

DISCUSSION OF  
“HOMELESSNESS”  
BY IMROHOROGLU & ZHAO

Kurt Mitman

CEMFI, IIES, CEPR, and IZA

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# DISCUSSION ROADMAP

1. Very brief overview of the paper
2. Data on homelessness and housing affordability
3. Comments
4. Conclusion

## QUICK SUMMARY OF THE PAPER

- ▶ Interested in studying policies to alleviate homelessness
- ▶ Document some facts
- ▶ Build an equilibrium model of housing and homelessness
  - ▶ Matches PE RCT evidence
  - ▶ Captures inequality in wealth and income
  - ▶ Housing supply and demand elasticities
  - ▶ Key feature is segmented housing markets
- ▶ Study policies to alleviate homelessness
- ▶ Nice combination of micro/macro to tackle important, oft overlooked, question

# CHALLENGES TO MEASURING HOMELESSNESS

- ▶ What does it mean to be homeless?
  1. People living rough (e.g. public spaces/external spaces)
  2. People in emergency accommodation
  3. People living in accommodation for the homeless
  4. People living in institutions
  5. People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing (e.g., cars)
  6. People living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends

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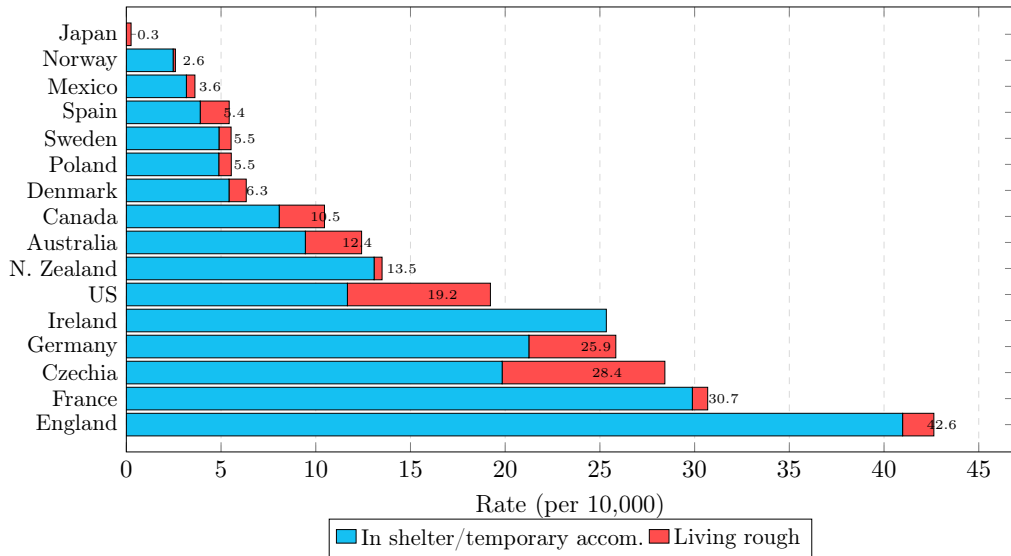
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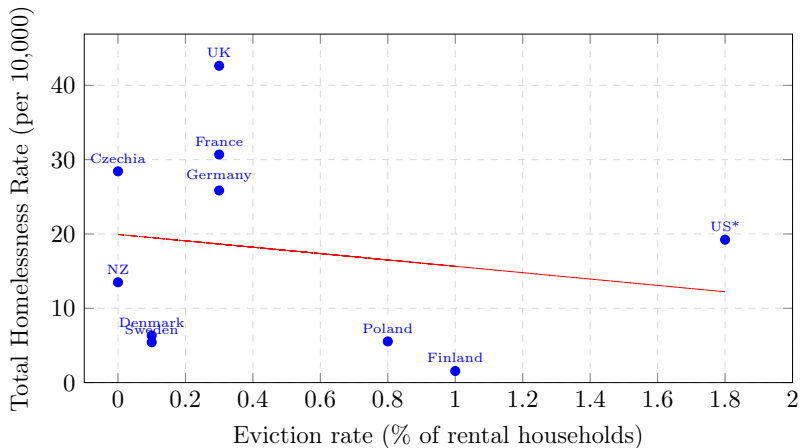
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- ▶ Types 6 can be large (e.g., in Sweden  $\text{Type 6} > 1+2+3$ )

