

The Determinants of Banking Crises in Developing and Developed Countries

ASLI DEMIRGÜÇ-KUNT and ENRICA DETRAGIACHE*

The paper studies the factors associated with the emergence of systemic banking crises in a large sample of developed and developing countries in 1980–94 using a multivariate logit econometric model. The results suggest that crises tend to erupt when the macroeconomic environment is weak, particularly when growth is low and inflation is high. Also, high real interest rates are clearly associated with systemic banking sector problems, and there is some evidence that vulnerability to balance of payments crises has played a role. Countries with an explicit deposit insurance scheme were particularly at risk, as were countries with weak law enforcement.
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IN THE 1980s and early 1990s a number of developed economies, developing countries, and economies in transition experienced severe banking crises. Such proliferation of large-scale banking sector problems has raised widespread concern, as banking crises disrupt the flow of credit to households and enterprises, reducing investment and consumption and possibly forcing viable firms into bankruptcy. Banking crises may also jeopardize the functioning of the payments system and, by undermining confidence in domestic financial institutions, they may cause a decline in domestic savings and/or a large-scale capital outflow. Finally, a systemic crisis may force sound banks to close their doors.

In most countries, policymakers have responded to banking crises with various interventions, ranging from loose monetary policy to the bailout of

* Asli Demirgüç-Kunt is a Senior Economist in the Development Research Group of the World Bank. Enrica Detragiache is an Economist in the IMF's Research Department. The authors are indebted to Jerry Caprio, Stijn Claessens, George Clarke, Steve Cosslett, Harry Huizinga, Ed Kane, Ross Levine, Miguel Savastano, Mary Shirley, Dimitri Vittas, and Peter Wickham for helpful comments, and to Anqing Shi for excellent research assistance.

insolvent financial institutions with public funds. Even when they are carefully designed, however, rescue operations have several drawbacks: they are often very costly for the budget; they may allow inefficient banks to remain in business; and they are likely to create the expectation of future bailouts, thereby reducing incentives for adequate risk management by banks. Rescue operations may also weaken managerial incentives when, as is often the case, they force healthy banks to bear the losses of ailing institutions. Finally, loose monetary policy to prevent banking sector losses can be inflationary and, in countries with an exchange rate commitment, it may trigger a speculative attack against the currency.

Preventing the occurrence of systemic banking problems is undoubtedly a major concern of policymakers, and understanding the mechanisms that are behind the surge in banking crises in the last fifteen years is a first step in this direction. Recently, a number of studies have analyzed various episodes of banking sector distress in an effort to draw useful policy lessons (see Section II).¹ Most of this work consists of case studies, and econometric analyses are few. González-Hermosillo, Pazarbaşıoğlu, and Billings (1997) use an econometric model to predict bank failures using Mexican data for 1991–95. In a paper focused primarily on the connection between banking crises and balance of payments crises, Kaminsky and Reinhart (1996) examine the behavior of a number of macroeconomic variables in the months before and after a crisis in a sample of 20 countries; using a methodology developed for predicting the turning points of business cycles, they attempt to identify variables that act as “early warning signals” for crises.² The best signals appear to be a loss of foreign exchange reserves, high real interest rates, low output growth, and a decline in stock prices.

The goal of this study is to further investigate the features of the economic environment that tend to breed banking sector fragility and, ultimately, lead to systemic banking crises. Rather than focusing on the behavior of high frequency time series around the time of the crisis, we study the determinants of the probability of a banking crisis in a multivariate logit specification with annual data.³ Our panel includes all market economies for which data were available over the period 1980–94.⁴ Many

¹ Some of these studies also review the strategies adopted to rescue the banking system, a topic that we do not address in this paper.

² While this approach provides numerous interesting insights, it is open to the criticism that the criteria used to establish which variables are useful signals are somewhat arbitrary. Also, even the best signals seem to be very noisy.

³ Our methodology is similar to that recently used by Eichengreen, Rose, and Wyplosz (1996) to study currency crises, and by Knight and Santaella (1997) to study the factors leading to Fund financial arrangements.

⁴ Economies in transition are excluded from our study even though they have experienced some of the worst banking crises. We believe that some of the bank-

countries in our sample did not experience systemic banking crises in the period under consideration, and therefore serve as controls. The explanatory variables capture many of the factors suggested by the theory and highlighted by case studies, including not only macroeconomic variables but also structural characteristics of the economy in general and of the financial sector in particular. This approach allows us to identify a number of interesting correlations. However, because we estimate a reduced-form relationship without deriving it from a specific structural model of the economy, such correlations should be interpreted with caution as they may not necessarily reflect direct causal links.

The first issue that we explore is which (if any) elements of the macroeconomic environment are associated with the emergence of banking crises. We find that low GDP growth, excessively high real interest rates, and high inflation significantly increase the likelihood of systemic problems in our sample; thus, crises do not appear to be solely driven by self-fulfilling expectations as in Diamond and Dybvig (1983). This confirms the evidence presented by Gorton (1988) on the determinants of bank runs in the United States during the nineteenth century.⁵ Adverse terms of trade shocks also tend to increase the likelihood of banking sector problems, but here the evidence is weaker. The size of the fiscal deficit and the rate of depreciation of the exchange rate, on the other hand, do not seem to have an independent effect in our sample.

A weak macroeconomic environment, however, is not the sole factor behind systemic banking sector problems. Structural characteristics of the banking sector and of the economic environment in general also play a role. Our tests show that—as hypothesized by Calvo, Leiderman, and Reinhart (1994)—vulnerability of the system to sudden capital outflows increases the probability of a banking crisis. This result, however, is not robust to the specification of the regression. We also find some evidence that problems are more likely where a larger share of credit goes to the private sector, possibly indicating a connection between the emergence from a state of financial repression and banking sector fragility.

Another interesting result, which is quite robust to the specification of the regression, is that the presence of an explicit deposit insurance scheme makes bank unsoundness more likely. While explicit deposit insurance should reduce bank fragility by eliminating the possibility of self-fulfilling

ing problems in these economies are due to the process of transforming a centrally planned economy into a market economy, and are therefore of a distinctive nature.

⁵ It should be pointed out, however, that without a theory of how beliefs are formed in rational expectations models with multiple equilibria, this evidence cannot rule out that crises have a self-fulfilling component, since pessimistic, self-fulfilling beliefs may tend to emerge when macroeconomic fundamentals are weak.

panics, it is well known that it creates incentives for excessive risk-taking by bank managers (moral hazard). Our evidence suggests that, in the period under consideration, moral hazard played a significant role in bringing about systemic banking problems, perhaps because countries with deposit insurance schemes were not generally successful at implementing appropriate prudential regulation and supervision, or because the deposit insurance schemes were not properly designed. Also, a variable capturing the effectiveness of the legal system is found to be significantly negatively correlated with the emergence of banking sector problems, possibly suggesting that banking crises are more likely where outright fraud or more minor violations of contractual covenants, corporate charters, and prudential regulation tend to go unpunished.

