does not have a significant impact on marriage and fertility outcomes for male physicians. These findings provide a better understanding of physicians’ hours of work in response to the reform over time and the role of gender with respect to labor supply behavior and family formation decisions.
To learn more, see Research in Labor Economics (forthcoming).
Leonard Lopoo: Pregnancy Medicaid Expansions and Fertility: Differentiating Between the Intensive and Extensive Margins
(Con-authored with Lincoln H. Groves & Sarah Hamersma)

The theoretical and empirical links between public health insurance access and fertility in the United States remain unclear. Utilizing a demographic cell-based estimation approach with panel data (1987-1997), we revisit the large-scale Medicaid expansions to pregnant women during the 1980s to estimate the heterogeneous impacts of public health insurance access on childbirth. While the decision to become a parent (i.e., the extensive margin) appears to be unaffected by increased access to Medicaid, we find that increased access to public health insurance positively influenced the number of high parity births (i.e., the intensive margin) for select groups of women. In particular, we find a robust, positive birth effect for unmarried women with a high school education, a result which is consistent across the two racial groups examined in our analysis: African American and White women. This result suggests that investigating effects along both the intensive and extensive margin is important for scholars who study the natalist effects of social welfare policies, and our evidence provides a more nuanced understanding of the influence of public health insurance on fertility.


Katherine Michelmore: The Impact of the Earned Income Tax Credit on Household Finances
(Con-authored with Lauren E. Jones)

Using a simulated instrument strategy, we analyze how expansions to the federal and state Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC) affected household finances over the past two decades. Using data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation wealth topical modules, we also test whether responses differ over time, as well as whether there are different responses to the federal and state expansions, and how responses vary by educational attainment. A $1,000 policy-induced increase in the average household EITC leads to a 3 percentage point increase in the likelihood of holding money in a savings or checking account, and approximately $700 more held in savings balances. These results are coupled with large increases in pre-tax family earnings. We also find some evidence of decreases in unsecured debt holdings. We interpret these results as further evidence that the EITC increases the financial stability of low-income single mothers.

David Schwegman: Rental Market Discrimination against Same-Sex Couples: Evidence from a Pairwise-Matched Email Correspondence Test

This paper presents the results of a randomized matched-pair email correspondence test of 6,490 unique property owners in 94 U.S. cities to provide a nationally representative estimate of the level of discrimination that same-sex couples experience when inquiring about rental housing. I find that same-sex male couples, especially non-White same-sex male couples, are less likely to receive a response to inquiries about rental units. I also find that same-sex Black male couples are subject to more subtle forms of discrimination than heterosexual Black couples are. I then examine whether state and local antidiscrimination laws covary with rates of housing discrimination against same-sex couples. Although my results are not causal, I find that antidiscrimination laws have an ambiguous relationship with rates of discrimination faced by same-sex couples. State-level housing protections, for example, covary positively with response rates for same-sex Black male couples, whereas local-level laws covary negatively with response rates for these couples.

To learn more, see *Housing Policy Debate* (forthcoming) DOI 10.1080/10511482.2018.1512005.