

Monopoly Power and Economic Growth

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Welfare consequences of product market power?

The *static* perspective:

- Markup level: constrains output
- Markup dispersion: misallocation of production

We extend the analysis to a *dynamic* setting:

- Endogenous growth from innovation by profit-maximizing firms

How do the welfare costs of markups change in this setting?

- Equilibrium vs. constrained-optimal allocation
- Larger markups: larger distance from constrained-optimum

Theoretical setting

To characterize consequences of markups, must take a stance on:

- Origin of product market power
- Nature of innovation

We adopt the particular view that:

- Market power from monopolistic competition among differentiated firms
- Innovation as costly reduction of firms' marginal cost of production
- VES demand and heterogeneity in productivity imply markup dispersion

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Alternatives left for future work:

- Oligopolistic competition
- Product quality improvements

Outline

1. Partial equilibrium intuition
2. General equilibrium model
3. Quantification
4. Counterfactuals

Partial equilibrium intuition

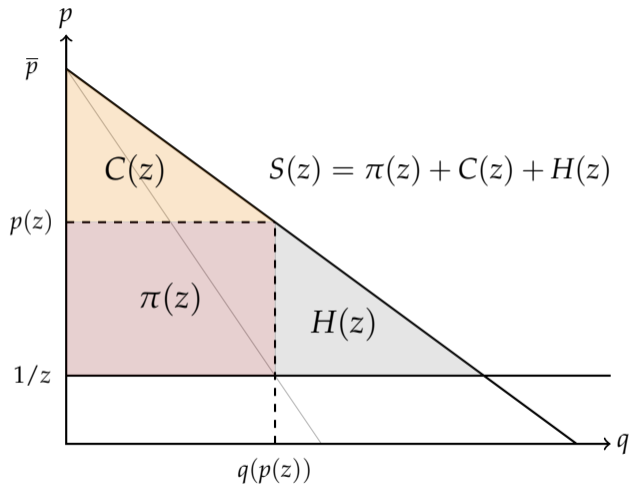
Let p denote a commodity's price and $q(p)$ be demand at this price

A monopolist produces at marginal cost $1/z > 0$ and the demand function satisfies:

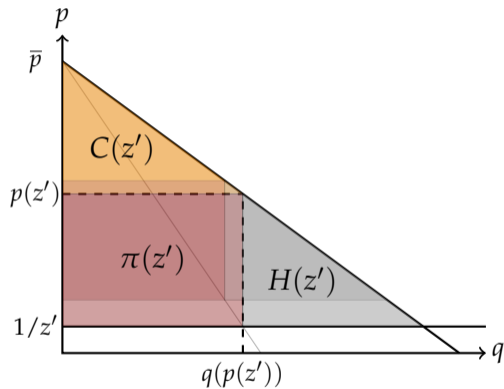
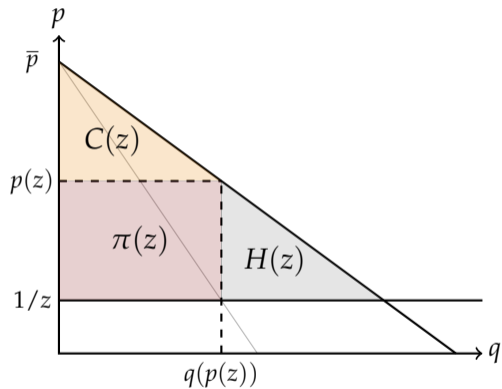
$$\frac{\partial q(p)}{\partial p} < 0, \quad q(1/z) > 0 \quad \text{and} \quad \vartheta(p) \equiv -\frac{\partial \ln(q(p))}{\partial \ln(p)} > 1$$

- The profit-maximizing price $p(z)$ is such that $q(p(z)) > 0$

Static cost of monopoly power



What about dynamics?