Using estimates of the cost of banking crises from Caprio and Klingebiel (1996), we also study the factors that account for the severity of each episode. We find that most of the variables that tend to make crises more likely also tend to make them more costly. Since the size of the sample is small owing to data limitations, however, these results should be interpreted with caution.

I. Theory

Banks are financial intermediaries whose liabilities are mainly short-term deposits and whose assets are usually short- and long-term loans to businesses and consumers. When the value of their assets falls short of the value of their liabilities, banks are insolvent. The value of a bank's assets may drop because borrowers become unable or unwilling to service their debt (credit risk). Credit risk can be reduced in various ways, such as screening loan applicants, diversifying the loan portfolio by lending to borrowers who are subject to different risk factors, or asking for collateral. Appropriate screening can ensure that projects that are unprofitable *ex ante* are not financed; but risky projects that are profitable in an *ex ante* sense may still fail *ex post*. Also, portfolio diversification is unlikely to eliminate default risk completely, especially for banks that operate in small countries or regions, or that specialize in lending to a particular sector. Finally, collateral is costly to establish and monitor, and its value is typically subject to fluctuations. Thus, default risk cannot be entirely eliminated without severely curtailing the role of banks as financial intermediaries.⁶ If loan

⁶ The amount of risk that bank managers choose to take on, however, is likely to exceed what is socially optimal because of limited liability (Stiglitz, 1972). Hence the need for bank regulators to impose minimum capital requirements and other restrictions. When bank deposits are insured, incentives to take on excessive risk are even stronger (see below). On the theory of bank prudential regulation, see Dewatripont and Tirole (1994).

losses exceed a bank's compulsory and voluntary reserves as well as its equity cushion, the bank is insolvent. When a significant portion of the banking system experiences loan losses in excess of its capital, a systemic crisis occurs.

Thus, theory predicts that shocks that adversely affect the economic performance of bank borrowers and whose impact cannot be reduced through risk diversification should be positively correlated with systemic banking crises. Furthermore, for given shocks, banking systems that are less capitalized should be more vulnerable. The shocks associated with episodes of banking sector problems highlighted by the literature include cyclical output downturns, terms of trade deteriorations, and declines in asset prices such as equity and real estate (Gorton, 1988; Caprio and Klingebiel, 1996; Lindgren, Garcia, and Saal, 1996; and Kaminsky and Reinhart, 1996).

Even in the absence of an increase in nonperforming loans, bank balance sheets can deteriorate if the rate of return on bank assets falls short of the rate that must be paid on liabilities. Perhaps the most common example of this type of problem is an increase in short-term interest rates that forces banks to increase the interest rate paid to depositors.⁷ Because the asset side of bank balance sheets usually consists of long-term loans at fixed interest rates, the rate of return on assets cannot be adjusted quickly enough, and banks must suffer reduced profits or bear losses. All banks within a country are likely to be exposed to some degree of interest rate risk because maturity transformation is one of the typical functions of the banking system; furthermore, high real interest rates are likely to hurt bank balance sheets even if they can be passed on to borrowers, as high lending rates result in a larger fraction of nonperforming loans. Thus, a large increase in short-term interest rates is likely to be a major source of systemic banking sector problems. In turn, the increase in short-term interest rates may be due to various factors, such as an increase in the rate of inflation, a shift toward more restrictive monetary policy that raises real rates, an increase in international interest rates, the removal of interest rate controls owing to financial liberalization (Galbis, 1993), or the need to defend the exchange rate against a speculative attack (Velasco, 1987; Kaminsky and Reinhart, 1996).⁸

Another case of rate of return mismatch occurs when banks borrow in foreign currency and lend in domestic currency. In this case, an unexpected depreciation of the domestic currency threatens bank profitability. Many countries have regulations limiting banks' open foreign currency positions,

⁷ According to Mishkin (1996), most banking panics in the United States were preceded by an increase in short-term interest rates.

⁸ On the determinants of high interest rates in developing and transition economies, see Brock (1995).

but sometimes such regulations can be circumvented (Garber, 1996). Also, banks that raise funds abroad may choose to issue domestic loans denominated in foreign currency, thus eliminating the open position. In this case, foreign exchange risk is shifted onto the borrowers, and an unexpected devaluation would still affect bank profitability negatively through an increase in nonperforming loans. Foreign currency loans were a source of banking problems in Chile in 1981 (Akerlof and Romer, 1993), in Mexico in 1995 (Mishkin, 1996), in the Nordic countries in the early 1990s (Drees and Pazarbaşıoğlu, 1995; Mishkin, 1996), and in Turkey in 1994.

When bank deposits are not insured, a deterioration in the quality of a bank's asset portfolio may trigger a run, as depositors rush to withdraw their funds before the bank declares bankruptcy. Because bank assets are typically illiquid, runs on deposits accelerate the onset of insolvency. In fact, as Diamond and Dybvig (1983) have shown, bank runs may be self-fulfilling, that is, they may take place simply because depositors believe that other depositors are withdrawing their funds even in the absence of an initial deterioration of the bank's balance sheet. The possibility of self-fulfilling runs makes banks especially vulnerable financial institutions. A run on an individual bank should not threaten the banking system as a whole unless partially informed depositors take it as a signal that other banks are also at risk (contagion).⁹ In these circumstances, bank runs turn into a banking panic.

Bank runs should not occur when deposits are insured against the risk of bank insolvency. Deposit insurance may be explicit, that is, banks may purchase full or partial insurance on behalf of depositors from a government agency or from a private insurer, or it may be implicit, if depositors (correctly) believe that either the government will prevent the bank from failing or, in case of failure, it will step in and compensate depositors for their losses. If the premiums do not fully reflect the riskiness of bank portfolios, then the presence of deposit insurance creates incentives for taking on excessive risk (moral hazard) (Kane, 1989). The effects of moral hazard are likely to be negligible when the banking system is tightly controlled by the government or by the central bank. On the other hand, when financial liberalization takes place—as it has been in many countries in the past 15 years—the opportunities for risk taking increase substantially. Thus, if financial liberalization takes place in countries with deposit insurance, and it is not accompanied by a well-designed and effective system of prudential regulation and supervision, then excessive risk taking on the part of bank managers is possible, and banking crises due to moral hazard may occur.

⁹ For an in-depth discussion of the theory of bank runs, see Bhattacharya and Thakor (1994).

To summarize, the theory is ambiguous as to the sign of the correlation between deposit insurance and banking crises. On the one hand, when deposits are insured, self-fulfilling crises should not occur. On the other hand, banking crises due to adverse macroeconomic shocks could be more likely because bank managers choose riskier loan portfolios.

In countries in which the banking sector is liberalized but bank supervision is weak and legal remedies against fraud are easy to circumvent, banking crises may also be caused by widespread "looting": bank managers not only may invest in projects that are too risky, but they may also invest in projects that are sure failures but from which they can divert money for personal use. Akerlof and Romer (1993) claim that looting behavior was at the core of the savings and loan crisis in the United States and of the Chilean banking crisis of the late 1970s. Thus, a weak legal system that allows fraud to go unpunished increases the probability of a banking crisis.

