

Financial fragility and mean-field interaction as determinants of macroeconomic dynamics: a stochastic model

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- 1 To develop a proper analytical framework to address the impact of *micro-financial variables* on aggregate outcomes and apply it
- 2 in a dynamic model of *financial fragility* with *heterogeneous agents* using a *bottom-up* approach.

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"Precise behavior of each agent is *irrelevant*. Rather we need to recognize that microeconomic behavior is **fundamentally stochastic** and we need to resort to proper statistical methods to study the macroeconomy consisting of a large number of such agents."

(M. Aoki and H. Yoshikawa, *Reconstructing Macroeconomics*, 2006)

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Mean-field interaction: *average interaction model that substitutes all the relations among agents that could not be analytically treated:*

- Agents are clustered in a space of **micro-states**, basing on their characteristics;
- Macro configuration is identified by the *number of agents that occupy each micro-state at a given time* (the **macro-state**), governed by a *stochastic law*;
- Modeling this stochastic law as a *continuous time Markov chain*, system's dynamics can be described by a **master equation**.

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It is feasible...

- the analytical aggregation of heterogeneous agents;
- without ad-hoc hypothesis on the statistical properties of the system,

...but:

how to apply it?:

- implicit formulation (relationship between analytical instruments and the underlying economic model) without closed solution;

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 - Firms are heterogeneous with respect to their financial soundness;
 - During business cycles the distribution of firms changes;
 - Financial crisis and recessions arise as the number of distressed firms increase.
- Greenwald and Stiglitz (1993) (GS): *Bankruptcy cost approach* implemented in a representative agent framework:
 - Asymmetric information and risk aversion;
 - Firms, fully rationed on equity market, recur to debt: same marginal cost for all;
 - Risk of default \Rightarrow Business cycles.

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...but:

can we take into account the financial heterogeneity of firms?:

- FIH: different risk of demise \Rightarrow different marginal cost of financing;
- Financial Hierarchy Hypothesis [Myers and Majluf, 1984]: different sources of financing with different marginal costs;



- assuming a given specific distribution [Gallegati, Marco, 2002]: GS with 2 classes of firms following a binomial distribution;
- computer simulations [Delli Gatti et al., 2005]: GS with heterogeneous interacting agents.

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2 a dynamic model of financial fragility:

- analytical aggregation of interacting heterogeneous firms;
- no hypothesis about micro distribution;



Analytical identification of the two components of
macroeconomic dynamics:
an ODE for *trend* and a pdf for *fluctuations*.

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- analytical aggregation of interacting heterogeneous firms;
- no hypothesis about micro distribution;



Analytical identification of the two components of
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- Two microstates for firms according to their financial soundness:

$$\text{state } 1 : a_i(t) < \bar{a}(t)$$

$$\text{state } 0 : a_i(t) \geq \bar{a}(t)$$

where:

- $a(t)$: equity ratio (own assets on total assets);
- $\bar{a}(t)$: equity ratio for which probability of bankruptcy is 0;
- the dynamics of the number of firms in state j , N^j , follows a *continuous time jump Markov process*;
- firms fail (and exit from the system) only from state 1;
- constant number of firms N ;
- bankrupted firms are immediately substituted by new ones;
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Transition rates: probability to get, in a given unit of time, a "jump" of an agent from one state to another:

$$\begin{aligned}\lambda &= \zeta \eta \\ \gamma &= \iota (1 - \eta)\end{aligned}\tag{1}$$

where:

- ζ and ι : *transition probabilities* for a firm to move from state 0 to 1 and from 1 to 0 (*micro factor*);
- η : the a-priori probability for a firm to be in state 1 (*macro factor*).

