In This Issue

Robert Bifulco: Evaluating the Effects of Universal Place-Based Scholarships on Student Outcomes: The Buffalo Say Yes to Education Program ................................................................. 1

Robert Bifulco and David Schwegman: Who Benefits from Accountability-Driven School .... 1

Colleen Heflin: Food Pantry Assistance and the Great Recession ......................................................... 2

Colleen Heflin: SNAP Benefits and Childhood Asthma ................................................................. 2

Yilin Hou: Population Policy, Demographic Change, and Firm Returns: Evidence from China ...................................................................................................................... 2

Shannon Monnat: The Contributions of Socioeconomic and Opioid Supply Factors To U.S. Drug Mortality Rates: Urban-Rural and Within-Rural Differences ......................................................... 2

Iuliia Shybalkina and Robert Bifulco: Does Participatory Budgeting Change the Share of Public Funding to Low Income Neighborhoods? ......................................................... 3


Saba Siddiki and Ziqiao Chen: Applying Policy Process Theories to Environmental Governance Research: Themes and New Directions .............. 4

Faculty in the Media

TIME
Len Lopoo was quoted in the TIME article, “Paid Family Leave Has Stalled in Congress for Years. Here’s Why That’s Changing.”

NPR
Shannon Monnat was interviewed for the NPR (WSKG) piece “Yates County School Leaders Call Mental Health Crisis ‘Sickening.’”

New York Times
Stuart Rosenthal was quoted in the New York Times article, “The Neighborhood is Mostly Black. The Home Buyers are Mostly White.”

Los Angeles Times
Madonna Harrington Meyer’s book, “Grandmothers at Work,” was cited in the Los Angeles Times article, “Happy ‘Other’ Mother’s Day.”

If you would like to be added to or removed from our mailing list, please contact Katrina Fiacchi at kfiacchi@syr.edu

To learn more about CPR, visit the CPR website.
Robert Bifulco: Evaluating the Effects of Universal Place-Based Scholarships on Student Outcomes: The Buffalo Say Yes to Education Program
(Co-authored with Ross Rubenstein and Hosung Sohn)

A growing number of cities and states have been providing large tuition subsidies for residents through initiatives often called “place-based” or “Promise” scholarship programs. We examine the effects of a prominent last-dollar, place-based scholarship program, Say Yes to Education in Buffalo, NY, on college matriculation and persistence. Employing a difference-in-differences strategy comparing changes across cohorts of students eligible and ineligible for large college scholarships, we find that scholarship eligibility is associated with an increase of 20 percent in the likelihood of matriculating into college within one year of graduation, and an increase in the likelihood of persistence into a second year of college of nearly 16 percent. Increases in matriculation are largely at four-year institutions, where most of the additional funding from Say Yes is concentrated, exclusively at in-state institutions, both public and private, and are largest at colleges with more selective admission rates. Finally, we see the largest increases in matriculation and persistence among students who attend high schools in the middle third of the poverty distribution. These results suggest that the additional aid provided by Say Yes plays an important role in increasing college matriculation and encouraging students to attend more selective schools.


Robert Bifulco and David Schwegman: Who Benefits from Accountability-Driven School Closure? Evidence from New York City

We estimate the effects of accountability-driven school closure in New York City on students who attended middle schools that were closed at the time of closure and students who would have likely attended a closed middle school had it remained open. We find that students who would have entered the closed school had it not closed attended schools that perform better on standardized exams and have higher value-added measures than did the closed schools. While we find that closure did not have any measurable effect on the average student in this group, we do find that high-performing students in this group attended higher-performing schools and experienced economically-meaningful and statistically-significant improvements in their sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade math test scores. We find that these benefits persisted for several cohorts after closure. We also find that closure adversely affected students, low-performing students in particular, who were attending schools that closed. For policymakers, our results highlight a key trade-off of closing a low-performing school: future cohorts of relatively high-performing students may benefit from closure while low-performing students in schools designated for closure are adversely affected.

Colleen Heflin: Food Pantry Assistance and the Great Recession
(Co-authored with Ashley Price)

Using nationally representative data from the National Center for Charitable Statistics and the Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement, this study documents trends in the supply of and demand for food pantry assistance. While the number of food pantries has grown dramatically since 1995, there has been little expansion since the end of the Great Recession, a period of worldwide economic downturn that occurred between December 2007 and June 2009 in the United States, despite an increase in the number of households that report receiving food from food pantries. In the last 10 years, those who participate in food pantries have become older, more likely to have some college education, be divorced, separated or widowed, and unemployed after the Great Recession. Finally, we document that personal demographic characteristics associated with pantry use closely follow the correlates of poverty itself.


Colleen Heflin: SNAP Benefits and Childhood Asthma
(Co-authored with Irma Arteaga, Leslie Hodges, Jean Felix Ndashiyume, and Matthew P. Rabbitt)

Anecdotal and descriptive evidence has led to the claim that some low-income households may face a “eat or breathe” tradeoff, but quantitative evidence is scarce. We link Medicaid claims data to monthly Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) participation data from the state of Missouri from 2010 to 2013 to explore monthly patterns in children’s emergency room (ER) claims for asthma and to examine whether these patterns are sensitive to the timing and amount of SNAP benefits. This allows us to empirically test whether SNAP households with Medicaid insurance face trade-offs between food and medicine that increases the likelihood that a child in a SNAP and Medicaid household will go to the ER for asthma at the end of the month. While we do not find overwhelming evidence that the timing of SNAP benefits receipt are associated with the timing of asthma-related ER visits, we do find clear evidence that increased SNAP benefits are associated with a reduction in the overall probability of an asthma-related ER visit.


