

The Tail that Wags the Economy: Belief-Driven Business Cycles and Persistent Stagnation

KOZLOWSKI, VELDKAMP & VENKATESWARAN

Discussion by Franck Portier

“Secular Stagnation, Growth and Real Interest Rates”

June 18, 2015, Firenze



Roadmap

1.

2.

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2.



Roadmap

1. A Model

A Model

Environment

- ▶ **Small economy with integrated capital market**
- ▶ Risk neutral international investors
- ▶ Hand-to-Mouth domestic consumer-workers
- ▶ Aggregate shocks to capital quality
- ▶ Modigliani-Miller holds

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- ▶ **Risk-neutral**
- ▶ Require a expected return r^*
- ▶ Supply as much capital K as demanded for a return r^*

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Households

- ▶ Preferences

$$U_t = \log C_t - \frac{B}{1+\gamma} L_t^{1+\gamma}$$

- ▶ Budget constraint

$$C_t = w_t L_t + E$$

- ▶ Note: Final consumption good is the numéraire
- ▶ E is period exogenous endowment of consumption good
- ▶ Labor supply:

$$L_t = \frac{1}{B} - \frac{E}{w_t}$$

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- ▶ Firms operate along a Leontiev production function

$$Y_t = \min(v_t K_t^\alpha, L_t)$$

- ▶ v_t is an aggregate capital quality shock
- ▶ Timing of decisions within period t :
 - × Capital market opens and capital allocation is decided
 - × v_t is realized
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Deterministic benchmark

- ▶ $v_t = v$ for all t
- ▶ $Y = \min(vK^\alpha, L)$
- ▶ Firms optimal capital demand is such that

$$v\alpha K^{\alpha-1} = r^*$$

- ▶ Then, given the Leontief assumption, labor demand and production are

$$Y = L = vK^\alpha = vV^{\frac{1}{1-\alpha}} \left(\frac{\alpha}{r^*}\right)^{\frac{\alpha}{1-\alpha}}$$

- ▶ and wage is determined on the labor market:

$$w = \frac{E}{\frac{1}{B} - vV^{\frac{1}{1-\alpha}} \left(\frac{\alpha}{r^*}\right)^{\frac{\alpha}{1-\alpha}}}$$

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$$Y = v w^{\frac{1}{1-\alpha}} \left(\frac{\alpha}{r^*} \right)^{\frac{\alpha}{1-\alpha}}$$

- ▶ Y is increasing in v
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- ▶ r^* and v move L and w in the same direction
- ▶ B moves w but not L

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Stochastic Model with Perfect Information

- ▶ Assume v is *i.i.d.*
- ▶ v uniformly distributed on $[\underline{v}, \bar{v}]$
- ▶ denote $E(v) = \frac{\bar{v} - \underline{v}}{2}$
- ▶ Now firms install capital according to $E(v)$, and then demand labor according to installed K and *realized* v_t
- ▶ Capital demand

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Impulse Response

- ▶ $v_{t<0} = E(v)$
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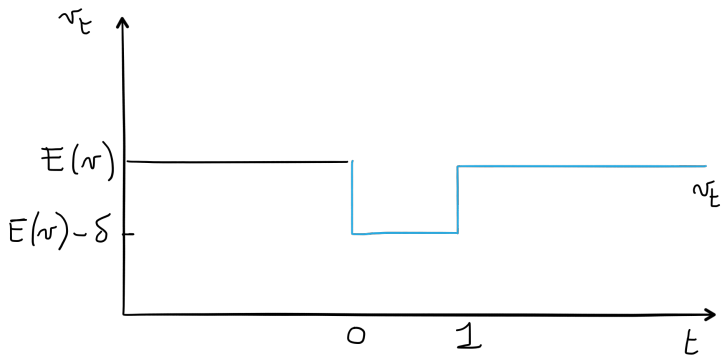
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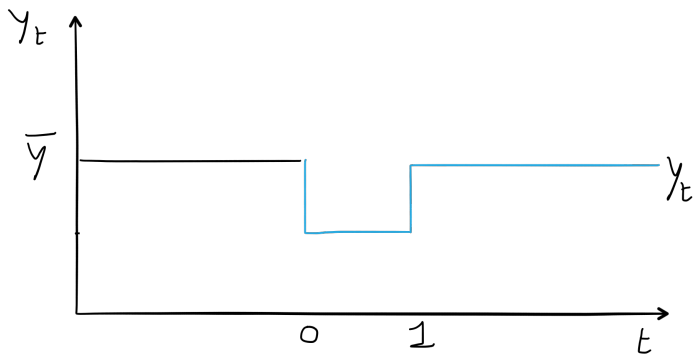
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Stochastic Model with Learning

