

When is aggregation enough?

Aggregation and Projection with the Master Equation

WORK IN PROGRESS

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Limitation of current methods for Heterogeneous Agents models

- ▶ Since Krusell, Smith (1998), a large array of methods have been developed to tackle *Heterogeneous Agent models with Aggregate Shocks*
 - Perturbation methods, Sequence space methods, Truncation methods, Machine Learning based methods
- ▶ Many of the recent operational methods rely on **certainty equivalence**
- ▶ By design, they can not speak about aggregate risk and decisions under **aggregate uncertainty**
- ▶ Some exceptions:
 - Second order perturbations, e.g. Bhandari, Bourany, Evans, Golosov (2024) ⇒ are still local approximations around a stationary equilibrium
 - Machine-Learning-based methods, e.g. Fernandez-Villaverde, Hurtado, Nuno (2023) Gu, Laurière, Merkel, Payne (2024) ⇒ might be a bit opaque / case specific

This project

- ▶ To solve *Heterogeneous Agent models with Aggregate Shocks*, new approaches have been developed by mathematician using the **Master equation**
 - Mean-Field Games with Common Noise: Cardaliaguet, Delarue, Lions, Lasry (2019)
 - Also used in economics by Schaab (2021), Bilal (2023), Gu, Laurière, Merkel, Payne (2024)
- ▶ My project is proposing a new method to talk about risk in H.A. models
 - Relying solely on “projection” to characterize the distribution of agents
 - Idea analogous to the original approach by Krusell-Smith (1998)
 - Extend it to more generic models of macro-finance

Krusell-Smith: General idea

- Take Krusell, Smith (1998) Consumption-saving model, c, a , with
 - (i) idiosyncratic income risk z ,
 - (ii) incomplete market,
 - (iii) credit constraints $a \geq \underline{a}$
 - (iv) aggregate shock on aggregate TFP Z .

- Firm side:

$$Y = ZK^\alpha \quad \Rightarrow \quad r = \alpha K^{\alpha-1} - \delta \quad w = (1 - \alpha)K^\alpha$$

- Distribution of households $g(a, z)$ over wealth and income
- Household decision (KS98)

$$V(a, z, g, Z) = \max_{c, a'} u(c) + \beta \mathbb{E}^{z', Z'} [V(a', z', g', Z') \mid z, Z]$$

$$s.t. \quad c + a' = zw + (1+r)a$$

$$g' = H(g, Z, Z')$$

- Equilibrium

$$K = \int_{a, z} a dg(a, z)$$

General idea and KS98 global solution

- ▶ Difficulty: Value function $V(a, z, g, Z)$ depends on the whole distribution g (!)
- ▶ Need to forecast the evolution of $g \Rightarrow$ very difficult with aggregate risk
 - Need to follow the distribution g_t on *every path* of $\{Z_t\}_t$
 - Brute force: computationally intensive, c.f. Bourany (2018)
- ▶ Krusell-Smith solution: two assumptions related to *bounded-rationality*
 1. Assume the Household only care about aggregate capital / First-moment $K = \int a dg(a, z)$
 2. Assume *Linear* forecasting-rule for future capital

$$K' = a_1^Z K + a_2^Z$$

- Choose parameters (a_1^Z, a_2^Z) to match the *realized* path of $\{K_t\}_t$
- ▶ Proposal today:
 - remove assumption 2 \Rightarrow bypass the linearity assumpt^o (in that sense close to FVHN)
 - test robustness to 1 and 2, using methods based on the Master equation

Primer on the Mean Field Games and the Master Equation

- ▶ Rewriting the Aiyagari model as a Mean Field Game involves a system of PDEs:

- States dynamics:

$$da_t = [z_t w_t + r_t a_t - c_t] dt \quad z_j \sim \text{Markov jump process } \lambda_j$$

1. Hamilton Jacobi Bellman Equation:

$$-\partial_t v(t, a, z) + \rho v(t, a, z) = \max_c u(c) + \mathcal{L}[v](t, a, z)$$

- Transport/Jump-Operator

$$\mathcal{L}[v | c^*](t, a, z_j) = \partial_a v(t, a, z_j) [z_j w + r a - c^*] + \lambda_j (v(t, a, z_{-j}) - v(t, a, z_j))$$

