

# The Economic Geography of Premature Mortality in the United States: Discussion

Shom Mazumder (Government)

09/10/2017

# Overview

- **Overarching Question:** Geographic variation in mortality? By race and age?
- Striking patterns emerge:
  - Middle aged, white women are dying at much higher rates
  - Whites in general are stagnating in mortality
  - Blacks are doing much better (could probably be emphasized more?)
- Evaluate some initial (economic!) explanations
  - Income growth (nada)
  - Manufacturing (maybe?)

# Why This Paper is a BFD



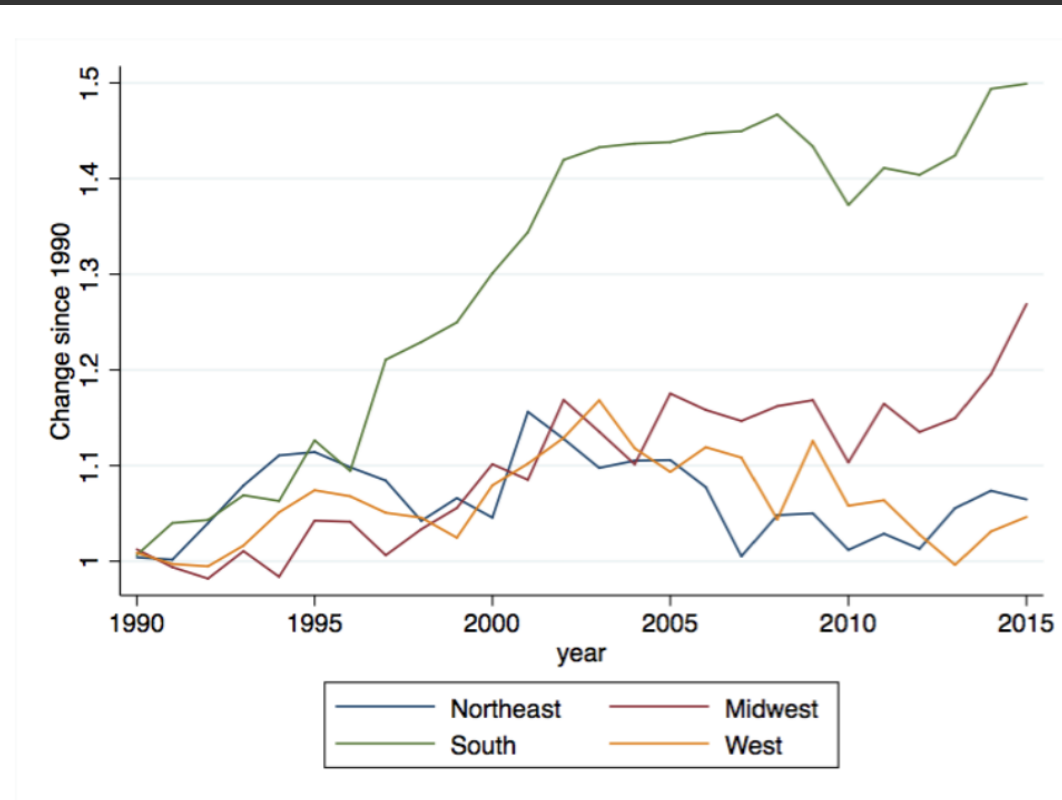
- Uses **population data** from CDC to evaluate mortality rates
- Shows strong gender-race-regional differences in mortality rates
- Tons of puzzles come out of this that are (literally) a matter of life and death

# My Overarching Questions

- Theory
  - No overarching conceptual framework
  - Are there microfoundations that can jointly incorporate age, race, and sex?
  - Where's the state? Politics?
- Empirics
  - Where's the geography?
  - Not sure if you've really set up fair tests of existing explanations
  - Cause specific mortality trends?

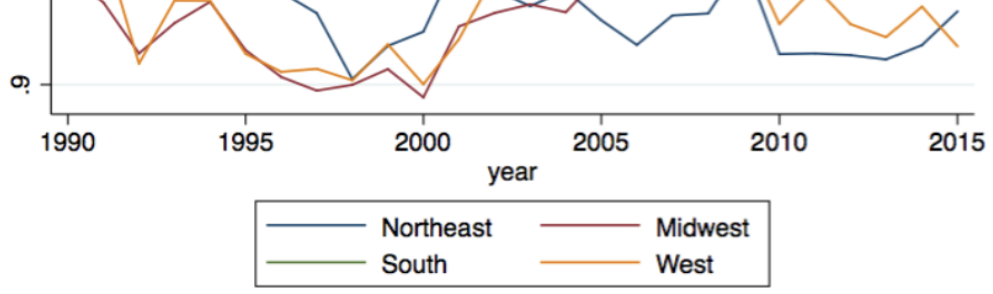


# The Erosion of the Welfare State?



(a) White women, 40-44





# Suggestions for Theory

- Paper currently reads as overview of existing explanations
  - I want to know how **you** are thinking about this theoretically
- Microfound this with some a lifecycle theory of household bargaining?
- Politics and the state (Bleakly 2007, Velasco 2017)
  - Decline in welfare state and Medicaid
  - Incarceration?
  - What about decline of unions, rise in inequality, etc.?





## Post-treatment?

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60
Share manuf. emp. 1969	0.143 (0.231)	0.614* (0.331)	1.117** (0.437)	0.610 (0.481)	0.319 (0.553)	0.325 (0.906)	-0.931 (1.101)	-2.048 (1.325)	-4.171*** (1.292)
Share manuf. emp. 2000	-0.633** (0.283)	-0.480 (0.394)	-1.050** (0.430)	-0.234 (0.493)	0.606 (0.589)	0.522 (0.869)	1.743 (1.124)	2.194* (1.307)	3.451*** (1.258)
Chg. manuf. share 2000-2015	0.218** (0.0952)	0.0666 (0.0861)	-0.0854 (0.112)	-0.0215 (0.114)	0.122 (0.115)	0.0677 (0.126)	-0.103 (0.299)	-0.0311 (0.285)	-0.0505 (0.263)
Med. HH Inc., 2000	0.000684 (0.00253)	-0.00955*** (0.00339)	-0.0211*** (0.00453)	-0.0258*** (0.00550)	-0.0376*** (0.00636)	-0.0611*** (0.00860)	-0.0761*** (0.0101)	-0.103*** (0.0147)	-0.109*** (0.0195)
Real Inc. growth, 2000-2015	-0.431 (0.409)	-0.573 (0.538)	-0.883 (0.674)	-0.829 (0.659)	-0.564 (0.783)	-0.371 (1.040)	-1.829 (1.435)	-4.276*** (1.566)	-5.298*** (1.462)
Constant	0.545*** (0.191)	1.278*** (0.263)	1.635*** (0.388)	2.011*** (0.399)	2.796*** (0.509)	4.203*** (0.681)	5.002*** (0.719)	6.834*** (1.121)	7.854*** (1.617)
Observations	670	670	670	670	670	670	670	670	670
R-squared	0.699	0.311	0.352	0.326	0.358	0.451	0.427	0.416	0.405

<!center>

## Suggestions for Empirics

- Would love to see maps of this variation
- Directly test the China shock hypothesis
- Lot's of problem with post-treatment variables
  - Makes it hard to interpret the regressions
- What about Chetty et al?
- Minor point: graphs hard to read in black and white

# Conclusion

This is going to be a very important paper.