A sudden withdrawal of bank deposits with effects similar to those of a bank run may also take place after a period of large inflows of foreign short-term capital, as indicated by the experience of a number of Latin American, Asian, and Eastern European countries in the early 1990s. Such inflows, often driven by the combined effect of capital account liberalization and high domestic interest rates owing to inflation stabilization policies, result in an expansion of domestic credit (Khamis, 1996). When foreign interest rates rise, domestic interest rates fall, or when confidence in the economy wavers, foreign investors quickly withdraw their funds, and the domestic banking system may become illiquid (Calvo, Leiderman, and Reinhart, 1994). As discussed by Obstfeld and Rogoff (1995) among others, in countries with a fixed exchange rate, banking problems may also be triggered by a speculative attack against the currency: if a devaluation is expected to occur soon, depositors (both domestic and foreign) rush to withdraw their bank deposits and convert them into foreign currency deposits abroad, thus leaving domestic banks illiquid.¹⁰

Banking sector problems may also follow successful stabilization in countries with a history of high inflation. As shown by English (1996), chronic high inflation tends to be associated with an overblown financial sector, as financial intermediaries profit from the float on payments. When inflation is drastically reduced, banks see one of their main sources of revenue disappear, and generalized banking problems may follow.¹¹

¹⁰ This mechanism seems to have been at work in Argentina in 1995: following the Mexican devaluation in December 1994, confidence in the Argentinean peso plunged, and the banking system lost 16 percent of its deposits in the first quarter of 1995 (IMF, 1996).

¹¹ Recently, banking sector difficulties in Brazil and Russia have been explained in this way (Lindgren, Garcia, and Saal, 1996).

II. Empirical Specification and Choice of Explanatory Variables

Sample

Because of data availability, our study is limited to the period 1980–94. To determine which countries to include, we began with all the countries in the IMF's International Financial Statistics (IFS) database. We then eliminated centrally planned economies and economies in transition because the interrelation between the banking system and the rest of the economy is likely to be of a distinctive nature in these countries. Other countries had to be eliminated because the main macroeconomic and financial data series were missing or mostly incomplete. A few countries, such as Bangladesh and Ghana, were left out because their banking systems were in a state of distress for much of the period under consideration. Finally, three countries (Argentina, Brazil, and Bolivia) were excluded because they were outliers with respect to two of the regressors that we use (inflation and the real interest rate).¹² This process of elimination left us with a number of countries ranging from a maximum of 65 to a minimum of 45 depending on the specification of the regression.¹³ A list of the countries included in the sample can be found in the Appendix.

Econometric Model

We estimate the probability of a banking crisis using a multivariate logit model. In each period the country is either experiencing a crisis, or it is not. Accordingly, our dependent variable, the crisis dummy, takes the value zero if there is no crisis, and takes the value one if there is a crisis. The probability that a crisis will occur at a particular time in a particular country is hypothesized to be a function of a vector of n explanatory variables $X(i, t)$. The choice of explanatory variables is discussed below. Let $P(i, t)$ denote a dummy variable that takes the value of one when a banking crisis occurs in country i and time t and a value of zero otherwise. β is a vector of n unknown coefficients and $F(\beta'X(i, t))$ is the cumulative probability distribution function evaluated at $\beta'X(i, t)$. Then, the log-likelihood function of the model is

¹² Not surprisingly, when the three outlier countries are left in the sample, inflation and the real interest rate lose significance.

¹³ Due to lack of data, for some countries the observations included in the panel do not cover the entire 1980–94 period.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Ln } L = & \sum_{t=1}^T \sum_{i=1}^n P(i,t) \ln\{F[\beta' X(i,t)]\} \\ & + [1 - P(i,t)] \ln\{1 - F[\beta' X(i,t)]\} \end{aligned}$$

In modeling the probability distribution we use the logistic functional form.¹⁴ Thus, when interpreting the regression results, it is important to remember that the estimated coefficients do not indicate the increase in the probability of a crisis given a one-unit increase in the corresponding explanatory variables. Instead, in the above specification, the coefficients reflect the effect of a change in an explanatory variable on $\ln[P(i,t)/(1 - P(i,t))]$. Therefore, the increase in the probability depends upon the original probability and thus upon the initial values of all the independent variables and their coefficients. While the sign of the coefficient does indicate the direction of the change, the magnitude depends on the slope of the cumulative distribution function at $\beta' X(i,t)$. In other words, a change in the explanatory variable will have different effects on the probability of a crisis depending on the country's initial crisis probability. Under the logistic specification, if a country has an extremely high (or low) initial probability of crisis, a marginal change in the independent variables has little effect on its prospects, while the same marginal change has a greater effect if the country's probability of crisis is in an intermediate range.

After the onset of a banking crisis, the behavior of some of the explanatory variables is likely to be affected by the crisis itself. For instance, as described below, one of the explanatory variables used in the regressions is the credit-to-GDP ratio; this ratio is likely to fall as a result of the banking crisis, and the reduction in credit may, in turn, affect another explanatory variable, GDP growth. Another regressor that may be affected by the banking crisis is the real interest rate, which is likely to fall owing to the loosening of monetary policy that often accompanies banking sector rescue operations. Clearly, these feedback effects would muddle the relationships that we try to identify, so in a first set of regressions we eliminate from the panel all observations following a banking crisis. The drawbacks of this approach are that we lose episodes of multiple crises, and that many observations for the late 1980s and early 1990s are excluded from the sample.

As an alternative approach, we identify the year in which each banking crisis ended based on information available in existing case studies, and in a second set of regressions we include in the panel all observations following the end date. This panel, of course, is considerably larger than the first,

¹⁴ The logistic distribution is commonly used in studying banking difficulties. See, for example, Cole and Gunther (1995) and González-Hermosillo, Pazarbaşoğlu, and Billings (1997).

and it includes repeated banking crises. The drawback of this approach is that determining when the effects of a banking crisis come to an end is quite difficult, so the choice of which observations to include in the panel is somewhat arbitrary. Furthermore, in this set of regressions the probability that a crisis occurs in a country that had problems in the past is likely to differ from that of a country where no crisis ever occurred. To take this dependence into account, we include different additional regressors in the estimated equations, such as the number of past crises, the duration of the last spell, and the time since the last crisis.

