Perceived Income Risks

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Outline

- Motivation
- 2 Empirical evidence
 - Cross-sectional patterns
 - Permanent versus transitory risks
 - Perceived risks and decisions
 - Summary of empirical findings
- Model
- 4 Conclusion
 - Perceived risks and macroeconomic history

Motivation

- Risks matter for individual decisions
 - precautionary saving
 - stock market participation
 - portfolio choice
- Risks matter for macroeconomic outcomes
 - since idiosyncratic risks are not perfectly insured
 - \bullet \rightarrow income/wealth inequality
 - \bullet \rightarrow heterogeneous MPCs
 - ullet ightarrow distributional channel of macroeconomic policies
 - \bullet \rightarrow business cycle fluctuations
- Income risks are central inputs of any incomplete-market model
- My question: perceptions \approx estimates \approx "the truth"?

Some macro facts

- \bullet Wealth inequality and heterogeneity in MPCs
 - a standard incomplete market model generates insufficient inequality seen in the data
 - unless additional features such as preference heterogeneity or costly adjustment are introduced
- Liquid assets holdings
 - too few in data compared to a standard one-asset incomplete market model
- "Excessive sensitivity" to unanticipated transitory shocks
 - high MPCs seen in the data than PIH model prediction

Preview of the findings

- Empirics: subjective risk profiles from a density survey
 - Heterogeneity: sizable difference across/within groups
 - Superior information: on average lower than standard parameterizations used by economists
 - State-dependence: negative correlation with recent/past labor market conditions
 - Extrapolation: correlated with negative labor outcomes
 - History-dependence: positive correlation with experienced volatility/unemployment
 - Decisions: spending plans react to risk perceptions

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2 Model:

- a survey-informed subjective OLG / incomplete-market GE model
 - With heterogeneous perceived risks (PR)
 - Lower PR \rightarrow lower savings + more wealth inequality
 - \bullet State-dependence/extrapolation \to higher savings
 - Heterogeneity in $PR \rightarrow$ more wealth inequality



Literature

- income risks and partial insurance: Gottschalk et al. (1994), Carroll and Samwick (1997), Meghir and Pistaferri (2004), Storesletten et al. (2004), Blundell et al. (2008), Moffitt and Gottschalk (2002), Guvenen et al. (2014), Arellano et al. (2017), Bloom et al. (2018)
- subjective/probabilistic survey of beliefs: Manski (2004), Delavande et al. (2011), Manski (2018), Bertrand and Mullainathan (2001), Armantier et al. (2017)
- incomplete market macro: Bewley (1976), Aiyagari (1994), Huggett (1996), Krusell and Smith (1998), Heathcote et al. (2009), Carroll et al. (2017), Krueger et al. (2016), Bayer et al. (2019)
- consumption/saving under incomplete information/imperfect perception: Pischke (1995), Wang (2004), Rozsypal and Schlafmann (2017), Carroll et al. (2018), Lian (2019)

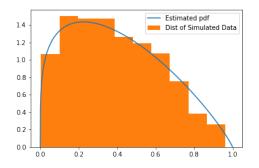
Data and sample

- Density survey: SCE
 - 2013M6-2020M4 (monthly)
 - 1300 households
 - 12-month panel
- Income panel: SIPP
 - 2014M1-2019M12 (monthly)
 - wage computed for the primary job
 - 900-2700 respondents
 - CPI adjusted
 - age 25-65
 - only job-stayers with the same employer for ≥ 2 years

Survey question

- Individual-specific bin-based forecast on $\Delta w_{i,t+1}$
 - wage growth of the same job/position/hours
 - exl. endogenous labor supply changes/promotion/demotion/separation
- Measurement of PR:
 - variance: $\overline{Var}_{i,t}(\Delta w_{i,t+1})$
 - computed from the density density forecast
- density estimation following Engelberg et al. (2009)
- restricted to attentive/high numeracy score sample
- adjusted into real terms using inflation uncertainty