Introducing dynamics

Achieve $g\%$ improvement in z at cost $i(g)$ for i strictly increasing-convex

To 1st-order approx., the producer and planner dynamic problems are:

$$\max_g \left\{ \underbrace{\pi(z) + \pi'(z)gz}_{\approx \pi((1+g)z)} - i(g) \right\} \quad \text{and} \quad \max_g \left\{ \underbrace{S(z) + S'(z)gz}_{\approx S((1+g)z)} - i(g) \right\}$$

First-order conditions of each problem:

$$\pi'(z) = i'(g)/z \quad \text{and} \quad S'(z) = i'(g)/z$$

Private and social incentives won't coincide if $\pi'(z) \neq S'(z)$

Too little innovation?

Proposition 1

The ratio $R(z)$ of marginal producer surplus to marginal social surplus from an infinitesimal reduction in marginal cost is characterized by:

$$R(z) \equiv \frac{\pi'(z)}{S'(z)} = \frac{q(p(z))}{q(1/z)} < 1.$$

All else equal, for any downward-sloping demand function with a price elasticity above unity, social incentives for productivity improvements will exceed private incentives.

- Too little innovation

Misallocation of innovation?

Proposition 2

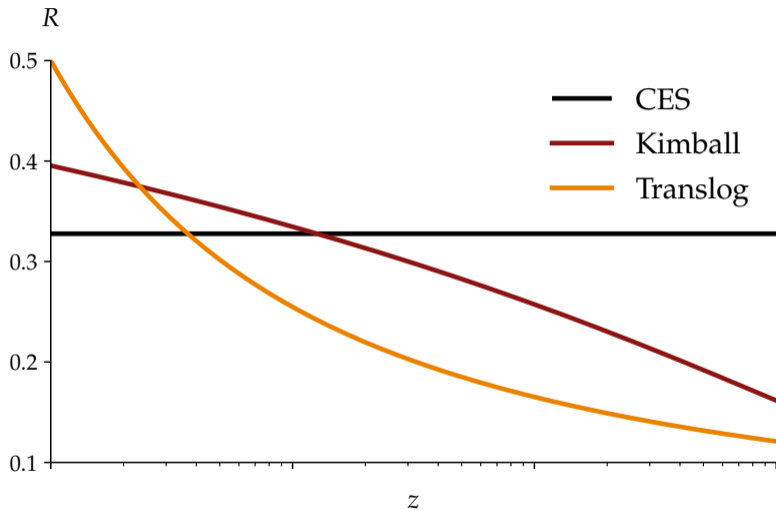
The elasticity of the ratio $R(z)$ with respect to productivity is characterized by:

$$\frac{\partial \ln(R(z))}{\partial \ln(z)} = \frac{\vartheta(p(z))[\vartheta(p(z)) - 1]}{\vartheta(p(z)) + \varepsilon(p(z)) - 1} - \vartheta(1/z)$$

where $\varepsilon(p) \equiv \partial \ln(\vartheta(p)) / \partial \ln(p)$ denotes the “super-elasticity” of demand.

- Potential for misallocation of innovation

Illustrative examples



Going from partial to general equilibrium

Partial equilibrium takeaways:

- Too little innovation
- Misallocation of innovation

Why a general equilibrium model?

- Quantitative counterfactuals
- Potentially too much innovation: business stealing externality

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Theoretical ingredients

Endogenous growth from Markovian productivity improvements

- Ericson and Pakes (1995), Atkeson and Burstein (2010), Stokey (2014), Benhabib, Perla and Tonetti (2021), Lashkari (2023)

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Heterogeneous markups from VES demand and productivity dispersion

- Kimball (1995), Klenow and Willis (2016), Edmond, Midrigan and Xu (2022)

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Selection from endogenous entry and exit

- Hopenhayn (1992), Luttmer (2007), Arkolakis (2016), Lashkari (2023)

Preferences

Infinitely lived representative household with separable preferences:

$$U_0 = \int_0^{\infty} e^{-\rho t} [\ln(C_t) - v(H_t)] dt$$

Production technology

Final good Y_t is a **Kimball (1995)** aggregate of differentiated varieties:

$$\int_{j \in \mathcal{J}_t} \Upsilon(q_{jt}) dj = 1 \quad \text{where} \quad q_{jt} \equiv \frac{y_{jt}}{Y_t} \quad \text{and} \quad M_t \equiv |\mathcal{J}_t|$$

