

# Fiscal Policy in a Networked Economy

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Undirected Transfers (e.g. stimulus checks)

Targeted Transfers (e.g. extended UI benefits)

Targeted Spending (e.g. auto industry bailout, infrastructure spending)

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**Research question:** How does network structure shape impact and optimal design of fiscal policy?

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## 1. **Theory:** Develop model of how heterogeneity affects propagation of fiscal shocks

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Rich model of heterogeneity: Many HHs, sectors, regions, linked via **IO, emp., & cons. networks.**

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## 2. **Empirics:** Bring decomposition to data and explore implications for fiscal policy design

Estimate components of multiplier using several public-use datasets

Find that many dimensions of heterogeneity are irrelevant for aggregate multipliers

**Key policy implication:** targeting fiscal policy to high-MPC households is maximally expansionary

Estimate of fiscal spillovers across states, distributional impacts

Literature has proposed many channels by which network structures and heterogeneity might matter. Our paper brings together and quantifies what matters for which questions:

*Aggregate GDP responses: **loading of shocks onto high MPC households*** (Werning, 2015; Kaplan, Moll, and Violante, 2018; Auclert, 2019; Patterson, 2019; Bilbiie, 2019), **input-output linkages** (Long and Plosser, 1987; Acemoglu, Carvalho, Ozdaglar, and Tahbaz-Salehi, 2012; Baqaee and Farhi, 2019; Rubbo, 2019; Bigio and La'O, 2020)

*Distributional and spatial impacts: **regional trade and within-region consumption bias*** (Farhi and Werning, 2017; Caliendo, Parro, Rossi-Hansberg, and Sarte, 2018; Dupor, Karabarbounis, Kudlyak, and Mehkari, 2018)



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Sufficient statistics approach: Miyazawa (1976); Auclert, Rognlie, and Straub (2018); Wolf (2019)

Network propagation of demand shocks: Baqaee (2015); Baqaee and Farhi (2018, 2020); Woodford (2020); Guerrieri, Lorenzoni, Straub, and Werning (2020); Andersen, Huber, Johannesen, Straub, Vestergaard (2023)

Semi-structural approach consistent with and complements reduced-form estimation of fiscal multipliers: Ramey (2011); Nakamura and Steinsson (2014); Chodorow-Reich (2019); Corbi, Papaioannou, and Surico (2019)

# This Talk

- 1 Model
- 2 Networks, Heterogeneity, and the Multiplier
- 3 Data and Calibration
- 4 Empirical Results
- 5 Implications for Design of Fiscal Policy
- 6 Conclusion

# Model

# A Rationing Model of Recessions

**Setup:** Two time periods  $t$ . Many sectors  $i$  and HHs  $n$ . One labor factor.

▶ More time periods

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**Labor rationing:** Pd. 1 labor supply determined by [rationing](#). Model w/ flexible rationing function

$$R : \tau L_i^1 u \tilde{N} \tau \bar{L}_n^1 u$$

that satisfies labor market clearing:  $\sum_n R_n p_i L_i^1 u q = \sum_i L_i^1$ . ▶ Full equilibrium conditions

# Networks, Heterogeneity, and the Multiplier

# The Output Multiplier: From PE to GE

We consider two policy shocks: tax and transfer shocks  $d$  and spending shocks  $dG^1$

Define shock's PE effect as  $\Delta$  final demand before incomes adjust:  $\Delta Y^1 = dG^1 + \frac{dc^1}{dn} d$

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## Sufficient statistics

$rR^1_{sij}$   $j$ 's unit exp. on good  $i$ .

$rL^1_{sij}$   $1_{i=j}$   $j$ 's unit exp. on labor.

$rR_{L;n;i}$  marg. rationing of  $i$ 's LD to HH  $n$

$rms_{n;n^1}$   $1_{n=n^1}$   $n$ 's MPC.