When using panel data, country fixed effects are often included in the empirical model to allow for the possibility that the dependent variable may change cross-country independently of the explanatory variables included in the regression. In logit estimation, including country fixed effects would require omitting from the panel all countries that did not experience a banking crisis during the period under consideration (Greene, 1997, p. 899). In our case, this would imply disregarding a large amount of available information, since—as discussed below—countries that did not experience crises are more than half of the total number. Furthermore, limiting the panel to countries with crises would produce a biased sample. Given these drawbacks, we believe that estimating the model using the full sample but without fixed effects is the preferable approach.¹⁵

Banking Crisis Variable

A key element in our study is the construction of the banking crisis dummy variable. To do this, we have identified and dated episodes of banking sector distress during the period 1980–94 using primarily five recent studies: Caprio and Klingebiel (1996), Drees and Pazarbaşıoğlu (1995), Kaminsky and Reinhart (1996), Lindgren, Garcia, and Saal (1996), and Sheng (1995). Taken together, these studies form a comprehensive survey of banking sector fragility around the world; from our perspective, it was important to distinguish between fragility in general and crises in particular, and between localized crises and systemic crises. To this end, we established—somewhat arbitrarily—that for an episode of distress to be classified as a full-fledged crisis in our panel at least one of the following four conditions had to hold:

¹⁵ An alternative strategy would be to estimate a probit model with random effects, since such a methodology would be compatible with using the entire data set. However, this model produces unbiased estimates only if the random effects are uncorrelated with the regressors, which is unlikely to be true in practice (Judge and others, 1985, p. 527).

1. The ratio of nonperforming assets to total assets in the banking system exceeded 10 percent.
2. The cost of the rescue operation was at least 2 percent of GDP.
3. Banking sector problems resulted in a large scale nationalization of banks.
4. Extensive bank runs took place or emergency measures such as deposit freezes, prolonged bank holidays, or generalized deposit guarantees were enacted by the government in response to the crisis.

Therefore, the premise behind our work is that when one or more of the above conditions obtains, the problem is of a systemic nature and should be considered a banking crisis, while when none of the above occurs the problem is localized and/or relatively minor.¹⁶ The criteria above were sufficient to classify as a crisis or not a crisis almost all of the fragility episodes identified by the literature. In a few cases, however, we had insufficient information and made a decision based on our best judgment. According to these classification criteria, in the largest of our samples there were 31 episodes of systemic banking crises out of 546 observations (see Table 1). Of these, 23 crises took place in developing countries and 8 in developed countries. Of the crises in developing countries, 7 were in Africa, 7 in Asia, 6 in Latin America, and 3 in the Middle East. Thus, our sample of banking crises includes a relatively diverse set of economies.

Explanatory Variables

Our choice of explanatory variables reflects both the theory of the determinants of banking crises summarized in Section I and data availability. A list of the variables and their sources is in the Appendix. To capture adverse macroeconomic shocks that hurt banks by increasing the share of nonperforming loans, we use as regressors the rate of growth of real GDP, the external terms of trade, and the real short-term interest rate. High short-term real interest rates also affect bank balance sheets adversely if banks cannot increase their lending rates quickly enough, as explained in Section I. Finally, the real interest rate may also be considered a proxy for financial liberalization, as Galbis (1993) found that the liberalization process tends to lead to high real rates. Financial liberalization, in turn, may increase

¹⁶ We also estimated the model using a more restrictive and a less restrictive definition of a crisis (ratio of nonperforming loans to bank assets above 15 percent and/or cost of crises above 3 percent of GDP, and ratio of nonperforming loans to bank assets above 5 percent and/or cost of crises above 1 percent of GDP). The results remain essentially unchanged.

Table 1. *Banking Crises by Country*

Country	Banking crisis date
Colombia	1982–85
Finland	1991–94
Guyana	1993–95
India	1991–94
Indonesia	1992–94
Israel	1983–84
Italy	1990–94
Japan	1992–94
Jordan	1989–90
Kenya	1993
Mexico	1982, 1994
Mali	1987–89
Malaysia	1985–88
Nigeria	1991–94
Norway	1987–93
Nepal	1988–94
Philippines	1981–87
Papua New Guinea	1989–94
Portugal	1986–89
Senegal	1983–88
South Africa	1985
Sri Lanka	1989–93
Sweden	1990–93
Tanzania	1988–94
Turkey	1991, 1994
Uganda	1990–94
United States	1981–92
Uruguay	1981–85
Venezuela	1993–94

banking sector fragility because of increased opportunities for excessive risk taking and fraud.¹⁷ Pill and Pradhan (1995) find that the variable that best captures the extent to which financial liberalization has progressed is the ratio of credit to the private sector to GDP. Accordingly, we introduce this variable as a regressor in our equations. Another variable that can proxy the progress with financial liberalization is the change in real credit. Since case studies point to a number of episodes in which banking sector problems were preceded by strong credit growth, we experiment with various lags of this variable.

¹⁷ Kaminsky and Reinhart (1996) find that a financial liberalization dummy variable tends to predict the occurrence of banking crises in their sample of 20 countries.

Inflation is introduced as an explanatory variable because it is likely to be associated with high nominal interest rates and because it may proxy macroeconomic mismanagement, which adversely affects the economy and the banking system through various channels. In addition, the rate of depreciation of the exchange rate is used to test the hypothesis that banking crises may be driven by excessive foreign exchange risk exposure either in the banking system itself or among bank borrowers. To test whether systemic banking sector problems are related to sudden capital outflows in countries with an exchange rate peg, we introduce as a regressor the ratio of M2 to foreign exchange reserves. According to Calvo (1996), this ratio is a good predictor of a country's vulnerability to balance of payments crises.

The government surplus as a percentage of GDP captures the financing needs of the central government. This variable may matter for two reasons: first, governments strapped for funds often postpone measures to strengthen bank balance sheets, with the result that relatively small problems grow to systemic proportions. According to Lindgren, Garcia, and Saal (1996):

... supervisors often are prevented from intervening in banks because this would bring problems out in the open and "cause" government expenditure. Typical justifications for inaction are that there is "no room in the budget" or that the fiscal situation is "too weak" to allow for any consideration of banking problems. (p. 166)

Even when government officials are prepared to intervene despite budgetary difficulties, the public may believe that they are not, and bank runs may compound the initial problems, turning them into a full-fledged crisis. A second reason for including the government fiscal position in the regressions is that failure to control the budget deficit may be a serious obstacle to successful financial liberalization (McKinnon, 1991). Foiled attempts at financial liberalization may, in turn, create problems for the banking system.

Adverse macroeconomic circumstances should be less likely to lead to crises in countries where the banking system is liquid. To capture liquidity we use the ratio of bank cash and reserves to bank assets. We also construct a dummy variable that takes a value of one in countries/years in which an explicit deposit insurance scheme is in place. As discussed in Section I, the expected sign of this variable is ambiguous, because while explicit deposit insurance should reduce the incidence of bank runs, it is likely to increase risk owing to moral hazard. Finally, banking sector problems may be due to widespread fraud, or to weak enforcement of loans contracts and/or prudential regulation in countries where the legal system is not very efficient. To test this hypothesis, we introduce as regressors indexes of the quality of the legal system, of contract enforcement, and of the bureaucracy, as well

as GDP per capita. These proxies may also capture the government's administrative capability, which, in turn, is likely to be positively correlated with the effectiveness of prudential supervision of the banking system. Thus, low values of the proxies may mean more opportunities for moral hazard.