- Potentially variable markups

Each variety produced by a single firm using labor l_{jt} with productivity z_{jt} :

$$y_{jt} = \exp(z_{jt})l_{jt}$$

Must pay per-period fixed cost of $c_F > 0$ units of labor to remain active

Innovation technology

Productivity follows a controlled Itô diffusion process:

$$dz_t = \gamma_t dt + \sigma dB_t$$

Labor requirement to achieve drift γ is $i(\gamma)$:

- $i : \mathbb{R}_0^+ \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_0^+$
- i is strictly increasing-convex
- $i(0) = 0$ and $\lim_{\gamma \rightarrow \infty} i(\gamma) = \infty$

Entry and exit

Endogenous and exogenous exit:

- Endogenous: unpaid fixed costs
- Exogenous: Poisson rate $\delta > 0$

Endogenous entry:

- Potential entrants allocate $c_E > 0$ units of labor to achieve unit flow of entry
- Start producing with productivity draw from CDF $F_t^E(z) : [z_t, \infty) \rightarrow [0, 1]$

Resource constraints

Final good is used for consumption:

$$C_t = Y_t$$

Labor can be allocated to production, innovation, entry or fixed costs:

$$L_t + I_t + c_E E_t + c_F M_t = H_t$$

Aggregate production and innovation labor:

$$L_t \equiv M_t \int_{z_t}^{\infty} l_t(z) dF_t(z) \quad \text{and} \quad I_t \equiv M_t \int_{z_t}^{\infty} i(\gamma_t(z)) dF_t(z)$$

Economic environment

$$U_0 = \int_0^{\infty} e^{-(\rho-n)t} [u(C_t) + v(H_t)] dt$$

Preferences

$$M_t \int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} \Upsilon(q_t(z)) dF_t(z) = 1, \quad q_t(z) \equiv y_t(z)/Y_t$$

Final good

$$y_t(z) = \exp(z)l_t(z)$$

Varieties

$$dz_t = \gamma_t dt + \sigma dB_t$$

Innovation

$$C_t = Y_t$$

Final good r.c.

$$L_t + I_t + c_E E_t + c_F M_t = H_t$$

Labor r.c.

$$\dot{M}_t = [e_t - \delta - \sigma^2 F_t''(\underline{z}_t)/2] M_t$$

Measure

$$\dot{F}_t(z) = -\gamma_t(z)F_t'(z) + \sigma^2 \{F_t''(z) - F_t''(\underline{z}_t)[1 - F_t(z)]\}/2 + e_t[F_t^E(z) - F_t(z)]$$

Distribution

Market structure

- Perfectly competitive **final good** (numéraire) market
- Perfectly competitive **labor** market
- Perfectly competitive **asset** market
- *Monopolistically* competitive **variety** markets

All prices taken as given besides firms choosing their variety's price

Decision problems

1. Household's problem [Details](#)
 - Choose $\{C_t, H_t\}_t$ to maximize lifetime utility
2. Final sector's problem [Details](#)
 - Choose $q_t(z)$ to maximize profits each period
3. Firm's static problem [Details](#)
 - Choose $p_t(z)$ to maximize profits each period
4. Firm's dynamic problem [Details](#)
 - Choose $\{\gamma_t(z), \underline{z}_t\}_t$ to maximize expected PDV of profits
5. Entrant's problem [Details](#)
 - Choose E_t to maximize expected PDV of profits

Optimality conditions

$$v'(H_t)/u'(C_t) = w_t$$

Household's static FOC

$$\dot{C}_t/C_t = r_t - \rho$$

Intertemporal Euler equation

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Intertemporal Euler equation

$$p_t(z) = \Upsilon'(q_t(z))D_t$$

Inverse demand function

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$$p_t(z) = \mu(q_t(z))w_t \exp(-z)$$