$rC^1_{sin}$  share of  $n$ 's marg. exp. on good  $i$

## Proposition (Network Keynesian Multiplier)

*The general equilibrium change in first-period total output  $dY^1$  following a scalar shock with partial equilibrium impact on first-period total output  $BY^1$  is*

$$dY^1 = [I - \sum_n C^1_{m;n} R_{L;n} L^1]^{-1} R^1 BY^1$$

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$$dY^1 = \left( I - \sum_n C^1_{m R_{L^1}} L^1 \right)^{-1} R^1 \cdot BY^1$$

**Intuition:** Shock  $\tilde{N}$  production  $\tilde{N}$  labor rationed  $\tilde{N}$  marg. consumption  $\tilde{N}$  directed consumption



▶ Comparative Statics

The many dimensions of heterogeneity can amplify shocks through three network effects:

1. **Incidence Effect:** The shock disproportionately hits households with higher MPCs
2. **Bias Effect:** shocked HHs direct marginal spending towards HHs with higher-than-average MPCs
3. **Homophily Effect:** Correlation between HH's own MPC and MPCs of the HHs they spend on

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## Proposition (Network Decomposition)

For any shock with PE incidence  $Bh_n^1$  onto first-period HH incomes and total incidence  $Bh_n^1$  1,

$$1^T dY^1 = 1^T dG^1 \left[ \frac{1}{1 - E^{-1} m_n^s} \underbrace{E^{-1} m_n^s}_{\text{RA Keynesian effect}} + \underbrace{E^{-1} m_n^s}_{\text{Incidence effect}} + \underbrace{E^{-1} m_n^s}_{\text{Biased spending direction effect}} + \underbrace{E^{-1} m_n^s}_{\text{Homophily effect}} \right] + O^3(p|m|q)$$

where  $m_n^{\text{next}}$  is the average MPC of HHs who receive as income  $i$ 's marginal dollar of spending.

# Network Effects: An Example

## Two-household economy

High-MPC HH with  $m_H = 0.5$ . Low-MPC HH with  $m_L = 0.1$

Consider 4 different cases for [shock incidence](#) and [spending-to-income network](#)



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Consider 4 different cases for **shock incidence** and **spending-to-income network**

### Case 1: Uniform incidence, neutral network



As if economy had a single household with  $\bar{m} = \frac{m_L + m_H}{2}$

Multiplier ( $M$ ) given by

$$M = \frac{1}{1 - \bar{m}} = 1.43$$

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## Case 2: Heterogeneous incidence, neutral network

Initial transfer directed entirely to  $m_H$



Initial and higher "rounds" of multiplier are different

$$M = 1 + \frac{m_H}{1 - m} = 1.71$$

# Network Effects: An Example

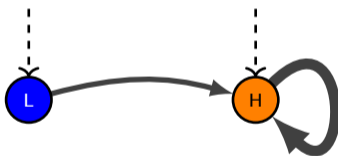
## Two-household economy

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Consider 4 different cases for **shock incidence** and **spending-to-income network**

### Case 3: Uniform incidence, biased network

All marginal spending directed to sector employing  $m_H$



Higher "rounds" of multiplier propagates at  $m_H$

$$M = 1 + \frac{\bar{m}}{1 - m_H} = 1.60$$

# Network Effects: An Example

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Consider 4 different cases for **shock incidence** and **spending-to-income network**

### Case 4: Uniform incidence, homophilic network

All marginal spending directed to own sector



Each shock propagates separately

$$M = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ \frac{1}{2} & 1 \\ 1 & m_L \\ 1 & m_H \end{pmatrix} \quad 1:56$$

# Data and Calibration

## Mapping model to data

“Sectors” = 51 states 55 industries ( 3-digit NAICS).

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## Strategy to calibrate multiplier

$$I \quad \mathbb{C}^1 m \quad R_{L_1} \quad \mathbb{P}^1 \quad p / \quad \mathbb{R}^1 q \quad 1 \quad 1$$

### 1. Regional input-output matrix ( $\mathbb{R}^1$ ) [Details](#)

Data: BEA make and use tables. CFS interstate trade.

Assumptions: Each sector's prod. fn. is same across states. Non-tradables sourced within state.