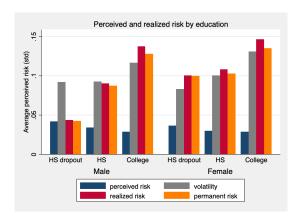
An illustration of the density forecast estimation



- case 1. 3+ intervals with positive probs, a generalized beta dist
- case 2. exactly 2 adjacent intervals with positive probs: a triangle dist
- case 3. one interval only: a uniform dist



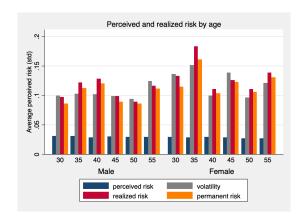
Observable heterogeneity: by education and gender



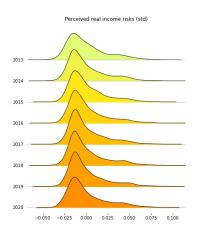
• consistent with Meghir and Pistaferri (2004)



Observable heterogeneity: by age and gender



Non-observable heterogeneity



- residuals controlling for observables + time FE ($R^2 = 0.10$)
- average PR: 3.5% in std; 10/90 IQR: 5.2% in std





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Log wage process

$$\underbrace{w_{i,t}}_{\text{log wage}} = \underbrace{z_{i,t}}_{\text{predictable component}} + \underbrace{e_{i,t}}_{\text{stochastic component}}$$

- \bullet individual i at time t
- $e_{i,t}$: to be specified later

Perceived risks (PR)

• Wage growth

$$\Delta w_{i,t+1} = \Delta z_{i,t+1} + \Delta e_{i,t+1}$$

• To the agent: **conditional** variance under FIRE

$$Var_{i,t}^*(\Delta w_{i,t+1}) = \sigma_{t+1|t}^2$$

• To econometricians: approximated unconditional variance

$$Var^{c}(\Delta \hat{e}_{i,c,t+1}) = \hat{\sigma}_{c,t}^{2} + \hat{\sigma}_{c,t+1}^{2} - 2Cov^{c}(\hat{e}_{i,c,t}, \hat{e}_{i,c,t+1})$$

- $\hat{e}_{i,c,t+1}$: first step regression residual controlling observable vars
- group c: assumed to share income process/risks $\sigma_{c,t}^2$
 - i.e. education/year of birth/gender/age



Possible problems with estimation

- $\hat{e}_{i,c,t} \neq e_{i,c,t}$
 - Intrinsic heterogeneity of individual i beyond c
 - Foresight about individual circumstance not available to economists

Time series structure of wage shocks

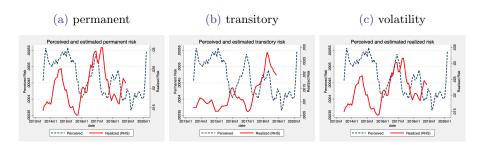
$$e_{i,c,t} = \underbrace{p_{i,c,t}}_{\text{permanent}} + \underbrace{\theta_{i,c,t}}_{\text{transitory}}$$

$$p_{i,c,t+1} = p_{i,c,t} + \psi_{i,c,t+1}$$

$$\psi_{i,c,t} \sim N(0, \sigma_{c,t,\psi}^2)$$

$$\theta_{i,c,t} \sim N(0, \sigma_{c,t,\theta}^2)$$

Permanent versus transitory risks



- i.e. one-year-ahead perceived risk at 2014m1 v.s. realized risk over the same period
- wage rate for the same job/hours/position
- estimated monthly risks aggregated into annual frequency