Monopoly pricing

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Monopoly pricing

$$V'_t(z) = w_t i'(\gamma)$$

Optimal innovation

$$V_t(\underline{z}_t) = V'_t(\underline{z}_t) = 0$$

Value matching and smooth pasting

Optimality conditions

$$v'(H_t)/u'(C_t) = w_t$$

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$$\dot{C}_t/C_t = r_t - \rho$$

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Optimal innovation

$$V_t(\underline{z}_t) = V'_t(\underline{z}_t) = 0$$

Value matching and smooth pasting

$$\left(\int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} V_t(z) dF_t^E(z) - w_t c_E \right) E_t = 0$$

Free-entry condition

Equilibrium allocation

Given initial conditions $\{M_0, F_0(z)\}$:

- $\{C_t, H_t\}_{t=0}^{\infty}$ solve the household's problem
- $\{q_t(z)\}_{t=0}^{\infty}$ solve the final sector's problem
- $\{p_t(z)\}_{t=0}^{\infty}$ solve the firms' static problem
- $\{\gamma_t(z), z_t\}_{t=0}^{\infty}$ solve the firms' dynamic problem
- $\{E_t\}_{t=0}^{\infty}$ satisfies the free-entry condition
- $\{Y_t\}_{t=0}^{\infty}$ satisfies the **Kimball (1995)** aggregator
- $\{w_t\}_{t=0}^{\infty}$ clears the labor market
- $\{r_t\}_{t=0}^{\infty}$ clears the asset market
- Measure of varieties and distribution of firms evolve as described

Balanced growth path

Restrict attention to BGP equilibrium allocations:

- $\{C_t, Y_t, w_t, z_t\}$ grow at *endogenous* constant rate g
- $\{L_t, I_t, E_t, H_t, M_t, r_t, q_t(z), p_t(z), D_t, \gamma_t(z)\}$ are stationary
- Distribution $\mathcal{F}_t(\hat{z})$ of detrended productivity is stationary: $\hat{z}_t \equiv z_t - gt$

Economic growth

Contributions to growth from: [Details](#)

- Incumbent firms' productivity growth (+)
- Incumbent firms' productivity volatility (\pm)
- Selection from entry (\pm)
- Selection from exit (+)

Characterization

$$v(h) = \beta \times \frac{h^{1+\eta}}{1+\eta}$$

MaCurdy (1981)

$$\Upsilon(q) = 1 + (\theta - 1) \exp\left(\frac{1}{\epsilon}\right) \epsilon^{\theta/\epsilon-1} \left[\Gamma\left(\frac{\theta}{\epsilon}, \frac{1}{\epsilon}\right) - \Gamma\left(\frac{\theta}{\epsilon}, \frac{q^{\epsilon/\theta}}{\epsilon}\right) \right]$$

Klenow and Willis (2016)

Price elasticity: $\vartheta(q) = \theta q^{-\epsilon/\theta}$

$$i(\gamma) = \psi \times \frac{\gamma^{1+\lambda}}{1+\lambda}$$

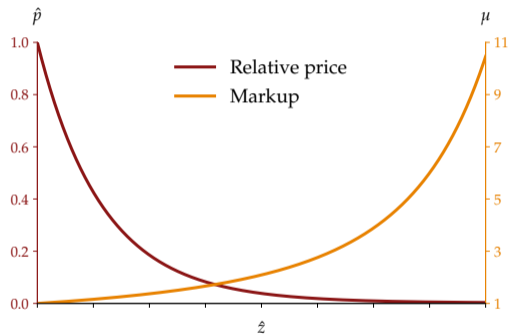
Assumption

$$\mathcal{F}^E(\hat{z}) = 1 - [1 - \mathcal{F}(\hat{z})]^\zeta$$

Benhabib, Perla and Tonetti (2021)