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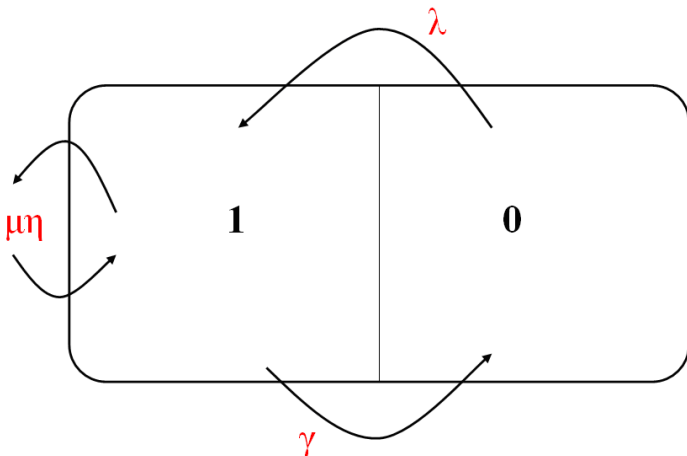


Figure: Structure of the system. μ : probability of bankruptcy for a firm.

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- the only productive factor is capital (K);
- being fully rationed on equity market, firms recur to net worth A_i and, *if necessary*, to mortgaged debt B_i ; balance sheet identity is $B_i(t) + A_i(t) = K_i(t)$;
- r is the interest rate and the return on net worth: financing costs of a firm are equal to $rK_i(t)$;
- all output is sold but each firm's selling price is affected by an iid idiosyncratic shock:

$$P_i(t) = \tilde{u}_i(t)P(t) \quad (2)$$

where $\tilde{u}_i(t)$ has uniform distribution with $E(\tilde{u}) = 1$;

- a firm with $A \leq 0$ fails and faces bankruptcy costs equal to $C_i(t) = c(P_i(t)q_i(t))^2$;
- **Mean-field approximation** for equity ratios: a^j is a statistic of all the a_i s within each state $j = 0, 1$;

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Setting:

- $\bar{u}^{\zeta}(t)$ and $\bar{u}^{\iota}(t)$: the thresholds of price shock to have a switching from one state to another and
- $\bar{u}(t)$: the threshold to have bankruptcy,

we can specify transition probabilities:

$$\zeta(t) = p(\tilde{u}_i(t) \leq \bar{u}^{\zeta}) = F(\bar{u}^{\zeta}(t)) \quad (3)$$

$$\iota(t) = p(\tilde{u}_i(t) \geq \bar{u}^{\iota}) = 1 - F(\bar{u}^{\iota}(t)) \quad (4)$$

and probability of bankruptcy μ :

$$\mu(t) = p(\tilde{u}_i(t) \leq \bar{u}) = F(\bar{u}(t)) \quad (5)$$

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$$\zeta(t) = p(\tilde{u}_i(t) \leq \bar{u}^\zeta) = F(\bar{u}^\zeta(t)) \quad (3)$$

$$\iota(t) = p(\tilde{u}_i(t) \geq \bar{u}^\iota) = 1 - F(\bar{u}^\iota(t)) \quad (4)$$

and probability of bankruptcy μ :

$$\mu(t) = p(\tilde{u}_i(t) \leq \bar{u}) = F(\bar{u}(t)) \quad (5)$$

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Firms objective function

- The problem for a generic firm i is:

$$\max_{q_i(t)} \mathbb{E} \{P(t)\tilde{u}_i(t)q_i(t) - rK_i(t) - C_i(t)\mu(t)\} \quad (6)$$

- optimal levels of production are:

$$\begin{aligned} q^{1*}(t) &= (r + 2c\mu(t))^{-1} \\ q^{0*}(t) &= r^{-1} \end{aligned} \quad (7)$$

- the aggregate output is given by:

$$Q(t) = \frac{N^1(t)}{r + 2c\mu(t)} + \frac{N^0(t)}{r} \quad (8)$$

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Step 2: analytical
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Step 3: estimation of the
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(Chapman-Kolmogorov or) **master equation**: quantifies the variation of probability flows in a small interval of time:

$$\frac{dP(N^1, t)}{dt} = (\text{inflows of probability fluxes into state 1}) - (\text{outflows of probability fluxes out of state 1})$$