2. Kolmogorov forward Equation:

$$\partial_t g(t, a, z) = \mathcal{L}^*[g | c^*](t, a, z)$$

- Equilibrium:

$$\iint_{z, a \geq \underline{a}} a dg(t, a, z_j) = K_t \quad r_t = \alpha K_t^{\alpha-1} - \delta$$

Primer on the Master Equation

- ▶ The master equation combines in *one equation* both the HJB and the KFE
 - Case without aggregate risk, c.f. Cardaliaguet et al (2019), Bilal (2023)

$$\begin{aligned}
 -\partial_t v(t, a, z, g) + \rho v(t, a, z, g) = & \overbrace{\max_c u(c) + \mathcal{L}[v | c^*](t, a, z)}^{\text{standard HJB continuation value}} + \\
 & \underbrace{\iint_{z, a} \frac{dv(t, a, z, g)}{dg} [(\tilde{a}, \tilde{z})] \mathcal{L}^*[g | c^*](t, \tilde{a}, \tilde{z}) dg(t, \tilde{a}, \tilde{z})}_{\text{evolution of the distribution}}
 \end{aligned}$$

- Novelty: dependence on how the distribution g changes
notice the forecast from agents (a, z) about all other agents (\tilde{a}, \tilde{z})
- Requires to defines the derivative in the space of distribution $\frac{dv(g)[\tilde{x}]}{dg}$: Lions' derivative

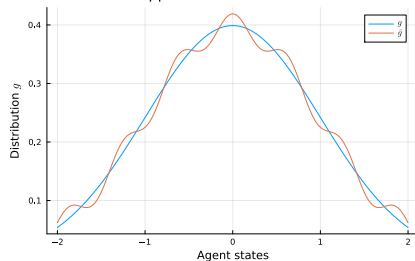
Primer on the Lions derivative

- Derivative in the space of distribution:
how the value $v(a, z, \mathbf{g})$ changes when the distribution of agents \mathbf{g} moves?

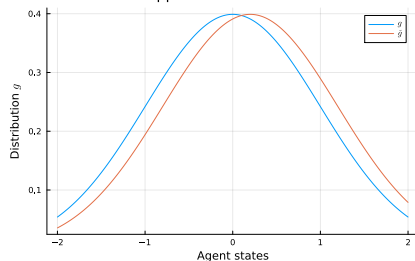
$$\begin{aligned}
 dv(a, z, \mathbf{g}) &\approx v(a, z, \tilde{\mathbf{g}}) - v(a, z, \mathbf{g}) \\
 &\approx \iint_{\tilde{a}, \tilde{z}} \underbrace{\frac{\partial v(a, z, \mathbf{g})}{\partial \mathbf{g}}[\tilde{a}, \tilde{z}]}_{=\text{Fréchet}} (\tilde{\mathbf{g}}(\tilde{a}, \tilde{z}) - \mathbf{g}(\tilde{a}, \tilde{z})) \\
 &\approx \iint_{\tilde{a}, \tilde{z}} \underbrace{\frac{d}{d\tilde{a}} \frac{\partial v(a, z, \mathbf{g})}{\partial \mathbf{g}}[\tilde{a}, \tilde{z}]}_{=\text{Lions}} \underbrace{d\tilde{a}}_{=\text{change in decision}} \mathbf{g}(\tilde{a}, \tilde{z})
 \end{aligned}$$

- $\frac{\partial v(a, z, \mathbf{g})}{\partial \mathbf{g}}[\tilde{x}]$ Fréchet Derivative, for a change of \mathbf{g} in \tilde{x}
- $\frac{dv(a, z, \mathbf{g})}{dg}[\tilde{x}] = \frac{d}{dx} \frac{\partial v(a, z, \mathbf{g})}{\partial \mathbf{g}}[\tilde{x}]$ Lions Derivative, for a change of \tilde{x} , i.e. a *shift* in $\mathbf{g}(\tilde{x})$

Point of approximation: Fréchet derivative



Point of approximation: Lions derivative



Lions derivative and agent decision: toward aggregation?