Yilin Hou: Population Policy, Demographic Change, and Firm Returns: Evidence from China
(Co-authored with Zhiyong An)

We take advantage of China’s relaxation in January 2014 of its “one-child” family planning policy to study the causal relationship between expected future demographic changes and firms’ stock returns. We use an event study method as our identification strategy and employ data from Chinese stock markets to implement the analysis. We find consistent evidence suggesting that expected demographic changes exert statistically and economically significant effects on firms’ stock returns. We address four potential threats
about the validity of our empirical design and argue that our conclusion is not China-specific, but a generic lesson portable to developed countries.


Shannon Monnat: The Contributions of Socioeconomic and Opioid Supply Factors To U.S. Drug Mortality Rates: Urban-Rural and Within-Rural Differences

Over the past two decades deaths from opioids and other drugs have grown to be a major U.S. population health problem, but the magnitude of the crisis varies across the U.S., and explanations for widespread geographic variation in the severity of the drug crisis are limited. An emerging debate is whether geographic differences in drug mortality rates are driven mostly by opioid supply factors or socioeconomic distress. To explore this topic, I examined relationships between county-level non-Hispanic white drug mortality rates for 2000-02 and 2014-16 and several socioeconomic and opioid supply measures across the urban-rural continuum and within different rural labor markets. Net of county demographic composition, average non-Hispanic white drug mortality rates are highest and increased the most in large metro counties. In 2014-16, the most rural counties had an average of 6.2 fewer deaths per 100,000 population than large metro counties. Economic distress, family distress, persistent population loss, and opioid supply factors (exposure to prescription opioids and fentanyl) are all associated with significantly higher drug mortality rates. However, the magnitude of associations varies across the urban-rural continuum and across different types of rural labor markets. In rural counties, economic distress appears to be a stronger predictor than opioid supply measures of drug mortality rates, but in urban counties, opioid supply factors are more strongly associated with drug mortality rates than is economic distress. Ultimately, the highest drug mortality rates are disproportionately concentrated in economically-distressed mining and service sector dependent counties with high exposure to prescription opioids and fentanyl.


Iuliia Shybalkina and Robert Bifulco: Does Participatory Budgeting Change the Share of Public Funding to Low Income Neighborhoods?

Using a newly compiled dataset, we measure the effects of participatory budgeting on the allocation of capital funding among areas of different income levels within New York City council districts. A difference-in-differences design compares changes in the allocation of funding in adopting districts before and after the adoption of participatory budgeting to changes over the same period among a control group consisting of later adopters. On average, adopting districts increase funding in the next to the lowest income census tracts more than the control group, but participatory budgeting does not redirect funds to the lowest income census tracts.

(Co-authored with Sanya Carley, Nikolaos Zirogiannis, Denvil Duncan, and John D. Graham)

The federal Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards and the related greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) standards are, in the absence of a national carbon price, the primary mechanisms through which the U.S. reduces transportation GHG emissions. In 2012, these standards were set to rise for light-duty vehicles between 2017 and 2025, eventually achieving a target of 54.5 miles per gallon in 2025. Since 2012, conditions have changed: forecasts of future gasoline prices have dropped dramatically, consumers have demanded larger vehicles, and the cost of compliance appears to larger than previously thought. In this article, we analyze the possible macroeconomic effects of the standards with both 2012 inputs and updated inputs to reflect these new market developments. The results reveal that the short-term effects of the federal standards will be negative but the long-term effects will be positive, using both 2012 and updated inputs. The transition from annual negative employment impacts to positive impacts occurs between 2023 and 2026, depending on which set of assumptions are used. Possible revisions to the standards that freeze them at 2020 levels or decrease their stringency reduce short-term negative impacts but also reduce long-term positive impacts. We conclude with a discussion of policy implications as they relate to the current energy and climate policy conditions.


Saba Siddiki and Ziqiao Chen: Applying Policy Process Theories to Environmental Governance Research: Themes and New Directions
(Co-authored with Tatyana Ruseva, Megan Foster, Gwen Arnold, Abigail York, and Riley Pudney)

Policy scholars have effectively leveraged policy process models, theories, and frameworks to respond to a variety of important environmental questions. For example, how do environmental issues arrive on the agendas of policymakers? What factors contribute to environmental policy change? What are the designs and effects of institutions (e.g., policies or cultural norms) on environmental governance? In this review, we survey the field of policy process scholarship, focusing on environmental governance, with three objectives. The first objective is to catalog the policy process models, theories, and frameworks most often featured in studies of environmental governance. The second is to capture the methodological choices commonly employed in the application of these models, theories, and frameworks in environmental domains. The third is to identify how these approaches deal with issues central to environmental governance research, including time, space, and policy scale. We aim to identify trends and strategies for integrating key considerations of scale into empirical policy process scholarship.