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{dP(N^1, t)}{dt} = & \lambda(N - (N^1 - 1))P(N^1 - 1) + \gamma(N^1 + 1)P(N^1 + 1) + \\ & - [\lambda N - (\lambda - \gamma) N^1] P(N^1) \end{aligned} \quad (9)$$

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1 split the state variable N^1 in two components:

- the **drift** (m): tendency value of the mean for $n^1 = N^1/N$;
- the **spread** (s): aggregate fluctuations around the drift;
- hypothesis:

$$N^1 := Nm + \sqrt{N}s \quad (10)$$

2 Use of lead and lag operators to homogenize *in* and *out* transition fluxes;

3 Taylor's expansion of the modified master equation;

4 Equating the terms with same order of power for N .

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Asymptotic solution: dynamics

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- *Macroscopic equation* (the drift):

$$\frac{dm}{dt} = \lambda m - (\lambda + \gamma)m^2 \quad (11)$$

- *Fokker-Planck equation* (the spread):

$$\frac{\partial Q}{\partial t} = [2(\lambda + \gamma)m - \lambda] \frac{\partial}{\partial s}(sQ(s)) + \frac{[\lambda m(1-m) + \gamma m^2]}{2} \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial s}\right)^2 Q(s) \quad (12)$$

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Asymptotic solutions: stationary equilibrium

- Trend dynamics and stationary state:

$$m(t) = \frac{\lambda}{(\lambda + \gamma) - \kappa e^{-\psi(t)}} \Rightarrow m^* = \frac{\lambda}{\lambda + \gamma} \quad (13)$$

where: $\kappa = 1 - \frac{m^*}{m(0)}$, $\psi = \frac{(\lambda + \gamma)^2}{\lambda}$.

- Probability density of fluctuations:

$$p(s) = C \exp\left(-\frac{s^2}{2\sigma^2}\right) : \sigma^2 = m^* \frac{\gamma}{\lambda + \gamma} \quad (14)$$

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Endogenous formulation for η in asymptotic conditions I

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- The dynamics of the economy is fully described by means of transition rates:

$$\begin{aligned}\lambda &= \zeta \eta \\ \gamma &= \iota(1 - \eta)\end{aligned}$$

- micro effects ζ and ι : probability and survival function of \tilde{u} ;
- macro effect η : identification of its equilibrium formulation.

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Endogenous formulation for η in asymptotic conditions II

- **Detailed balance condition:** probability of influxes equals probability of outfluxes for all states \Rightarrow master equation = 0.
- **Hammersley and Clifford theorem:** Markov random field \leftrightarrow Gibbs random field.



$$\eta(N^1) = \frac{e^{\beta(t)g(N^1)}}{N} \quad (15)$$

where:

$$\beta(t) = \ln \left(-\frac{y^1(t) - \bar{y}(t)}{y^0(t) - \bar{y}(t)} \right) (y^1(t) - y^0(t))^{-1}$$

$$g(N^1) = -\frac{1}{2\beta} \frac{dH(N^1)}{dN^1} = -\frac{1}{2\beta} \ln \left(\frac{N^1}{N - N^1} \right)$$

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System's dynamics

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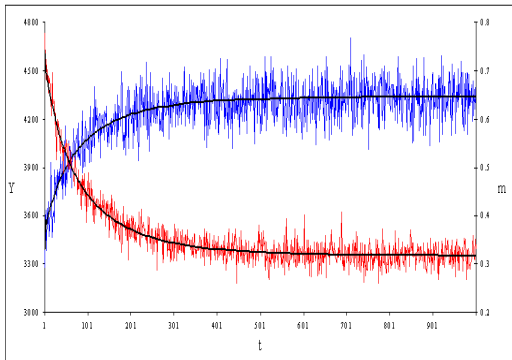


Figure: Trends (black lines) and series for m (red line, right axis) and value of aggregate production (blue line).