Firm-level static outcomes

(a) Relative price and markup



(b) Sales, profits and employment



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Policy intervention

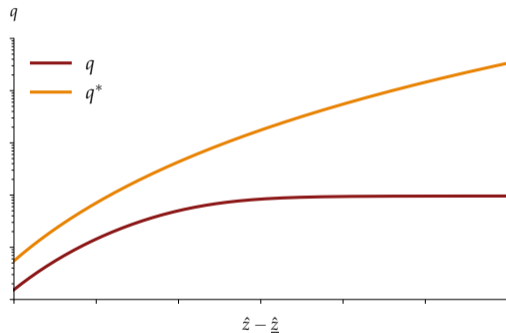
Size-dependent transfers to firms:

$$\pi_t^*(z) = \max_{p_t(z)} \{ \pi_t(z) + T_t(q) \} \quad \text{where} \quad T_t(q) = [\Upsilon(q) - \Upsilon'(q)q] D_t Y_t$$

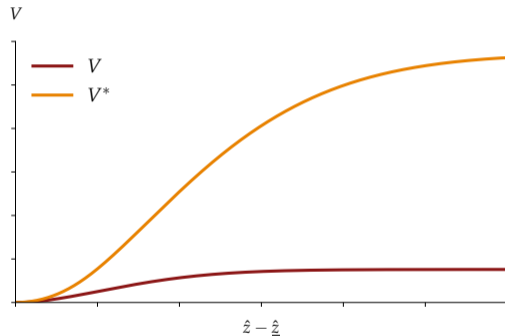
- Eliminate markup level and dispersion

Output and value function

(a) Output

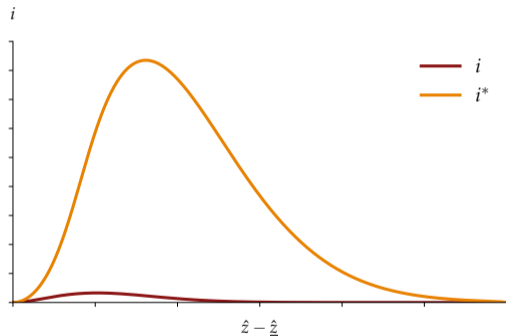


(b) Value function

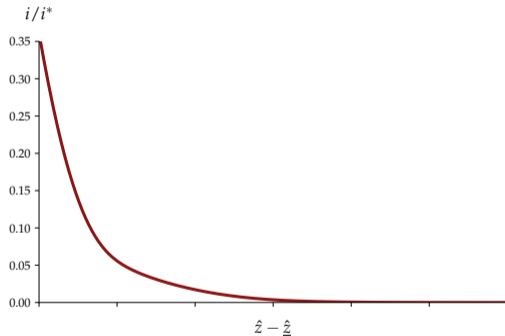


Innovation incentives response

(a) Innovation labor



(b) Ratio



Next steps

1. Solution and estimation strategy
 - Spectral collocation + quadrature
 - Mathematical program with equilibrium constraints + TikTak multi-start
2. Estimation with firm-level administrative data from France
 - Data on revenues and quantities for manufacturing firms
3. Alternative policy interventions?
 - Uniform subsidy: markup level
 - Size-dependent subsidy: markup dispersion
4. Transition dynamics with physical capital

Defining the surpluses

$$\pi(z) = p(z)q(p(z)) / \vartheta(p(z)) \quad \text{Producer surplus}$$

$$C(z) = \int_{p(z)}^{\bar{p}} q(p) dp \quad \text{Consumer surplus}$$

$$H(z) = \int_{1/z}^{p(z)} [q(p) - q(p(z))] dp \quad \text{Harberger triangle}$$

$$S(z) = \pi(z) + C(z) + H(z) \quad \text{Social surplus}$$

Distribution

Cumulative density $M_t(z)$ of firms with productivity z :

$$M_t(z) = F_t(z)M_t \quad \text{where} \quad M_t = \int_{z_t}^{\infty} dM_t(z)$$

Law of motion given by Kolmogorov forward equation for all $z > z_t$:

$$\dot{M}_t(z) = -\gamma_t(z)M_t'(z) + \sigma^2[M_t''(z) - M_t''(z_t)]/2 + E_t F_t^E(z) - \delta M_t(z)$$