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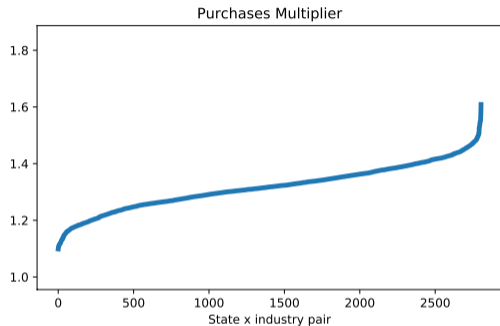
### 3. Directed MPC matrix ( $\mathcal{C}^1 m$ ) [Details](#)

Data: PSID + CEX for MPC estimation. [Details](#) CEX cons. basket by demog. CFS interstate trade.

Assumptions: Marg. cons. basket = avg. cons. basket. [Validation](#) Same interstate sourcing as firms.

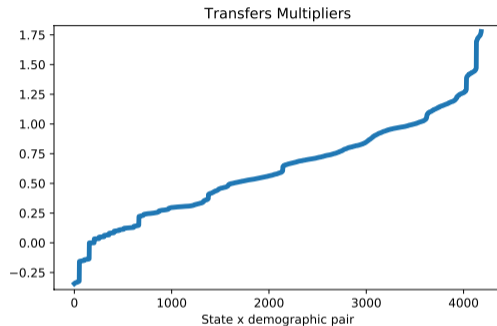
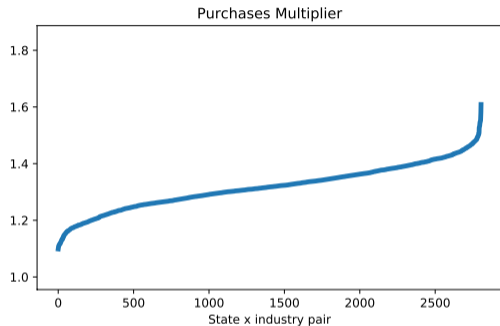
# Empirical Results

# Large dispersion in government purchases, transfer multipliers



*Aggregate government purchases multiplier*: Response of GDP to GDP-proportional shock is 1.3  
Amplification beyond original purchase varies by a factor of 6 depending on sector/state targeted

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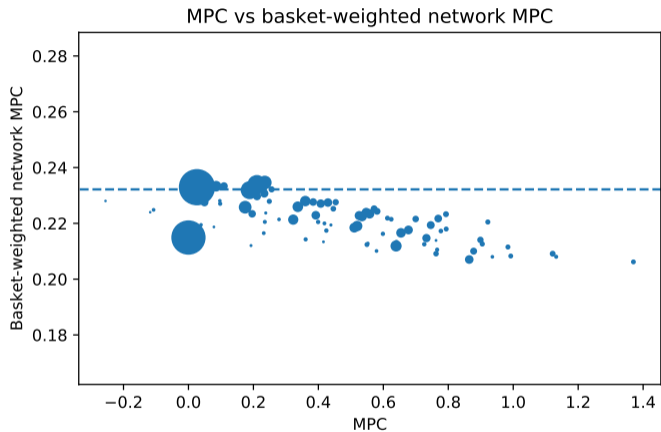


*Aggregate government purchases multiplier*: Response of GDP to GDP-proportional shock is 1.3  
Amplification beyond original purchase varies by a factor of 6 depending on sector/state targeted  
*Uniform transfer multiplier*: Transferring \$1 to average HH increases GDP by 77 cents