Perceptions versus economists' estimates

	PR(mean)	PR(median)	Volatility	RealizedRisk	PRisk	TRisk
gender						
1 (50%)	0.03	0.022	0.105	0.115	0.109	0.0238
2 (49%)	0.028	0.022	0.118	0.131	0.122	0.0322
education group						
HS dropout (0%)	0.036	0.022	0.088	0.071	0.07	0.0063
HS graduate (42%)	0.03	0.022	0.096	0.098	0.094	0.0176
College/above (56%)	0.028	0.021	0.124	0.142	0.132	0.0357
5-year age						
20 (2%)	0.037	0.031	0.094	0.069	0.068	0.0061
25 (12%)	0.032	0.027	0.111	0.157	0.156	0.0083
30 (12%)	0.03	0.023	0.116	0.112	0.098	0.0372
35 (13%)	0.029	0.021	0.125	0.149	0.134	0.0524
40 (13%)	0.028	0.02	0.1	0.119	0.111	0.0287
45 (14%)	0.028	0.02	0.119	0.113	0.106	0.0224
50 (15%)	0.027	0.019	0.095	0.1	0.096	0.0203
55 (15%)	0.027	0.018	0.122	0.128	0.121	0.0283
Full sample (100%)	0.029	0.021	0.112	0.123	0.115	0.0279

Perceived risks and household spending

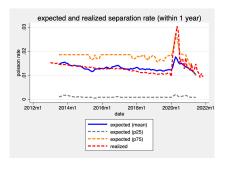
$$E_{i,t}(\Delta c_{i,t+1}) = u_0 + \frac{\mathbf{u_1}}{\operatorname{risks}}_{i,t}(\Delta y_{i,t+1}) + \xi_{i,t}$$

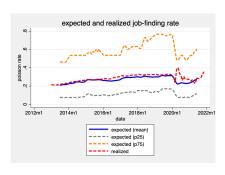
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
perceived earning risk	8.394***	8.399***	3.642***	3.243***		
	(1.175)	(1.176)	(0.533)	(0.537)		
perceived earning risk (nominal)					3.656***	
					(0.990)	
perceived ue risk						0.353***
-						(0.0553)
R-squared	0.0010	0.00282	0.928	0.928	0.941	0.633
Sample Size	53178	53178	53178	53178	54584	6269
Time FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Individual FE	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

 \bullet Higher perceived risks \to higher expected spending growth.



Perceived UE risks and realization





• realization computed from CPS panel of individuals

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- Why not directly use survey-reported PR?!
 - a resolution to "superior information" / unobserved heterogeneity
 - heterogeneity in wage risks without grouping people
- But need to be careful with measurement errors in PR from survey and behavioral bias.

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 - ◆ ↑ counter-cyclical risks: amplified business cycle fluctuations Bayer et al. (2019)

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- On wealth inequality
 - \bullet \uparrow Direct effect: heterogeneous PR \rightarrow heterogeneity in saving/wealth
 - \uparrow Indirect effect: lower PR \rightarrow lower self-insurance \rightarrow higher ex-post wealth inequality

Model overview

- Overlapping generation
- General equilibrium
- Uninsured idiosyncratic income risks
 - Permanent+ transitory productivity shock
 - Persistent unemployment spells
- No aggregate risk a la Krusell and Smith (1998)
- A blend of Huggett (1996) and Carroll (1997)
- Single one risk-free asset
- Allowing for subjective risk perceptions
 - Individuals swing between low/high risk perceptions

Benchmark model (objective risk perceptions)

$$\max \quad \mathbb{E}\left[\sum_{\tau=0}^{\tau=L-1} (1-D)^{\tau} \beta^{\tau} u(c_{i,\tau})\right]$$

$$\underbrace{a_{i,\tau}}_{\text{Savings}} = \underbrace{m_{i,\tau}}_{\text{Cash in hand}} -c_{i,\tau}$$

$$b_{i,\tau+1} = a_{i,\tau} R$$

$$m_{i,\tau+1} = b_{i,\tau+1} + (1 - \underbrace{\lambda}_{\text{Income tax}}) y_{i,\tau+1}$$

$$a_{i,\tau} \ge 0$$

- CRRA: $u(c) = \frac{c^{1-\rho}}{1-\rho}$
- Work age: $\tau = 1, 2..., T$ (since entering job market)
- Life length: $\tau = 1, 2..., L$ (since entering job market)
- Survival probability: 1-D