- ▶ As in KVV, I assume that agents must estimate the aggregate shock distribution
- ▶ Their common information set includes all aggregate and shocks observed up to time- t .
- ▶ At each point in time, they use the empirical distribution of v_t up to that point to construct an estimate of v
- ▶ With uniform distribution, that problem is super simple (analytic)...
- ▶ ... but conveys the main intuition of the paper

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- ▶ I assume that it is common knowledge that shocks are uniformly distributed on $[\underline{v} \ \bar{v}]$...
- ▶ ... but \underline{v} and \bar{v} are not known, but agent can learn about them.
- ▶ Given an history up to $t = 0$, the estimates of \underline{v} and \bar{v} are

$$\underline{v}_0 = \min\{v_{t < 0}\}$$

$$\bar{v}_0 = \max\{v_{t < 0}\}$$

- ▶ and

$$E_0(v) = \frac{\max\{v_{t < 0}\} - \min\{v_{t < 0}\}}{2}$$

- ▶ $E_0(v)$ is directly affected by a measure of *dispersion* of the shocks \rightsquigarrow tails matter.

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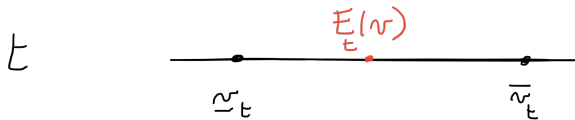
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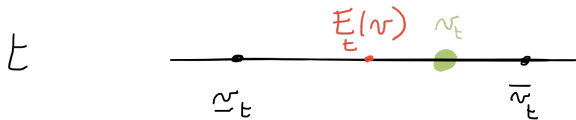
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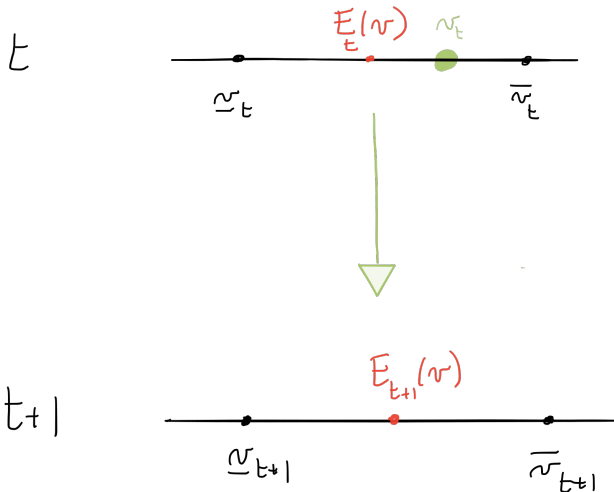
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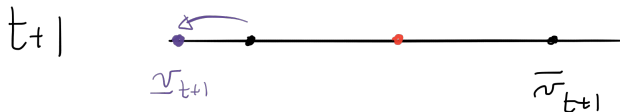
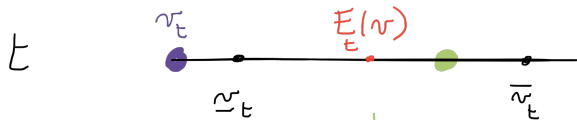
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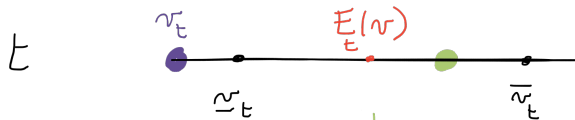
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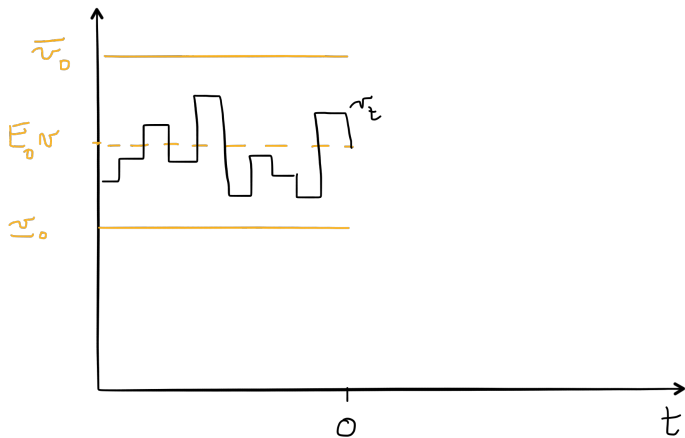