Standard boundary conditions:

$$M_t'(z_t) = \lim_{z \rightarrow \infty} M_t'(z) = \lim_{z \rightarrow \infty} M_t''(z) = 0$$

Distribution

Boundary conditions imply law of motion for measure of varieties:

$$\dot{M}_t = [e_t - \delta - \sigma^2 F_t''(\underline{z}_t)/2]M_t$$

Which in turn implies law of motion for $F_t(z)$ for all $z > \underline{z}_t$:

$$\dot{F}_t(z) = -\gamma_t(z)F_t'(z) + \sigma^2\{F_t''(z) - F_t''(\underline{z}_t)[1 - F_t(z)]\}/2 + e_t[F_t^E(z) - F_t(z)]$$

Household's problem

Choose consumption and labor supply to maximize lifetime utility:

$$\max_{\{C_t, H_t\}_{t=0}^{\infty}} \int_0^{\infty} e^{-\rho t} [\ln(C_t) - v(H_t)] dt \quad \text{s.t.} \quad \dot{A}_t = r_t A_t + w_t H_t - C_t$$

Value of corporate assets denoted by A_t :

$$A_t = M_t \int_{z_t}^{\infty} V_t(z) dF_t(z) \quad \text{where} \quad \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} e^{-\int_0^t r_{t'} dt'} A_t = 0$$

Delivers standard static and dynamic first-order conditions:

$$\frac{v'(H_t)}{u'(C_t)} = w_t \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{\dot{C}_t}{C_t} = r_t - \rho$$

Final sector's problem

Choose demand for each variety to maximize profits:

$$\max_{\{q_t(z)\}_{z=\underline{z}_t}^{\infty}} \left\{ P_t - M_t \int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} p_t(z) q_t(z) dF_t(z) \right\} Y_t \quad \text{s.t.} \quad M_t \int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} \Upsilon(q_t(z)) dF_t(z) = 1$$

Delivers inverse demand functions:

$$p_t(z) = \Upsilon'(q_t(z)) P_t D_t$$

Price and demand indices defined as:

$$P_t \equiv M_t \int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} p_t(z) q_t(z) dF_t(z) = 1 \quad \text{and} \quad D_t \equiv \left(M_t \int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} \Upsilon'(q_t(z)) q_t(z) dF_t(z) \right)^{-1}$$

Firm's static problem

Choose variety's price to maximize profits:

$$\pi_t(z) = \max_{p_t(z)} \{ [p_t(z) - w_t \exp(-z)] q_t(z) \} Y_t - w_t c_F \quad \text{s.t.} \quad p_t(z) = \Upsilon'(q_t(z)) D_t$$

Set price to a markup above marginal cost:

$$p_t(z) = \frac{\mu(q_t(z)) w_t}{\exp(z)} \quad \text{where} \quad \mu(q) \equiv \frac{\vartheta(q)}{\vartheta(q) - 1}$$

Express firm profits as implicit function of productivity:

$$\pi_t(z) = \frac{p_t(z) q_t(z) Y_t}{\vartheta(q_t(z))} - w_t c_F$$

Firm's dynamic problem

Control productivity drift and choose optimal exit time to maximize PDV of profits:

$$V_t(z) = \max_{\tau, \{\gamma_s\}_{s=t}^{\infty}} \mathbb{E}_t \left\{ \int_t^{t+\tau} e^{-\int_t^s r_{t'} dt'} [\pi_s(z_s) - w_t i(\gamma_s)] ds \middle| z_t = z \right\}$$

s.t. $dz_t = \gamma_t dt + \sigma dB_t$

Value function satisfies HJB equation in continuation region:

$$r_t V_t(z) = \pi_t(z) + \max_{\gamma} \{ \gamma V_t'(z) - w_t i(\gamma) \} + \sigma^2 V_t''(z) / 2 + \dot{V}_t(z)$$

As well as first-order, value matching and smooth pasting conditions:

$$V_t'(z) = w_t i'(\gamma) \quad \text{and} \quad V_t(\underline{z}_t) = V_t'(\underline{z}_t) = 0$$