Income process over the life-cycle

income

$$y_{i,\tau} = n_{i,\tau} W$$
$$n_{i,\tau} = p_{i,\tau} \xi_{i,\tau}$$

permanent component

$$p_{i,\tau} = G_{\tau} p_{i,\tau-1} \psi_{i,\tau}, \quad log(\psi_{i,\tau}) \sim N(-\sigma_{\psi}^2/2, \sigma_{\psi}^2) \quad \forall \tau \le T$$

persistent/transitory component

$$\xi_{i,\tau} = \begin{cases} \theta_{i,\tau} & \text{if } \nu_{i,\tau} = e & \& \quad \tau \leq T, \quad log(\theta_{i,\tau}) \sim N(-\frac{\sigma_{\theta}^2}{2}, \frac{\sigma_{\theta}^2}{2}) \\ \zeta & \text{if } \nu_{i,\tau} = u & \& \quad \tau \leq T \\ \mathbb{S} & \text{if } \tau > T \end{cases}$$

• transition probability between $\nu = u$ and $\nu = e$

$$\pi(\nu_{\tau+1}|\nu_{\tau}) = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{U} & 1 - \mathbf{U} \\ 1 - E & \mathbf{E} \end{bmatrix}$$

Objective versus subjective profile

- objective: agents perceive $\Gamma = \{\sigma_{\psi}^2, \sigma_{\theta}^2, \mho, E\}$ income risk parameters
- subjective with state-dependence: each agent i swings between two subjective risk state $\tilde{\Gamma}_{i,\tau} = \tilde{\Gamma}_l$ and $\tilde{\Gamma}_{i,\tau} = \tilde{\Gamma}_h$, with transition matrix Ω .
 - heterogeneity in risk perceptions
- subjective model with extrapolation: $\tilde{\Gamma}_{i,\tau}$ depends on employment status $\nu_{i,\tau}$, i.e. $\tilde{\Gamma}_{i,\tau}(\nu_{i,\tau}=0)=\tilde{\Gamma}_l$ and $\tilde{\Gamma}_{i,\tau}(\nu_{i,\tau}=1)=\tilde{\Gamma}_h$

Why subjective risk perceptions?

- I don't take a stance on if agents perceptions are correct or wrong
 - unobserved information to economists
 - or agents under-perceive the true risks
- The subjective risk profile is disciplined by the survey data
- Risk parameters are exogenous to the model, therefore, does not contradict with rational expectation.

Economic environment

• Technology

$$Y = ZK^{\alpha}N^{1-\alpha}$$

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• Government (balance budget)

$$\lambda \left[1 - \Pi^{\mho} + \zeta \Pi^{\mho} \right] = \zeta \Pi^{\mho} \tag{1}$$

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$$\lambda \left[1 - \Pi^{\mathcal{U}} + \zeta \Pi^{\mathcal{U}} \right] = \zeta \Pi^{\mathcal{U}} \tag{1}$$

- Demographics
 - Stable age distribution $\{\mu_{\tau}\}_{\mu=1,2,..L}$

$$\mu_{\tau+1} = (1 - D)\mu_{\tau}$$
$$\sum_{t=0}^{L} \mu_{\tau} = 1$$

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- Accidental bequests
 - Newborn starts with a bank-balance equal to 0-1 fraction of the lump-sum of the accidental deceased's wealth

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Value functions under different profiles

• objective:

$$\begin{split} V_{\tau}(\underbrace{\nu_{i,\tau}, m_{i,\tau}, p_{i,\tau}}) &= \max_{\{c_{i,\tau}, a_{i,\tau}\}} \ u(c_{i,\tau}) \\ &+ (1-D)\beta \mathbb{E}_{\tau} \left[V_{\tau+1}((\nu_{i,\tau}, m_{i,\tau+1}, p_{i,\tau+1}) \right] \end{split}$$