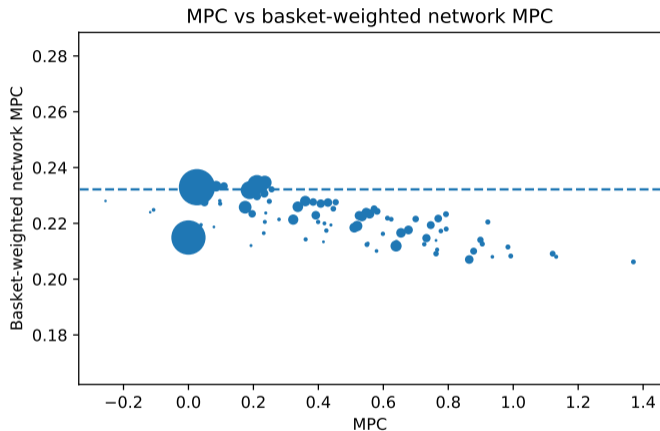
► Sources of heterogeneity

► Counterfactuals

# Incidence drives variation in multipliers

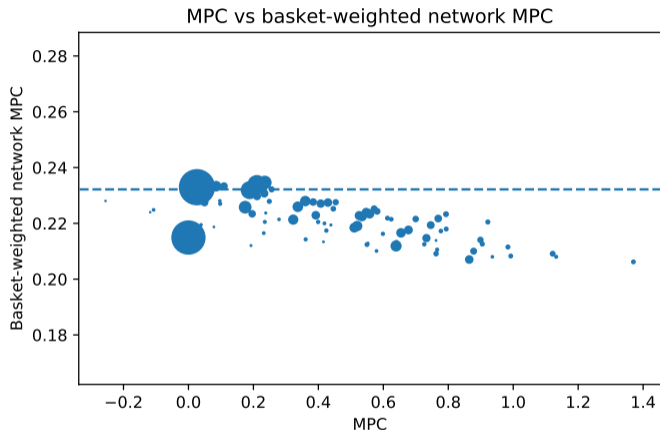


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*Observation 1:* Basket-weighted network MPCs are very similar across population

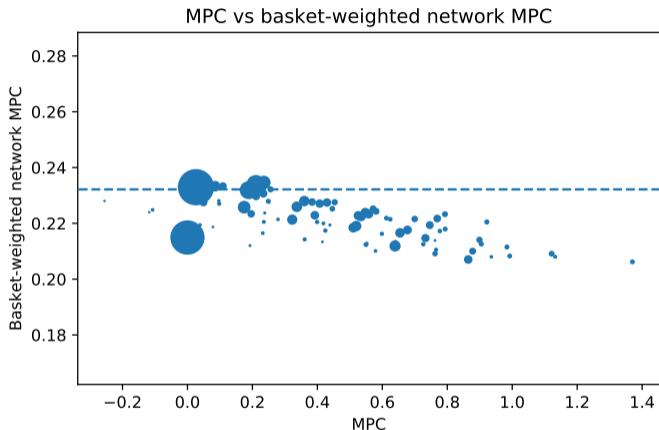
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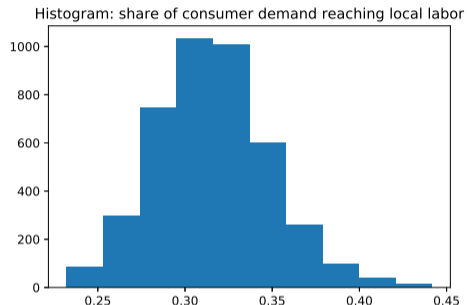
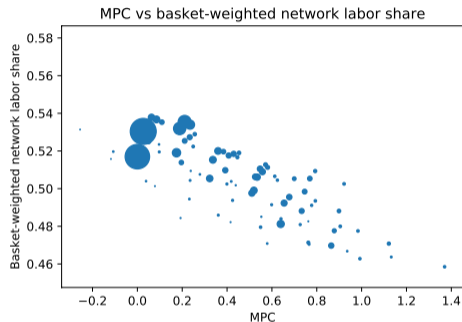
*Observation 2:* Basket-weighted network MPCs are similar to benchmark average MPC

Ñ Bias and homophily terms are both close to 0

► Robustness of empirical result



# Understanding Bias and Homophily Terms: Two O setting Effects



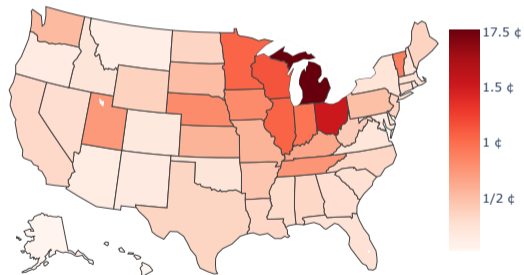
*Empirical Fact 1:* High MPC households consume from low labor share industries, creating negative homophily (Hubmer 2019)