III. Results

Tables 2 and 3 contain the main results of our econometric investigation. Table 2 reports four regressions using the panel that excludes observations following the first banking crisis, while Table 3 reports the same regressions for the panel in which observations following the end of a crisis episode are included. The first specification includes only the macroeconomic variables and GDP per capita, and it encompasses the largest set of countries. In the second specification we add variables capturing banking sector characteristics, while in the third regression the deposit insurance dummy variable is included. The fourth regression relies on the smallest sample, and it includes the "law and order" index.

Overall Model Performance and Prediction Accuracy

The quality of the model specification is assessed based on three criteria recommended by Amemiya (1981): model χ^2 , Akaike's information criterion (AIC), and in-sample classification accuracy. The model χ^2 tests the joint significance of the regressors by comparing the likelihood of the model with that of a model with only the intercept. As shown in Tables 2 and 3, in all the specifications the hypothesis that the coefficients of the independent variables are jointly equal to zero is rejected at the 1 percent significance level. The AIC is computed as minus the log-likelihood of the model plus the number of parameters being estimated, and it is therefore smaller for better models. This criterion is useful in comparing models with different degrees of freedom. The regressions including only observations before the first crisis seem to perform better, and the fourth regression appears to be the best based on AIC.

To assess the prediction accuracy of the various specifications, we report the percentage of crises that are correctly classified, the percentage of non-crises that are correctly classified, and the total percentage of observations that are correctly classified. The model appears to perform fairly well: the overall classification accuracy varies between 67 percent and 84 percent, while up to 70 percent of the banking crises are accurately classified. It should be pointed out that the percentage of noncrisis observations that are

Table 2. *Determinants of Banking Crises:
Panel Excluding Years After the First Crisis*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Macroeconomic variables				
<i>GROWTH</i>	-.067*** (.025)	-.136*** (.039)	-.252*** (.063)	-.228*** (.059)
<i>TOTCHANGE</i>	-.030* (.019)	-.025 (.020)	-.043* (.027)	-.045 (.032)
<i>DEPRECIATION</i>	.002 (.006)	-.001 (.007)	-.002 (.008)	-.012 (.012)
<i>RLINTEREST</i>	.088*** (.024)	.086*** (.025)	.131*** (.039)	.113*** (.035)
<i>INFLATION</i>	.040*** (.016)	.044*** (.018)	.053** (.023)	.079** (.035)
<i>SURPLUS/GDP</i>	.012 (.034)	.024 (.036)	.016 (.053)	.013 (.048)
Financial variables				
<i>M2/RESERVES</i>	—	.012** (.005)	.014** (.007)	.018** (.009)
<i>PRIVATE/GDP</i>	—	.019* (.012)	.033** (.015)	.009 (.010)
<i>CASH/BANK</i>	—	.009 (.016)	.018 (.023)	-.049 (.039)
<i>CREDITGRO_{t-2}</i>	—	.007 (.012)	.022** (.010)	-.003 (.020)
Institutional variables				
<i>GDP/CAP</i>	-.034 (.033)	-.090* (.055)	-.158** (.079)	—
<i>DEPOSITINS</i>	—	—	1.415** (.738)	—
<i>LAW&ORDER</i>	—	—	—	-.516** (.238)
Number of crises	28	26	20	18
Number of observations	546	493	395	268
% total correct	74	77	79	67
% crises correct	61	58	55	61
% no-crises correct	75	78	81	67
Model χ^2	31.88***	40.86***	53.79***	30.37***
AIC	204	187	131	126

Notes: The dependent variable takes the value one if there is a crisis and the value zero otherwise. Standard errors are given in parentheses. One, two, and three asterisks indicate significance levels of 10, 5, and 1 percent, respectively.

Table 3. *Financial Crisis Determinants:
Panel Excluding Years While the Crisis Is Ongoing^a*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Macroeconomic variables				
<i>GROWTH</i>	-.076*** (.024)	-.149*** (.040)	-.254*** (.059)	-.226*** (.056)
<i>TOTCHANGE</i>	-.027 (.019)	-.025 (.020)	-.034 (.027)	-.035 (.028)
<i>DEPRECIATION</i>	.008 (.006)	.006 (.006)	.006 (.007)	.001 (.007)
<i>RLINTEREST</i>	.067*** (.020)	.072*** (.022)	.106*** (.034)	.083*** (.028)
<i>INFLATION</i>	.023** (.012)	.035*** (.013)	.037** (.018)	.043** (.020)
<i>SURPLUS/GDP</i>	-.016 (.030)	-.009 (.032)	-.032 (.049)	-.008 (.043)
Financial variables				
<i>M2/RESERVES</i>	—	.016*** (.006)	.016*** (.007)	.021*** (.009)
<i>PRIVATE/GDP</i>	—	.013 (.013)	.024* (.015)	-.001 (.011)
<i>CASH/BANK</i>	—	-.013 (.019)	-.004 (.025)	-.046* (.031)
<i>CREDITGRO_{t-2}</i>	—	.011 (.010)	.024*** (.009)	.007 (.014)
Institutional variables				
<i>GDP/CAP</i>	-.032 (.033)	-.089* (.056)	-.126* (.071)	—
<i>DEPOSITINS</i>	—	—	1.130** (.630)	—
<i>LAW&ORDER</i>	—	—	—	-.389* (.218)
Past crisis				
<i>DURATION of last period</i>	.157*** (.053)	.180*** (.059)	.119* (.075)	.219** (.089)
Number of crises	31	29	23	20
Number of observations	645	581	483	350
% correct	75	77	84	74
% crises correct	55	66	70	65
% no-crises correct	76	77	84	75
Model χ^2	42.63***	55.54***	64.15***	37.86***
AIC	224	201	149	141

Notes: The dependent variable takes the value one if there is a crisis and value of zero otherwise. Standard errors are in parentheses. One, two, and three asterisks indicate significance levels of 10, 5, and 1 percent, respectively.

correctly classified tends to downplay the performance of the model, because in a number of episodes the estimated probability of a crisis increases significantly a few years before the episode begins, and those observations are considered as incorrectly classified by the accuracy criterion. To illustrate this point, Table 4 reports more details about the classification accuracy of the best of the specifications, namely, specification (3) in the second panel. While 26 percent of the crisis episodes were not correctly classified by the model, in 35 percent of the cases the estimated probability jumps up exactly in the year of the crisis; in 26 percent of additional cases the model classifies as a crisis also the year before the crisis began; and, finally, in another 13 percent of the episodes the estimated probability of crisis jumps as early

Table 4. *The Model as an Early Warning System*

Country	Crisis date	Not predicted as a crisis	Predicted as a crisis in the year of the crisis	Predicted as a crisis starting 1 year prior	Predicted as a crisis starting 3 or more years prior
Colombia	1982	X			
Finland	1991			X	
India	1991			X	
Indonesia	1992			X	
Israel	1983			X	
Italy	1990	X			
Japan	1992		X		
Jordan	1989			X	
Kenya	1993				X
Malaysia	1985		X		
Mexico	1982		X		
	1994				X
Nigeria	1991	X			
Norway	1987	X			
Philippines	1981	X			
Portugal	1986		X		
South Africa	1985				X
Sri Lanka	1989	X			
Turkey	1991		X		
	1994		X		
United States	1981		X		
Uruguay	1981		X		
Venezuela	1993			X	
Percent in each category	23 crisis episodes	26	35	26	13

Notes: Model used is specification (3) from Table 3. Cut-off probability is equal to the in-sample crisis frequency, which is 0.05.

as three years before the starting date. These results suggest that the elements that contribute to systemic banking sector fragility may be in place one or more years before problems become manifest.