# HOMELESSNESS IS A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

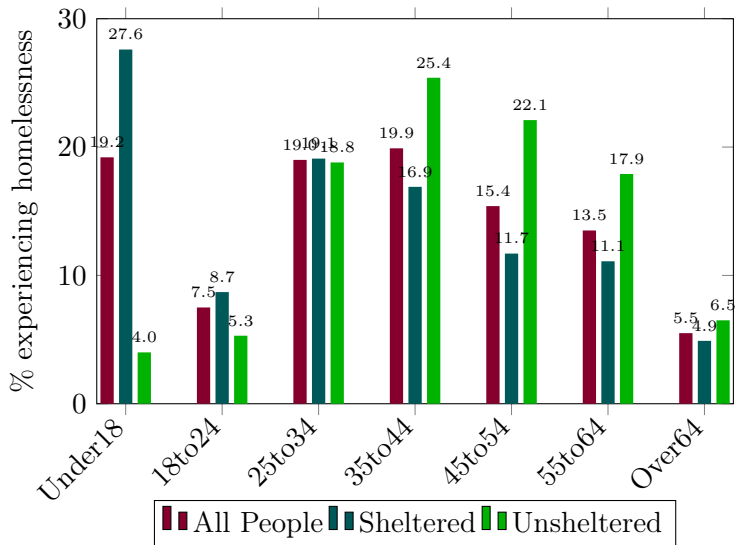




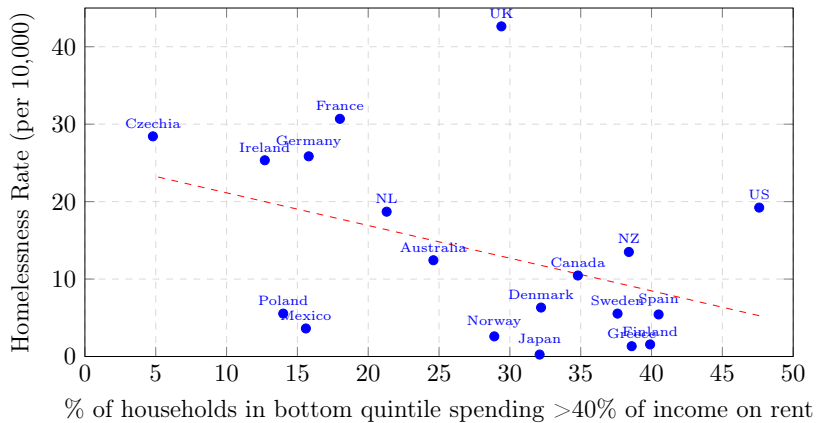
# HOMELESSNESS NOT JUST ABOUT EVICTION POLICY



# HOMELESS POPULATION IS HETEROGENEOUS



# IS IT A HOUSING AFFORDABILITY CRISIS?



## COMMENT 1: SHELTERED VS UNSHELTERED HOMELESS

- ▶ In the model, no distinction between sheltered and unsheltered (all get  $\underline{h}$ )
- ▶ Is it an innocuous decision?
  - ▶ Supply of shelter space isn't unlimited
  - ▶ Could interact with scarring effect/labor market prospects
  - ▶ For welfare it should matter
  - ▶ Amount of shelter space a policy choice
- ▶ Could evaluate policy decisions like NY right to shelter

## COMMENT 2: PUBLIC VS PRIVATE INSURANCE

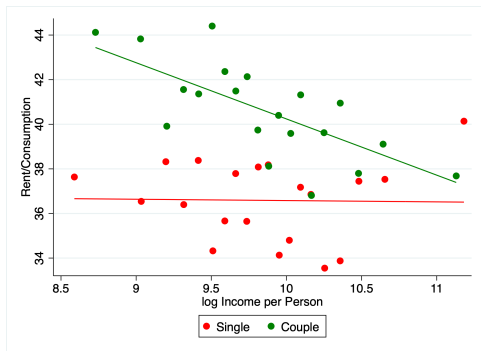
- ▶ From the motivation, seems many people "couch surfing"
- ▶ Right now there seems to be a lot of private insurance
- ▶ To what extent would these policies lead to crowding out?
- ▶ Again, these would be GE not picked up in RCTs

## COMMENT 3: LONG-RUN VS SHORT-RUN AND DYNAMICS

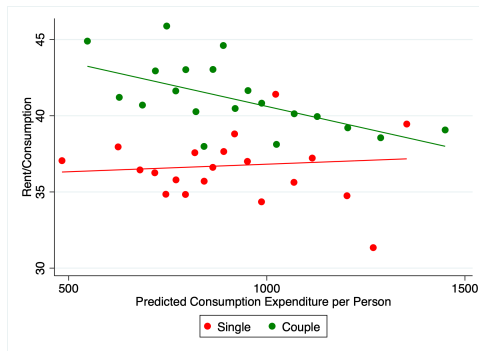
- ▶ Focus is on steady states
- ▶ Housing supply elasticities are long-run (from what I can tell)
- ▶ Transition dynamics from policies likely to matter
- ▶ Short-run housing supply much less elastic

## COMMENT 4: PREFERENCES, NON-RIVALRY, “DOUBLING UP”

FIGURE: Rent shares for couples and singles from Mitman, Peter, Piazzesi, & Schneider



(A) Rent share by income



(B) Rent share by consumption

- ▶ CD preferences, evidence suggests complements
- ▶ Housing at least partially non-rival
- ▶ “Doubling up”/shared housing/roommates could mitigate the issue

## FINAL THOUGHTS

- ▶ Very nice paper
- ▶ Most vulnerable usually overlooked in our models
- ▶ Long-run vs short-run considerations potentially important
- ▶ Looking forward to seeing the next version