*Empirical Fact 2:* Substantial fraction of demand remains local, creating positive homophily

# Regional Policy Spillovers

Of national multiplier, out-of-state spillovers account for 47% of amplification

Change in GDP / capita from \$1 / capita shock in Michigan



▶ Non per-capita version

## Implications for Design of Fiscal Policy

# MPC-targeting for transfers vs. government purchases

**Back to motivating question:** If planner wants to max agg. income, [how to target policy?](#)

Microfoundation

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**Transfers:** A group's MPC is *very* highly correlated with multiplier for transfers to it Application: CARES Act

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**Transfers:** A group's MPC is *very* highly correlated with multiplier for transfers to it Application: CARES Act

**Gov't purchases:** Avg. MPC w/in sector state less correlated w/ multiplier. IO shapes incidence.

# Conclusion

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## Theory + data

Simple, rich model. Analytical decomp. of multiplier into deviations from Keynesian benchmark

Calibration in terms of estimable sufficient statistics.

## Takeaway

Targeting fiscal policy is (a) important and (b) simple.

Fiscal multipliers vary substantially depending on where the shock is targeted

All heterogeneity stems from heterogeneous initial incidence across households with differing MPCs



## Multiplier changes over time as fundamentals of economy change

1. **The role of IO linkages:** An economy with no intermediate inputs has the same aggregate multipliers but more heterogeneity in spending multiplier. [Figure](#)
2. **The decline of the labor share:** The fall in the labor share from 2000 to 2012 lead to smaller purchases multipliers. [Figure](#)
3. **Rising labor income inequality:** Can change multipliers if it changes MPCs or shifts workers across industries/regions



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Additively-separable utility functions over consumption and labor

In  $t = 1$ , no labor supply decision and households face borrowing constraints

In  $t = 2$ , households are unconstrained

Utilitarian social planner puts weight  $\pi_n$  on household  $n$  and chooses government spending  $g_n$  (and taxes  $\tau_n$ ) to maximize total welfare

## Proposition 1

The change in welfare  $dW$  due to a small change in taxes and government purchases in the first period can be expressed as ▶ Formal Statement of Problem ▶ Optimal Policy

$$dW = \sum_n \pi_n \left[ r_n \tau_n + \lambda_n^1 \frac{d\tau_n}{\tau_n} + \mu_n^1 \frac{dg_n}{g_n} \right]$$

Address under-emp.      Make transfers

Where  $r_n$  = social value of transfers to  $n$ ,  $\lambda_n^1$  = labor wedge of household  $n$ .

In the case where:

1. All labor is rationing to un(der)employed households, who have no marginal disutility of labor
2. Social value of transfers are equal across households
3. Bias and homophily effects are 0

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$$dW = \frac{1}{N} \sum_n m_n B_n^1$$

$B_n^1$ : partial equilibrium change in total household incomes induced by policy

**Intuition:** Without bias/homophily, all households direct consumption in same way for purposes amplification

Allow set of periods  $T \subseteq \{1, \dots, T\}$  in which labor is rationed

## Proposition 2

For any small shock to fiscal policy inducing a partial equilibrium effect  $BY^T$  in periods  $1; \dots; T-1$ , there exists a selection from the equilibrium set such that the general equilibrium response of  $1; \dots; T-1$  period values added  $dY^T$  is given by:

$$dY^T = \left( \mathbb{E}^T m^T R_L^T \rho^T \right)^{-1} \mathbb{X}^T \mathbb{1}^T BY^T$$

Shocks in each rationing period can influence output in other rationing periods  
 Need to consider intertemporal MPCs (Auclert et al 2018)



Allow for fixed firm-level markups on marginal cost  $\frac{p_i^t}{1 - \mu_i}$

Now need to also ration dividends back to households

Very similar result holds in this setting

## Proposition 3

For any shock inducing a first-period partial equilibrium response  $dQ$ , the general equilibrium response in production satisfies:

$$dQ = \mathcal{R} dQ + C^{-1} R_L^{-1} P^1 dQ^1 + C^{-1} D^{-1} P dQ + B Q$$

where  $C$  is the matrix of household directed MPCs out of profit income, where  $D$  is the block diagonal matrix composed of  $D^1$  and  $D^2$  which are each  $N \times N$  matrices with entries  $D_{ij}^t = p_i^t q_j$  and where  $P$  is the block diagonal matrix composed of  $P^1$  and  $P^2$  themselves each diagonal matrices with entries  $P_i^t$ . All quantities are evaluated at the initial equilibrium.