• subjective:

$$\tilde{V}_{\tau}(\underbrace{\tilde{\Gamma}_{\tau}, \nu_{\tau}, m_{\tau}, p_{\tau}}_{\tilde{x}_{i,\tau}}) = \max_{\{c_{\tau}\}} u(c_{\tau}) + (1 - D)\beta \mathbb{E}_{\tau} \left[\tilde{V}_{\tau+1}(\tilde{\Gamma}_{\tau+1}, \nu_{\tau}, m_{\tau+1}, p_{\tau+1}) \right]$$

Evolution of the distribution over state variables

• objective:

$$\psi_{\tau}(B) = \int_{x \in X} \underbrace{P(x, \tau - 1, B)}_{\text{transition funcs}} d\psi_{\tau - 1} \quad \text{for all} \quad B \in B(X)$$

- B(X): distribution measure on state space X
- ψ_{τ} : distribution over state variables x for agents in age τ
- ψ_1 depends on initial draws of income shocks
- subjective:

$$\tilde{\psi}_{\tau}(\tilde{B}) = \int_{\tilde{x} \in \tilde{X}} \tilde{P}(\tilde{x}, \tau - 1, \tilde{B}) d\tilde{\psi}_{\tau - 1} \quad \text{for all} \quad \tilde{B} \in \tilde{B}(X)$$

Stationary equilibrium (StE)

- Optimal consumption and saving policies given W, R, λ
- Distribution evolution consistent with optimal c and a policies and exogenous probabilities of income/beliefs
- The factor markets are clearing.

$$\sum_{\tau} \mu_{\tau} \int_{X} a(x, \tau) d\psi_{\tau} = K$$

$$\sum_{\tau=0}^{T-1} \mu_{\tau} \Pi_{\tau}^{E} = N$$

• Firm optimization under competitive factor markets.

$$W = Z(1 - \alpha)(K/N)^{\alpha}$$

$$R = 1 + Z\alpha(K/N)^{\alpha - 1} - \delta$$

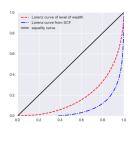
- Newborn's bank balance equal to accidental bequests
- Balanced government budget



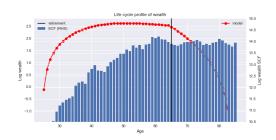
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StE Distribution of the objective model (preliminary)

(a) Wealth inequality



(b) Life-cycle wealth distribution



Calibration Partial equilibrium

Estimation of subjective risk profile

$$\underbrace{\tilde{\Gamma}_{i,t}^s}_{\text{reported PR}} = \underbrace{\tilde{\Gamma}_l + \mathbb{1}(\underbrace{J_{i,t}}_{\tilde{\Gamma}_{i,t}} = 1)(\tilde{\Gamma}_h - \tilde{\Gamma}_l)}_{\tilde{\Gamma}_{i,t}} + \xi_t + \eta_i + \epsilon_{i,t}$$

$$\underbrace{\tilde{\Gamma}_{i,t}^s}_{\tilde{\Gamma}_{i,t}} = 0$$

$$\underbrace{\tilde{\Gamma}_{i,t}}_{\tilde{\Gamma}_{i,t}} + \eta_i + \epsilon_{i,t}$$

$$\underbrace{\tilde{\Gamma}_{i,t}}_{\tilde{\Gamma}_{i,t}} = 0$$

- $J_{i,t} = 0$ for low and = 1 for high PR state
- a short time series of $\Gamma_{i,t}$ for many is observed in the survey
- $\{\tilde{\Gamma}_l \, \tilde{\Gamma}_h, \Omega\}$ can be estimated by MLE
- a modified Hamilton (1989) 2-regime-switching model
- $J_{i,t}$ can be also dependent upon business cycles

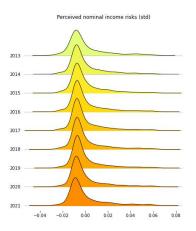




Summary

- Survey data can inform incomplete-market macro models
 - Direct evidence for heterogeneity in perceptions that matter
 - Closer to agents' information set that truly affects their decisions
 - No need to make stringent assumptions on expectation formation
- More work needed on
 - heterogeneous beliefs in HM models
 - understanding risk perception formation