Significance of the Explanatory Variables

In both panels, low GDP growth is clearly associated with a higher probability of a banking crisis, confirming that developments in the real side of the economy have been a major source of systemic banking sector problems in the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁸ Also, a decline in the terms of trade appears to worsen banking sector unsoundness, but this variable is significant in only two of the specifications and only at the 10 percent confidence level. GDP growth loses significance if it is lagged by one period, indicating that negative shocks work their way to bank balance sheets relatively quickly. Another possible interpretation is that the banking crisis itself causes a decline in the contemporaneous rate of GDP growth as credit to the economy withers.

Both the real interest rate and inflation are highly significant in all the specifications and have the expected sign, confirming the well-known vulnerability of the banking system to nominal and real interest rate shocks. On the other hand, the behavior of the exchange rate does not have an independent effect on the likelihood of a banking sector crisis once inflation and terms of trade changes are controlled for.¹⁹ The fiscal surplus is also not significant. External vulnerability as measured by the ratio of M2 to reserves significantly increases the probability of a crisis in most of the specifications, as predicted by the theory. This variable, however, tends to lose significance when the surplus to GDP variable is omitted.²⁰

A possible criticism of our approach is that we use contemporaneous variables as regressors, so that, if the effects of the banking crisis propagate quickly to the rest of the economy, contemporaneous variables may not be exogenous. Then low growth, high inflation, and high real interest rates may be the manifestation of an economic downturn caused by the banking crisis itself. Although issues of causation are always very difficult to sort out satisfactorily, to limit this potential problem we made an effort to date the beginning of each crisis based on its earliest manifesta-

¹⁸ The GDP growth variable remains strongly significant even if the deviation of the growth rate from its country mean is used.

¹⁹ When inflation is excluded from the regression, the coefficient of the rate of depreciation becomes significant and negative in most of the specifications.

²⁰ Other measures of external vulnerability, such as the ratio of foreign exchange liabilities (gross and net) of the banking sector to reserves and the capital account surplus, are less significant than the M2-to-reserves ratio.

tion. In addition, when we knew that a crisis had begun in the early part of the year, we considered the previous year as the starting date. Furthermore, a number of factors suggest that the cyclical downturn that accompanies banking crises tends to be exogenous. First, Kaminsky and Reinhart (1996), examining monthly data for 23 crises, find that output tends to peak about eight months before the onset of a crisis, that is, the downturn *precedes* the banking crisis, although the lag is short. Second, anecdotal evidence shows that in several episodes the economic downturn accompanying the banking crisis was triggered by a specific exogenous event.²¹ Third, in over 60 percent of the episodes in our sample, real credit to the economy was still increasing in the year of the crisis, raising doubts about the hypothesis that the recession is due to a credit crunch triggered by the banking crisis.

In the previous sections we conjectured that countries where the banking sector has a larger exposure to private sector borrowers should be more vulnerable to banking crises. This conjecture finds some support in our regression results, but the level of significance is low except in one of the specifications. Also, the other financial variables (credit growth and the liquidity variable) do not develop a consistently significant coefficient in all of the specifications, although the liquidity variable is significant in the fourth regression using the second panel, and credit growth is significant (and positive) if lagged by two periods in the third specification of both panels. Thus, there is some (not very strong) evidence that a boom in credit precedes banking crises.

As predicted by theory, low values of the “law and order” index, which should proxy more opportunities to loot and/or a lower ability to carry out effective prudential supervision, are associated with a higher likelihood of a crisis. It should be noted, however, that it is difficult to disentangle the effect of this index from that of GDP per capita, given the high degree of correlation between the two variables in our sample. Indexes of corruption, quality of contract enforcement, quality of the bureaucracy, and delays in the justice system are less significant than the “law and order” index.

The deposit insurance dummy variable has a significant positive sign in both panels. Thus, the presence of an explicit insurance scheme, although it may have reduced the incidence of self-fulfilling bank runs, appears to have worsened banking sector fragility through moral hazard. This result may be taken as evidence that no deposit insurance, or perhaps implicit deposit insurance, is preferable from the point of view of minimizing bank-

²¹ Examples include the external debt crisis in Mexico in 1982, the end of the Argentinean *tablita* in Uruguay in 1981, the collapse of trade with the Soviet Union in Finland in 1990, the sharp decline in oil prices in Norway in 1986, and the shift in monetary policy stance in the United States in 1980.

ing sector fragility. However, it may more simply reflect weaknesses in the design and implementation of deposit insurance schemes in our sample of countries.²² Clearly, more work is needed to sort out this issue.²³

Another interesting question is whether the differences in the estimated coefficient and standard errors across the four specifications are due to the introduction of new explanatory variables or to the change in the sample. To address this issue, we also ran the first and second specification for the panel used in the third regression of Tables 2 and 3. We find that the fact that the private credit-to-GDP ratio becomes significant in the third regression is due to the introduction of the additional regressor (deposit insurance), while the fact that lagged credit growth becomes significant is due to the change in the sample. If we run the first two regressions using the sample of the fourth specification (the one including the “law and order” variable), the coefficients remain approximately the same, so the difference must be due to the additional regressor.²⁴

As explained in Section II, because the empirical model is nonlinear, the estimated coefficients do not measure the percentage change in the estimated probability of a crisis associated with a given percentage change in the explanatory variable, as in the standard linear regression model. Rather, the impact of a change in each explanatory variable depends upon the initial values of all the independent variables and their coefficients. To gain some insight on the relative impact of each explanatory variable, using estimated coefficients from equation (3) in Table 3, we computed elasticities for a much-studied episode, the Mexican banking crisis of 1994. As shown in Table 5, the largest elasticities are those of the rate of output growth and of the ratio of private credit to GDP (the latter variable, though, is significant only at the 10 percent confidence level). The real interest rate and lagged credit growth have elasticities of around 0.5, while the external vulnerability variable (the ratio of M2 to reserves) and the rate of inflation have elasticities of 0.27 and 0.22, respectively. A switch from explicit to no deposit insurance would have decreased the probability of a crisis by over 60 percent. This large impact, of course, occurs because a change in the dummy variable from one to zero represents a 100 percent decline. As

²² On the design and implementation of deposit insurance schemes, see Garcia (1996).