What widens the heterogeneity in multipliers?

Heterogeneous demographic composition of states and sectors

Covariance between worker MPCs and elasticity of income to changes in output

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Covariance between worker MPCs and elasticity of income to changes in output

What dampens the heterogeneity in multipliers?

IO links dilute the MPC of workers receiving marginal dollars

# Full equilibrium conditions

Firm optimization

$$p_i^t X_i^t; L_i^t \quad P \operatorname{argmax}_{X_i; L_i} p_i^t F_i^t(p_i^t X_i; L_i) \quad p^t \quad X \quad L$$

HH optimization

$$p_n^1; c_n^2; \lambda_n^2 \quad P \operatorname{argmax}_{c^1; c^2; \lambda^2} \quad u_n^t(p^t; \lambda^t) \\ \text{s.t.} \quad \lambda_n^t \frac{p^t \cdot c_n^t}{p^1 \cdot r^t} \leq 0 \quad \text{and} \quad \lambda_n^1 \cdot p^1 \cdot c_n^1 \leq \underline{s}_n$$

Labor rationing

$$\lambda_n^1 \quad R_n p^1 L_i^1 u_i$$

Market clearing

$$F_i^t(p_i^t; L_i^t) \quad c_{n;i}^t \quad X_{j;i}^t \quad G_i^t \quad \text{and} \quad L_i^t \quad \lambda_n^t$$

# Network Effects: Exact Decomposition in Terms of Bonacich Centralities

Define:

1.  $\mathbf{m}$  { diagonal matrix of MPCs
2.  $\mathbf{C}^1$  { normalized spending direction matrix
3.  $\mathbf{G} = \mathbf{R}_L^{-1} \mathbf{P}^1 \mathbf{I} \mathbf{X}^1 \mathbf{C}^1$  map from household spending to others' income
4.  $\mathbf{b} = \mathbf{1}^T \mathbf{p} \mathbf{G} \mathbf{m} \mathbf{q}^{-1}$  { Vector of Bonacich centralities in spending network
5.  $\mathbf{p} \mathbf{b}^{\text{next}} \mathbf{q}^T = \mathbf{b}^T \mathbf{G}$  { Average Bonacich centrality of households on whom I consume

## Proposition 4

For any shock inducing a unit-magnitude labor incidence shock:

$$\mathbf{1}^T d\mathbf{Y}^1 = \frac{1}{1 - E_{By^1} r_{m_n}^s} E_{By^1} r_{m_n}^s E_{By^1} r_{b_n}^{\text{next}} s \frac{1}{1 - E_{By^1} r_{m_n}^s} \text{Cov}_{By^1} r_{m_n} : b_n^{\text{next}} s$$

Incidence multiplier
Biased spending direction effect
Homophily effect

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# Full Statement of Planner's Problem

Household Problem:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \max_{c_n^1, c_n^2} p_n^2 c_n^1 + c_n^2 q_n \quad \text{Pargmax}_{c_n^1, c_n^2} u_n^1(p_n^1 c_n^1; \lambda_n^1) q_n + u_n^2(p_n^2 c_n^2; \lambda_n^2) q_n \\
 & \text{s.t. } p_n^1 c_n^1 + \frac{p_n^2 c_n^2}{1+r} \leq \frac{w_n^1}{1+r} + \frac{w_n^2}{1+r} \\
 & \quad \lambda_n^1 p_n^1 c_n^1 \leq \lambda_n^1 \leq \underline{s}_n
 \end{aligned}$$