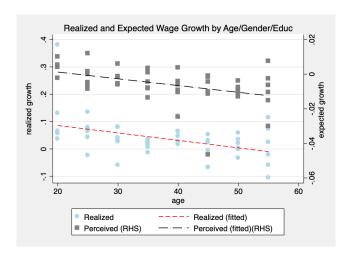
Within-group dispersion in nominal PR



- residuals controlling for observables /time fixed effects
- average PR: 2.1% in std; 10/90 IQR: 3.2% in std Back



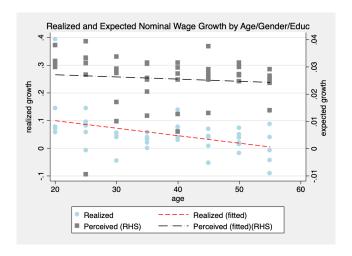
Appendix: expected growth by age



 \bullet e.g. a male high school graduate aged 30



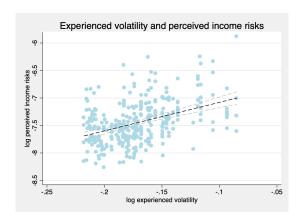
Appendix: expected **nominal** growth by age



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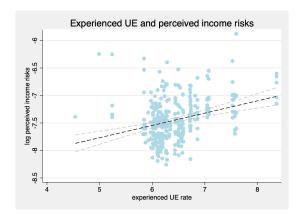


Appendix: Experienced volatility and PR



- income volatility conditional on macroeconomic history Storesletten et al. (2004)
- e.g. the experience by a 25-year old till 2015 is between 1990-2015

Experienced labor market and perceived risks



• e.g. experienced UE by a 25-year old in 2015 is between UE over 1990-2015



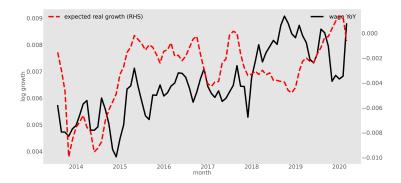
Appendix: Extrapolation from individual experiences

- higher experienced volatility \rightarrow higher PR
- recent unemployment experience \rightarrow higher PR

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
income shock squared	0.0225***	0.0222***	0.0217***	0.0207***	0.000773	0.00205***	0.000566	0.00183***	0.000614	0.00184***
	(0.00562)	(0.00570)	(0.00562)	(0.00564)	(0.000743)	(0.000516)	(0.000744)	(0.000515)	(0.000745)	(0.000516)
recently unemployed				0.511*	0.228***	0.0895***				
				(0.260)	(0.0330)	(0.0200)				
unemployed since m-8							0.161***	0.0783***		
							(0.0207)	(0.0121)		
unemployed since y-1									0.138***	0.0701***
									(0.0193)	(0.0113)
Observations	3662	3662	3662	3662	3701	1871	3701	1871	3701	1871
R-squared	0.004	0.013	0.016	0.017	0.015	0.030	0.019	0.041	0.016	0.039

Appendix: expected income growth and recent (past) wage growth

- \bullet $\overline{\exp_t}$: average expected growth across individuals
- quarterly growth in average hourly wage







Appendix: PR and current labor market condition

$$\underbrace{\overline{\mathrm{risk}_t}}_{\text{average perceived risk}} = \alpha + \beta \underbrace{\left(log(\mathrm{wage}_{t-k/12}) - log(\mathrm{wage}_{t-(k-3)/12}) \right)}_{\text{wage growth}} + \epsilon_{i,t}$$

 $\forall k = 0...4$

	mean:var	mean:iqr	mean:rvar	mean:skew
0	-0.28**	-0.42***	-0.48***	-0.02
1	-0.42***	-0.53***	-0.51***	0.12
2	-0.43***	-0.48***	-0.44***	-0.01
3	-0.43***	-0.48***	-0.42***	-0.1
4	-0.31***	-0.41***	-0.32***	-0.21*