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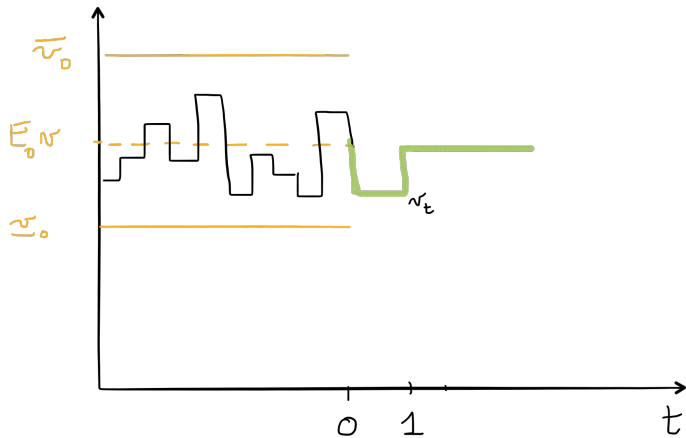
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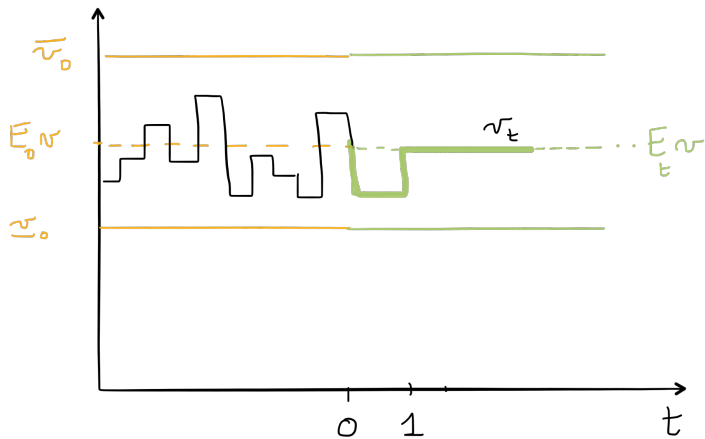
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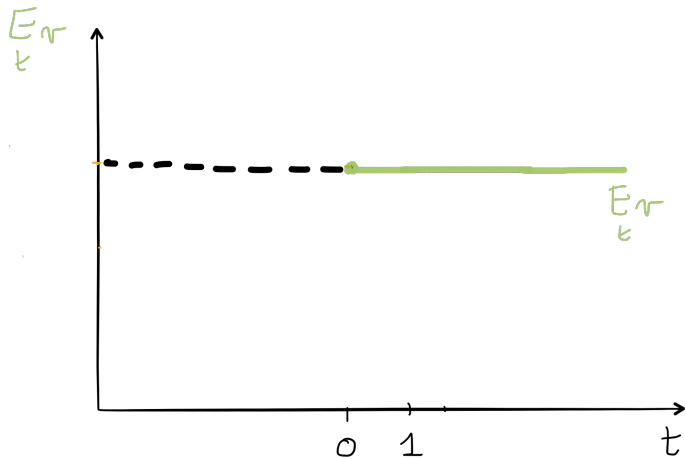
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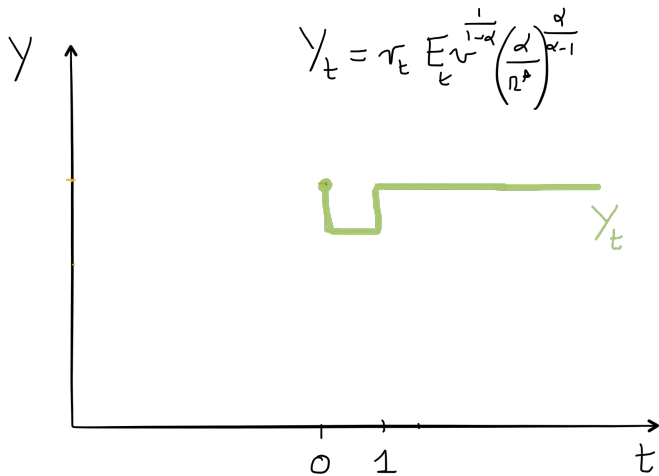
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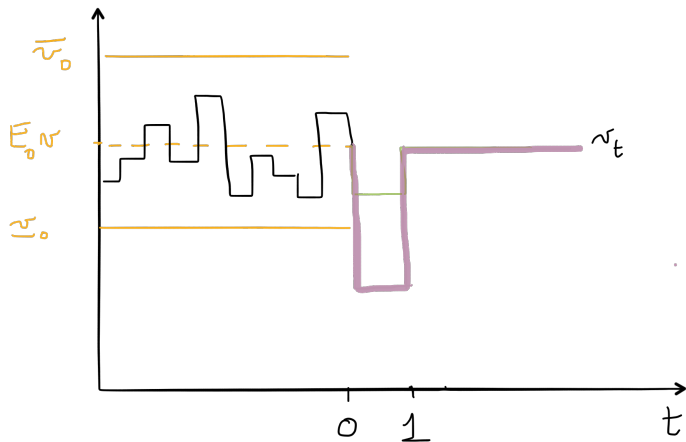
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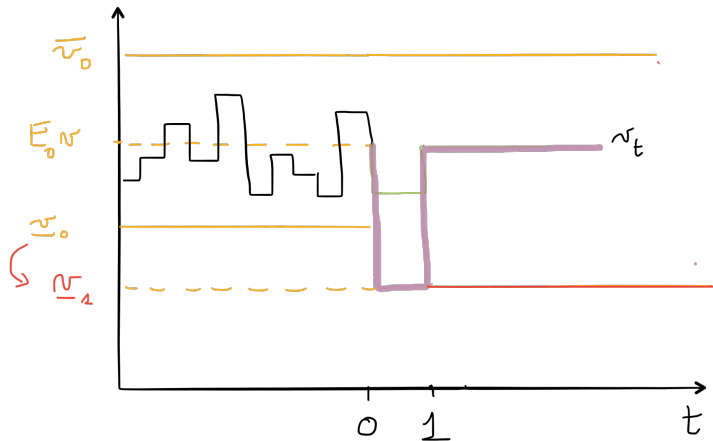
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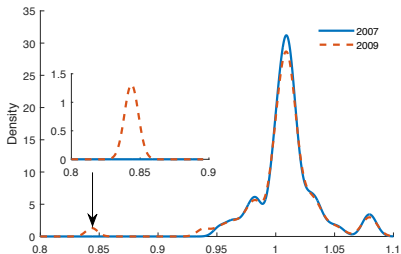
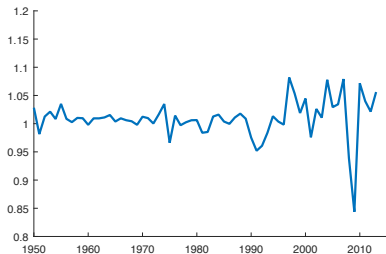
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► Note the analogy with the