²³ Although a number of countries instituted deposit insurance in response to the banking crisis, in all the episodes in our sample this occurred in the years following the inception of the crisis (which are excluded from the panel). Thus, those countries were classified as not having deposit insurance at the time of the crisis, and the issue of reverse causation does not arise.

²⁴ The sample used in the fourth specification is not a subset of that used in the third, and their overlap includes only 14–16 crises, so the same exercise cannot be performed to compare these two regressions.

Table 5. *Interpreting Regression Coefficients: The 1994 Mexican Crisis*

Variable	Initial value	Percent change in initial value	Percent change in the probability of crisis
<i>GROWTH</i>	3.7	+10	-7.0***
<i>RLINTEREST</i>	6.7	+10	+5.6***
<i>INFLATION</i>	7.3	+10	+2.2**
<i>M2/RESERVES</i>	20.5	+10	+2.7***
<i>PRIVATE/GDP</i>	39.7	+10	+7.8*
<i>CREDITGRO</i> _{t-2}	28.9	+10	+5.4***
<i>GDP/CAP</i>	1830	+10	-1.7*
<i>DEPOSITINS</i>	1 (= explicit)	-100 (0 = implicit)	-61.6**

Notes: The model used is specification (3) from Table 3. Given a change in an explanatory variable, the change in the probability of a crisis depends on the country's initial crisis probability, thus on the initial values of all the independent variables and their estimated coefficients. We calculate the impact of a given change in the variables with significant coefficients on the predicted probability of the 1994 Mexican crisis. One, two, and three asterisks indicate significance levels of 10, 5, and 1 percent, respectively.

pointed out in the introduction, these numbers have to be interpreted with caution, since the coefficients come from a reduced-form equation and we do not provide a structural model that makes explicit the connections among the various explanatory variables.

IV. The Cost of Banking Crises

The approach taken so far treats all banking crises as uniform events. In practice, however, the crises in our panel were of different severity. In this section, we test whether the set of macroeconomic, structural, and institutional variables that are associated with the occurrence of banking crises can also explain observed differences in the severity of the crisis. We measure the severity of the crises by their cost (as a share of GDP) using the estimates in Caprio and Klingebiel (1996), which are available for 24 of the 31 crisis episodes in our sample. These estimates reflect the fiscal cost of each episode. The explanatory variables are measured in the year in which the crisis begins. In interpreting the results, it is important to take into account that the cost of a crisis is an imperfect measure of the severity of the problems because it is also influenced by how well monetary authorities and bank supervisors deal with the crisis. Thus, some of the explanatory variables may be correlated with factors affecting the quality of the policy response rather than with the severity of the crisis.²⁵

²⁵ For a review of recent episodes of bank restructuring, see Dziobek and Pazarbaşıoğlu (1997).

Table 6 reports the regression results. The coefficients are estimated using ordinary least squares (OLS), and the standard errors are White's heteroscedasticity-consistent measures. Because the degrees of freedom are few, these results should be taken with caution. Overall, the variables that are significantly correlated with the probability of a crisis are also significantly correlated with the cost of a crisis: among the macro variables, low GDP growth, adverse terms of trade changes, high real interest rates, and high inflation tend to increase the cost of a crisis. Vulnerability to a balance of payments crisis, a larger share of credit to the private sector, and lagged credit growth are also significant and of the expected sign (although credit growth is significant only in one of the two specifications in which it is

Table 6. *Determinants of the Cost of a Crisis*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>GROWTH</i>	.580 (.407)	.313 (.279)	-1.119*** (.393)	-1.233*** (.389)
<i>TOTCHANGE</i>	-.215 (.223)	-.025 (.200)	-1.226*** (.285)	-1.470*** (.347)
<i>DEPRECIATION</i>	.016 (.077)	.083* (.049)	.157*** (.054)	.037 (.069)
<i>RLINTEREST</i>	.466*** (.143)	.564*** (.131)	.456*** (.093)	.281* (.150)
<i>INFLATION</i>	.454*** (.142)	.533*** (.129)	.417*** (.087)	.273** (.138)
<i>CASH/BANK</i>	—	-.338*** (.112)	.197 (.151)	.266 (.170)
<i>M2/RESERVES</i>	—	—	.151*** (.057)	.232*** (.050)
<i>PRIVATE/GDP</i>	—	—	.362*** (.127)	.215** (.122)
<i>CREDITGRO_{t-2}</i>	—	—	.174 (.112)	.289*** (.095)
<i>GDP/CAP</i>	.531 (.311)	.281 (.337)	—	—
<i>DEPOSITINS</i>	—	—	8.242** (3.460)	11.699*** (3.340)
<i>LAW&ORDER</i>	—	—	-5.796** (2.207)	-5.026*** (1.690)
<i>DURATION</i>	—	—	—	-2.252** (.795)
Adjusted R^2	.32	.40	.43	.54
Number of observations	24	24	19	19

Notes: The dependent variable is the cost of a banking crisis as a share of GDP. White's heteroscedasticity-consistent standard errors are in parenthesis. One, two, and three asterisks indicate significance levels of 10, 5, and 1 percent respectively.

included). The liquidity variable is significant only if the other financial variables are excluded. The deposit insurance dummy and the "law and order" index are also significant, indicating that the presence of explicit deposit insurance may not only make banking crises more likely, but it may also make such crises more expensive to clean up. Conversely, an effective legal system that sanctions fraudulent behavior is likely to reduce both the occurrence of systemic banking problems and their cost.

Finally, a variable capturing the length of the crisis episodes is negatively correlated with the cost. Thus, crises that are cleaned up more quickly appear to be also the most expensive. One possible explanation of this result is that more severe crises force policymakers to take quick and drastic action and, therefore, result in a speedier resolution of the problems. Another interpretation could be that rescue operations that put the banking system back on its feet relatively quickly require more budgetary resources, perhaps because they involve an across-the-board bailout instead of more selective intervention aimed at separating out efficient banks from inefficient institutions.

V. Conclusions

Since the early 1980s, systemic banking sector problems have emerged repeatedly all over the world, and the need to understand the connections between banking sector fragility and the economy is all the more urgent. The now numerous case studies indicate that, while experiences vary quite substantially across countries and over time, there may be factors common to all banking crises. This paper attempts to identify some of these factors by estimating a multivariate logit model for a large panel of countries.

We find that banking crises tend to emerge when the macroeconomic environment is weak; in particular, low GDP growth is significantly correlated with increased risk to the banking sector. Vulnerability to aggregate output shocks is not necessarily a sign of an inefficient banking system, as the role of banks as financial intermediaries by its very nature involves some risk taking. However, banks could hedge some of the credit risk due to fluctuations of the domestic economy by lending abroad. From this perspective, the expansion of cross-border banking activities should improve the strength of banks all over the world. Small developing countries, whose output is typically more volatile, should especially benefit from increased internationalization. Entry by foreign banks could also be beneficial, by increasing competition and putting pressure on local authorities to upgrade the institutional framework for banking activities, although lack of knowledge of local firms and of domestic market conditions may constitute a significant barrier. In future work, we plan to explore in more depth the connection between volatility, country size, and banking sector fragility.