Entrant's problem

Engage in perfect competition on labor market:

$$V_t^E = \max_{E_t} \left\{ E_t \int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} V_t(z) dF_t^E(z) - w_t c_E E_t \right\}$$

Delivers free-entry condition (in complementary-slackness form):

$$\left(\int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} V_t(z) dF_t^E(z) - w_t c_E \right) E_t = 0$$

Economic growth

Defining $\hat{Z} \equiv \left(\int_{\hat{z}}^{\infty} q(\hat{p}(\hat{z})) \exp(-\hat{z}) d\mathcal{F}(\hat{z}) \right)^{-1}$ and $\hat{Z}^E \equiv \left(\int_{\hat{z}}^{\infty} q(\hat{p}(\hat{z})) \exp(-\hat{z}) d\mathcal{F}^E(\hat{z}) \right)^{-1}$:

$$\begin{aligned}
 g &= \frac{\int_{\hat{z}}^{\infty} [q'(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))\hat{p}'(\hat{z}) - q(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))] \exp(-\hat{z}) \gamma(\hat{z}) d\mathcal{F}(\hat{z})}{\int_{\hat{z}}^{\infty} [q'(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))\hat{p}'(\hat{z}) - q(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))] \exp(-\hat{z}) d\mathcal{F}(\hat{z})} \\
 &+ \frac{\sigma^2 \int_{\hat{z}}^{\infty} [q''(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))\hat{p}'(\hat{z})^2 + q'(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))\hat{p}''(\hat{z}) - 2q'(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))\hat{p}'(\hat{z}) + q(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))] \exp(-\hat{z}) d\mathcal{F}(\hat{z})}{2 \int_{\hat{z}}^{\infty} [q'(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))\hat{p}'(\hat{z}) - q(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))] \exp(-\hat{z}) d\mathcal{F}(\hat{z})} \\
 &+ \frac{e(\hat{Z}/\hat{Z}^E - 1)}{\hat{Z} \int_{\hat{z}}^{\infty} [q'(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))\hat{p}'(\hat{z}) - q(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))] \exp(-\hat{z}) d\mathcal{F}(\hat{z})} \\
 &- \frac{\sigma^2 \mathcal{F}''(\hat{z}) [\hat{Z} q(\hat{p}(\hat{z})) \exp(-\hat{z}) - 1]}{2\hat{Z} \int_{\hat{z}}^{\infty} [q'(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))\hat{p}'(\hat{z}) - q(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))] \exp(-\hat{z}) d\mathcal{F}(\hat{z})}
 \end{aligned}$$

Firm-level static outcomes

Firm's relative price (W denotes Lambert W -function), relative demand and profits:

$$\hat{p}(\hat{z}) = \frac{(\theta/\epsilon) \exp(-\hat{z})w_0/\bar{p}_0}{W[(\theta/\epsilon) \exp(\theta/\epsilon - \hat{z})w_0/\bar{p}_0]}$$

$$q(\hat{p}) = \begin{cases} [-\epsilon \ln(\hat{p})]^{\theta/\epsilon} & \text{if } \hat{p} < 1 \\ 0 & \text{if } \hat{p} \geq 1 \end{cases}$$

$$\pi_t(\hat{z}) = \hat{p}(\hat{z})q(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))^{1+\epsilon/\theta}\bar{p}_t Y_t/\theta - w_t c_F$$

Policy interventions

Size-dependent transfers to firms:

$$\pi_t^*(z) = \pi_t(z) + T_t(q) \quad \text{where} \quad T_t(q) = [\varrho_0 \Upsilon(q) + \varrho_1 \Upsilon'(q)q] D_t Y_t$$

Optimal subsidy: $(\varrho_0, \varrho_1) = (1, -1)$

- Eliminate markup level and dispersion

Uniform subsidy: $(\varrho_0, \varrho_1) = (0, x/(1-x))$

- Reduce markup level by $x\%$ but leave dispersion unchanged

Size-dependent subsidy: $(\varrho_0, \varrho_1) = (1/(1+x), -1)$

- Eliminate markup dispersion but leave level to $1+x$