Social welfare for scal policy  $\{p_n^1, q_n\}$

$$W(p_n^1, q_n) = \sum_{n \in N} W_n(p_n^1, q_n)$$

$\{p_n^1, q_n\}$  household labor income consistent with rationing equilibrium with scal policy given by  $\{p_n^1, q_n\}$



Direct payments in CARES Act: \$1;200 to those making less than \$75,000



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**Takeaway 1:** With maximum transfer of \$1,200, income-targeting was very effective (0.79 vs. 0.8)

Direct payments in CARES Act: \$1,200 to those making less than \$75,000  
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**Takeaway 1:** With maximum transfer of \$1,200, income-targeting was very effective (0.79 vs. 0.8)

**Takeaway 2:** Could have generated more stimulus with larger transfer to higher-MPC households

$\rho_{si;kj}^1$ : sector  $i$  in state  $s$  uses  $\rho_{si;kj}^1$  units of output from sector  $j$  in state  $k$

Use 2012 BEA make and use tables to construct national IO matrix

Use 2012 CFS microdata on to compute gross trade flows between all state pairs for tradable commodities

For nontradable sectors, we assume all production is within state

# Estimating the Rationing Matrix ▶ Back

$$R_{L_1}^1 p^1$$

$$m; s_i$$

$$I_{rr} \quad s_s \quad i_r \quad i_i \quad \frac{y_{inr}}{Y_{inr}} \quad 1 \quad MPC_n \quad \overline{MPC}_{ir}$$

Within State    Labor Share of Output    Income Shares    Rationing on MPCs

1. Assume all labor income earned within state where production takes place ( $s_s$ )
2. Compute labor shares of output from BEA for each sector and state ( $i_r$ )
3. Use ACS to compute income shares of demographics in sectors and states ( $i_i$ )
4. Use LEHD to estimate exposure to business cycle shocks by worker demographics (Patterson 2019)

▶ Figure

$\alpha_{ri;sn}$  : demograph in state  $s$ 's MPC for good  $i$  in state  $r$



1. Use PSID and CEX to estimate  $\alpha_{ri;sn}^n$  using methodology of Blundell, Pistaferri and Preston (2008), Guvenen and Smith (2014) and Patterson (2019) [▶ Figure](#) [▶ Details](#)  
 MPC for capitalists of 0.028 (Chodorow-Reich, Nenov, and Simsek 2019)
2. Use CEX to compute consumption basket shares for each demographic group [▶ Figure](#)  
 Linear Engel curves for each demographic group
3. Use CFS to compute consumption trade flows across states [▶ Figure](#)  
 Assume all non tradables consumed within state

# Exploring constant consumption shares assumption

Figure: Estimated Directed MPCs Vs. CEX basket-weighted MPCs

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# Substantial MPC Heterogeneity Across Demographics

[Figure](#): Heterogeneity in MPCs by Demographic Group (Patterson 2019)



# Details of MPC Estimation

Following Gruber (1997) use panel structure of PSID:

$$C_{it} = \beta_x p_x E_{it} + \gamma' x_{it} + \eta_{it}$$

$C_{it}$  consumption expenditure  $E_{it}$  labor earnings  $x$  = demographics, state-by-time FEs

Instrument for income changes using unemployment shocks

Using CEX: estimate demand for food expenditure as function of durable consumption, non-durable consumption, demographic variables and CPI prices

Assuming monotonicity, invert to predict total consumption in the PSID using demographics and food expenditure

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# Relationship between MPC and Exposure to the Business Cycle

Figure: Earnings Elasticity and MPCs (Patterson 2019)

# Empirical irrelevance of the bias and homophily effects is a robust feature of a networked economy

# Regional Demand Linkages: Per Capita Spending

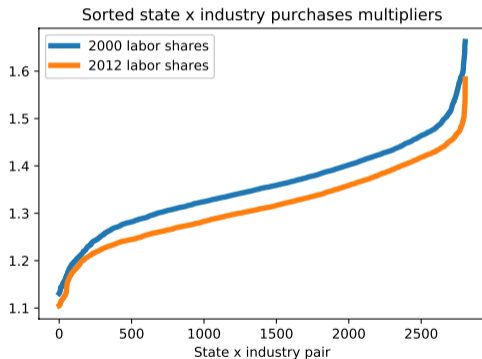
# IO linkages dampen the distribution of multipliers