• Counter-cyclical income risks: Storesletten et al. (2004), Guvenen et al. (2014), Bayer et al. (2019)



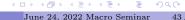


Appendix: PR and current labor market condition

$$\overline{\operatorname{risk}_{s,t}} = r + \psi \underbrace{LM_{s,t}}_{\text{median perceived risk in state } s} + \eta_{s,t}$$

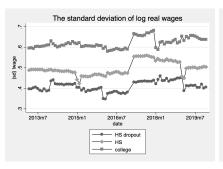
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	$\log(\text{var})$	$\log(\mathrm{risk})$	$\log(iqr)$	$\log(iqr)$
wage growth	-0.05***		-0.03***	
	(0.01)		(0.01)	
unemp rate		0.04*		0.04***
		(0.02)		(0.01)
Observations	3529	3529	3546	3546
R-squared	0.023	0.020	0.025	0.028



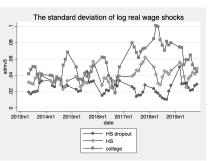


Appendix: monthly earning inequality and volatility





(b) Volatility



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Appendix: estimation of subjective risk profile

$$\log(\tilde{\text{var}}_{i,t}) = (12 + \frac{1}{12\kappa^2})\tilde{\sigma}_{i,t,\psi}^2 + \xi_t + \eta_i + \epsilon_{i,t}$$

• κ : externally assumed ratio of permanent and transitory risks $\frac{\tilde{\sigma}_{i,t,\psi}}{\tilde{\sigma}_{i,t,\theta}}$

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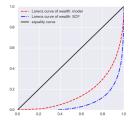
Appendix: calibration of the objective model

Table: Model parameters

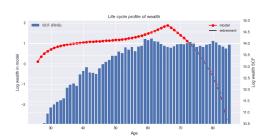
block	parameter name	values	source
risk	σ_{ψ}	0.15	Median estimates from the literature
risk	σ_{θ}	0.1	Median estimates from the literature
risk	U2U	0.18	Median estimates from the literature
risk	E2E	0.96	Median estimates from the literature
initial condition	$\sigma_{\psi}^{\mathrm{init}}$	0.629	Estimated for age 25 in the 2016 SCF
initial condition	bequest ratio	0	assumption
life cycle	T	40	standard assumption
life cycle	L	60	standard assumption
life cycle	1 - D	0.994	standard assumption
preference	ρ	1	standard assumption
preference	β	0.98	standard assumption
policy	S	0.65	U.S. average
policy	λ	0	endogenously determined
policy	λ_{SS}	0	endogenously determined
policy	μ	0.15	U.S. average
production	W	1	target values in steady state
production	K2Y ratio	3	target values in steady state
production	α	0.33	standard assumption
production	δ	0.025	standard assumption

Appendix: distribution in the partial equilibrium

(a) Wealth inequality



(b) Life-cycle wealth distribution



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Extensions: additional heterogeneity in MPC

- Heterogeneous time preferences
 - Ex-ante differences in β , a la Krusell and Smith (1998); Carroll et al. (2017); Krueger et al. (2016).
- Costly adjustments

$$V_{i,\tau}(c_{i,\tau-1}, x_{i,\tau}) = \max \{V_{\tau}^{A}(x_{i,\tau}) - \chi, V_{\tau}^{N}(c_{i,\tau-1}, x_{i,\tau})\}$$

$$V_{\tau}^{A}(x_{i,\tau}) = \max_{\{c_{i,\tau}\}} u(c_{i,\tau}) + (1-D)\beta \mathbb{E}_{\tau} [V_{\tau+1}(x_{i,\tau+1})]$$

$$V_{\tau}^{N}(c_{i,\tau-1}, x_{i,\tau}) = u(c_{i,\tau-1}) + (1-D)\beta \mathbb{E}_{\tau} [V_{\tau+1}(c_{i,\tau}, x_{i,\tau+1})]$$

- Utility cost from adjusting consumption in each period
- \bullet To introduce extensive margin of consumption change and match high MPC from data

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