Our results also indicate that an increased risk of banking sector problems may be one of the consequences of a high rate of inflation, possibly because the high and volatile nominal interest rates associated with high inflation make it difficult for banks to perform maturity transformation. Thus, restrictive monetary policies that keep inflation in check are desirable from the point of view of banking sector stability. However, when such policies are implemented in the context of an inflation stabilization program, they may lead to a sharp increase in real interest rates. As our empirical evidence shows, high real rates tend to increase the likelihood of a banking crisis. Thus, the design and implementation of effective inflation stabilization programs should be accompanied by a careful evaluation of the impact on the domestic banking system, and, in countries where the banking system appears weak, the benefits of inflation stabilization should be carefully weighed against the costs of a possible banking crisis.

High real interest rates may be the result of a host of factors other than inflation stabilization policies (Brock, 1995). Among these factors is financial liberalization, which, in turn, is often named as one of the culprits for banking sector fragility in the policy debate. We have found some (not very strong) evidence that a proxy for the degree of financial liberalization significantly increases the likelihood of banking crises even when real interest rates are controlled for. We plan to explore this issue further in future extensions by developing more accurate indicators of financial liberalization.

Our regressions also indicate that the presence of an explicit deposit insurance scheme tends to increase the probability of systemic banking problems. This suggests that, while deposit insurance may reduce the incidence of self-fulfilling banking panics, it introduces a significant degree of moral hazard, which often has not been successfully curbed through appropriate design of the insurance scheme or through effective prudential supervision and regulation. Thus, reducing the moral hazard induced by deposit insurance should be a priority for policymakers interested in strengthening the banking system. Also, opting for an implicit rather than explicit deposit insurance scheme may be preferable while the administrative capability needed to enforce a system of prudential regulation is being created. To explore this issue further, we plan to test whether banking sector fragility is affected by specific features of the deposit insurance system such as the extent of the coverage, the type of premiums charged to banks, the public or private nature of the scheme, and the presence of coinsurance and deductibles.

Our study has several limitations: first, it leaves open the question of how sensitive the correlations are to different aspects of the methodology, such as the estimation technique, the treatment of crisis years, and the set of other explanatory variables included in the regression. We plan to address this

issue more fully in future work. Also, this study has focused on macroeconomic and institutional variables at the expense of variables that capture the structure of the banking system and, more generally, of financial markets. Aspects such as the degree of capitalization of banks, the degree of concentration and the structure of competition of the market for credit, the liquidity of the interbank market and of the bond market, the ownership structure of the banks (public versus private), and the quality of regulatory supervision are likely to play an important role in breeding banking crises, but they are neglected here because of lack of data.²⁶ A study limited to a smaller set of countries that includes more structural variables might yield interesting results.

APPENDIX

Sample Composition and Data Sources

The countries included in the largest sample (regression no. 1 in Table 3) are the following: Austria, Australia, Burundi, Belgium, Bahrain, Canada, Chile, Congo, Colombia, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Indonesia, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Korea, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Netherlands, Nepal, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Senegal, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Swaziland, Switzerland, Syria, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zaire, and Zambia.

For most countries the years included are 1980–94; for some countries, however, a shorter subperiod was used because of lack of data. Thus, some countries in the sample had a banking crisis during 1980–94, but because of missing data in the years of the crisis that crisis does not appear in Table 1 (Chile, Thailand, and Peru are such examples). Table A1 provides details on the composition of each of the samples used.

²⁶ A variable often used in microeconomic studies of bank fragility, the level of nonperforming loans, could not be used in our framework, however, since it is used to construct the depended variable.

Table A1. *Composition of the Samples*

Countries excluded from sample No. 1	
Regression 2, Table 3	United Kingdom, Sweden, Zaire
Regression 3, Table 3	Bahrain, Burundi, Congo, Cyprus, Guyana, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Mali, Papua New Guinea, Senegal, Singapore, Seychelles, Swaziland, Sweden, Tanzania, United Kingdom, Zaire
Regression 4, Table 3	Burundi, Congo, Nepal, Niger, Senegal, Seychelles, Singapore, Swaziland, United Kingdom, Zaire
Regression 1, Table 2	Chile, Peru, Turkey
Regression 2, Table 2	Chile, Peru, Singapore, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, Zaire
Regression 3, Table 2	Bahrain, Burundi, Chile, Congo, Cyprus, Guyana, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Senegal, Seychelles, Singapore, Swaziland, Sweden, Tanzania, Turkey, United Kingdom, Zaire
Regression 4, Table 2	Bahrain, Burundi, Chile, Congo, Cyprus, Guyana, Israel, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Senegal, Seychelles, Singapore, Swaziland, Sweden, Tanzania, Turkey, United Kingdom, Zaire

Table A2. *Description of the Explanatory Variables and Sources*

Variable name	Definition	Source
<i>GROWTH</i>	Rate of growth of real GDP	IFS where available. Otherwise, WEO.
<i>TOTCHANGE</i>	Change in the terms of trade	WEO
<i>DEPRECIATION</i>	Rate of change of the US\$ exchange rate; for the U.S., rate of change of the nominal effective exchange rate.	IFS, line ae.
<i>RLINTEREST</i>	Nominal interest rate minus the contemporaneous rate of inflation	IFS. Where available, nominal rate on short-term government securities. Otherwise, a rate charged by the central bank to domestic banks such as the discount rate. If this is also not available, the commercial bank deposit interest rate.
<i>INFLATION</i>	Rate of change of the GDP deflator	IFS
<i>SURPLUS/GDP</i>	Ratio of central government budget surplus to GDP	Surplus is IFS line 80.

Table A2. (concluded)

Variable name	Definition	Source
<i>M2/RESERVES</i>	Ratio of M2 to foreign exchange reserves of the central bank	M2 is money plus quasi-money (IFS lines 34 + 35) converted into US\$. Reserves are IFS line 1dd.
<i>PRIVATE/GDP</i>	Ratio of domestic credit to the private sector to GDP	Domestic credit to the private sector is IFS line 32d.
<i>CASH/BANK</i>	Ratio of bank liquid reserves to bank assets	Bank reserves are line 20 of IFS. Bank assets are IFS lines 21 + lines 22a to 22f.
<i>CREDITGRO</i>	Rate of growth of real domestic credit	IFS line 32d divided by the GDP deflator.
<i>DEPOSITINS</i>	Dummy variable for the presence of an explicit deposit insurance scheme	Kyei (1995) and Tally and Mas (1990)
<i>GDP/CAP</i>	Real GDP per capita	GDP data are from World Bank National Accounts data base. Population is IFS line 99z.
<i>LAW&ORDER</i>	Index of the quality of law enforcement	International Country Risk Guide

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