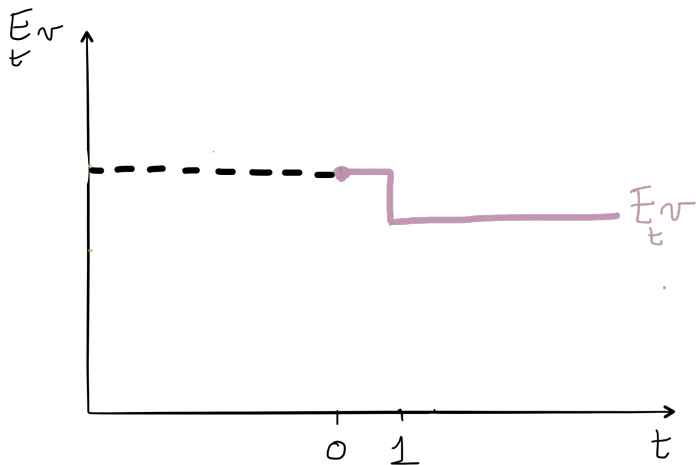


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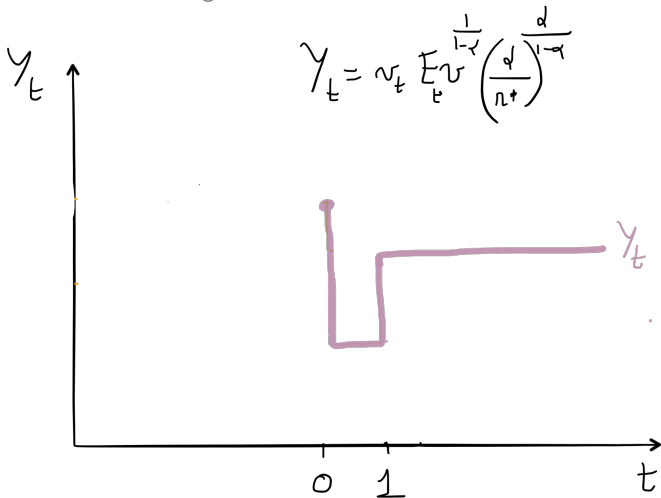
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A Model

Including “Finance” and Default

- ▶ Add idiosyncratic risk and fixed costs

$$Y_t = \min(u_{it} v_t K_t^\alpha, L_t) - F$$

- ▶ Firms that draw a too low u_{it} are not profitable ex post
- ▶ They give back their capital (the collateral of their loan) *before* producing
- ▶ At the steady state, there is always a fraction of firms that default and close.
- ▶ That fraction will be larger permanently after a big shock
- ▶ Shocks are also amplified on impact by an extensive margin adjustment : not only firms produce less and revise downward $E(v)$, but more capital is *ex post* idle.

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Roadmap

2. The Model

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A serious model

- ▶ A fully G.E. model with intertemporal decisions
- ▶ Finance introduced, gives nice amplification ...
- ▶ ... but is not at the core of the mechanism
- ▶ Nice way to discipline the exercise by measuring the $\phi(v)$ shock
- ▶ The story is not one of the effect of a disaster that we have never observed, but that of an observed disaster.

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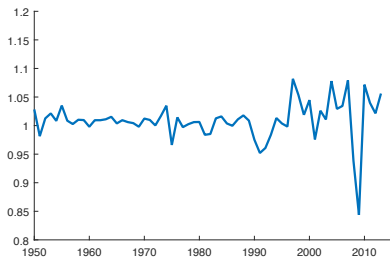
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The need for a big impulse

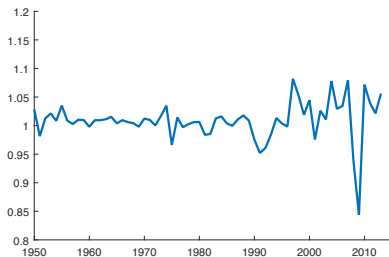


- ▶ Clearly something happened in 2008 and 2009
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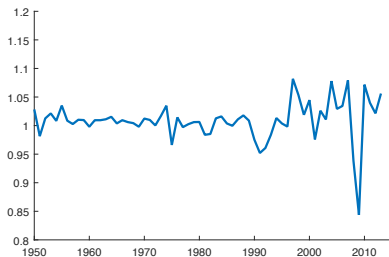


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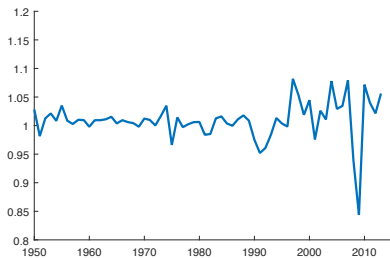
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Modeling the drop in $\phi(v)$

- ▶ Do I understand well that a drop in the observed q will be measured as a drop in $\phi(v)$
- ▶ Perception revisions of the the type: *"I realize that my investment will not be as profitable as I thought"* can be seen as an explanation for recessions
- ▶ "News Driven Business Cycles: Insights and Challenges", Beaudry and Portier, Journal of Economic Literature (2015).
- ▶ Do such expectation-driven booms and busts create variations in measured $\phi(v)$?

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What do we observe?

- ▶ **What is an observation?**
 - × a quarter? 220 observations since 1960
 - × a cycle? 7 observations
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