IO linkages *narrow* the heterogeneity across sectors/states

Inputs dilutes the MPC of workers receiving marginal dollars

# Multipliers and the decline of the labor share

Consider the decline in the labor share by industry from 2000-2012, keeping all else equal  
Assume the difference in labor income accrues to a factor with  $MPC = 0$



# Special Case with No Incidence of Bias Effect: Homotheticity

Assume the following conditions:

- Consumption preference and labor rationing are homothetic (i.e. marginal change is the same as the average)

- No households are net borrowers in period 1

- No government spending

Then, for a final-output-proportional demand shock, the incidence and bias effects are 0

- Each household's marginal consumption is proportional to its initial consumption  $\bar{N}$  income-weighted average of marginal consumption is proportional to output.

- Households with different consumption bundles  $\bar{N}$  some households experience a greater change in income

- Those households have different MPCs from the average  $\bar{N}$  homophily possible.

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# Special Case with No Network Effects

*When does this collapse to classical Keynesian multiplier?*

If all industries have a common rationing-weighted average MPC,  $m$ , then

$$\mathbf{1}^T dY^1 = \frac{1}{1 - E_y - m_n s} = \frac{1}{1 - m}$$

*No matter where the shock hits, the aggregate consumption response is the same*

Special case of this: single good and single household

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In the paper we provide a number of results on the optimality of fiscal policy, not merely the welfare effects of potentially suboptimal fiscal policy

## Proposition 5

Suppose taxes  $\tau^1; \tau^2$  and purchases  $G^1; G^2$  solve the planner's problem. Now consider a change in policy  $\tau^1; \tau^2; G^1; G^2 \rightarrow \tau^1; \tau^2; G^1; G^2$ , indexed by  $\gamma$ . The following first-order condition holds:

$$0 = \underbrace{\lambda^T \mu WTP^1 - \gamma \lambda^T \Delta \Gamma^1 q G^1}_{\text{Opportunistic government purchases}} + \underbrace{\lambda^T \mu p l - \phi q WTP^2 - \gamma \lambda^T G^2}_{\text{Short-termist government purchases}} + \underbrace{\gamma \lambda^T \mu \tau_\varepsilon^1 - \frac{\tau_\varepsilon^2}{1+r}}_{\text{Pure redistribution}} + \underbrace{\lambda^T \phi \mu \tau_\varepsilon^2}_{\text{Relaxation of borrowing constraints}} + \underbrace{\lambda^T \Delta \Gamma^1 l - C_{\ell 1}^1 \Gamma^1 - C_{\ell 1}^1 \Gamma^1 G^1 - \mu \tau_\varepsilon^1 - \frac{1 - \phi n - \phi \mu \tau_\varepsilon^2}{1+r}}_{\text{Keynesian stimulus (alleviation of involuntary unemployment)}}$$

where  $\gamma$  is the marginal value of public funds,  $\Gamma^1$  is the matrix of type weights,  $\mu$ ,  $\phi$ , and  $\Delta$  are the diagonal matrices of type weights, borrowing wedges, and labor wedges, respectively.

In the paper we derive a number of comparative statics results which explore how changes in the network structure affect the distribution of fiscal multipliers

Define the matrix:

$$M = C_1^{-1} R_1 P^1 / R^1$$

## Proposition 6

Consider a change in the economy such that  $M$  is replaced with  $M^1$ . The effect on  $dY^1$  of this change is given to first order in  $\epsilon$  by:

$$\frac{d}{d\epsilon} dY^1|_{\epsilon=0} = P^1 M^1 Q^1 E P^1 - M^1 Q^1 B Q^1$$

where  $BQ^1$  generalizes  $BY^1$  to the case with supply shocks.

Corollaries include:

1. Higher multipliers with higher MPCs / labor shares
2. More dispersed multipliers with less connected IO matrix