Effects of r

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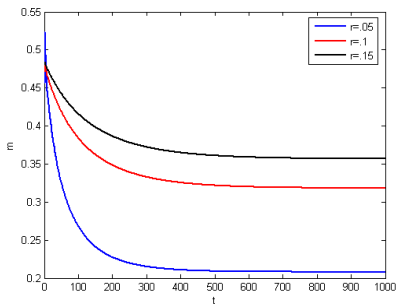


Figure: Different levels of m^* for different interest rates.

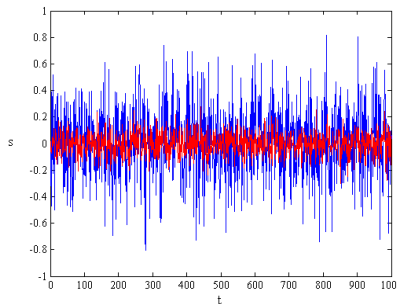


Figure: Spread for $r = 0.1$ (blue) and $r = 0.05$ (red).

Bifurcation diagram

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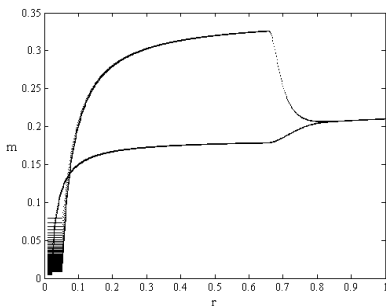


Figure: Bifurcation diagram for m as a function of the interest rate r .

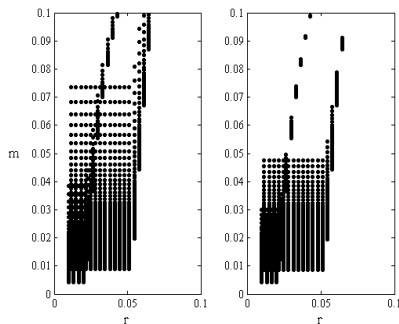


Figure: Particular of bifurcation diagrams with $m(0) = 0.4$ (left) and $m(0) = 0.1$ (right).

Non listed firms: Italy and France

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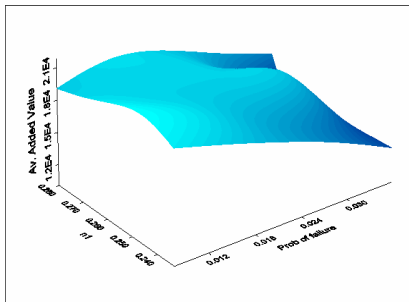


Figure: Italy 1992-2005. Average added value as a function of μ and n^1 .

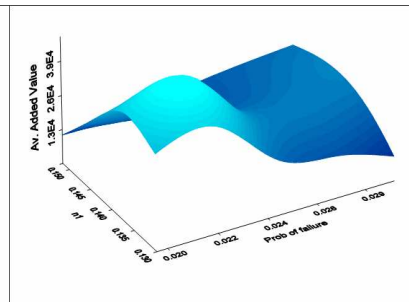


Figure: France 1992-2005. Average added value as a function of μ and n^1 .

Listed firms: USA

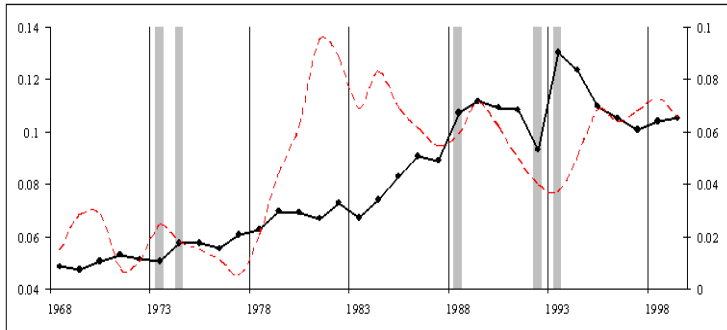


Figure: Trends of fraction of US listed firms with equity ratio below 0.1 (black line) and real lending interest rate (red dashed line, right axis). Grey areas: rejection of detailed balance.

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