► Derivative in the space of distribution

- Change in value $v(a, z, \mathbf{g})$ with moves in the distribution of agents \mathbf{g}
- Lions-derivative: what causes the change in the agents' distribution \mathbf{g} ?
 \Rightarrow change in states $(d\tilde{a}, d\tilde{z})$
- What causes the change in states? \Rightarrow the change in agents' decisions
 - States dynamics $(d\tilde{a}, d\tilde{z})$ change with small change in decision, i.e. consumption-saving: operator $\mathcal{L}^*[g | c^*]$ (!)

► Can we aggregate?

- Aggregate the distribution?
 - Aggregate the change in agents' decision?
- \Rightarrow Goal/method of this project!
- Before, back to the original question: aggregate risk

Adding Aggregate Risk to the Master Equation (ARME?)

► Consider aggregate risk

- Agg. TFP follows a AR(1) - Ornstein-Uhlenbeck process

$$dZ_t = -\theta(Z - \bar{Z})dt + \hat{\sigma}dB_t^0$$

- The master equation doesn't change much: value $v = v(t, a, z, g, Z)$

$$\begin{aligned}
 -\partial_t v + \rho v = & \underbrace{\max_c u(c) + \mathcal{L}[v|c]_{(t, a, z)}}_{\text{standard HJB continuation value}} \quad \underbrace{-\theta(Z - \bar{Z})v_Z + \frac{\hat{\sigma}^2}{2}v_{ZZ}}_{\text{direct effect of risk of } Z \text{ on } v} \\
 & + \underbrace{\iint_{z, a} \frac{dv(t, a, z, g, Z)}{dg} [(\tilde{a}, \tilde{z})] \mathcal{L}^*[g|c^*]_{(t, \tilde{a}, \tilde{z})} dg(t, \tilde{a}, \tilde{z})}_{\text{evolution of the distribution}}
 \end{aligned}$$

- Why?

- Aggregate shocks don't have *direct effects* on the distribution!
- Is that the reason why KS98 model features “approximate aggregation” ?
- ⇒ linear in Z / can aggregate capital K easily / doesn't have important implication of risk $\hat{\sigma}$?

General Aggregate Risk to the Master Equation (GARME?)

- Add agg. risk with *direct effects* on household income, w/ exogenous portfolio share θ

$$dR_t = \bar{\sigma} dB_t^0 \quad da = (ra + zw - c)dt + \theta a (dR - r)$$

- The master equation now becomes **second order**! value $v = v(t, a, z, g, Z)$ changes a lot!

$$\begin{aligned}
 -\partial_t v + \rho v = & \underbrace{\max_c u(c) + \mathcal{L}[v|c](t, a, z)}_{\text{standard HJB continuation value}} \underbrace{-\theta(Z - \bar{Z})v_Z + \frac{\hat{\sigma}^2}{2} v_{ZZ}}_{\text{direct effect of risk of } Z \text{ on } v} + \underbrace{\iint_{z, a} \frac{dv(t, a, z, g, Z)}{dg} [(\tilde{a}, \tilde{z})] \mathcal{L}^*[g|c^*](t, \tilde{a}, \tilde{z}) dg(t, \tilde{a}, \tilde{z})}_{\text{deterministic evolution of the distribution}} \\
 & + \underbrace{\frac{\theta^2 \bar{\sigma}^2}{2} \iint_{z, a} \frac{d}{d\tilde{a}} \left(\frac{dv}{dg} [(\tilde{a}, \tilde{z})] \right) dg(t, \tilde{a}, \tilde{z})}_{\text{diffusion of the distribution due to risk}} + \underbrace{\theta^2 \bar{\sigma}^2 \iint_{z, a} \frac{d}{da} \frac{dv}{dg} [(\tilde{a}, \tilde{z})] dg(t, \tilde{a}, \tilde{z})}_{\text{covariance of own state } a \text{ and distribution } \tilde{a}} \\
 & + \underbrace{\theta \bar{\sigma} \hat{\sigma} \iint_{z, a} \frac{d}{dZ} \frac{dv}{dg} [(\tilde{a}, \tilde{z})] dg(t, \tilde{a}, \tilde{z})}_{\text{covariance of agg. state } Z \text{ and distribution } \tilde{a}} + \underbrace{\frac{\theta^2 \bar{\sigma}^2}{2} \iint_{(z, a)^{\otimes 2}} \frac{d^2 v}{dg^2} [(\tilde{a}, \tilde{z}, \tilde{a}', \tilde{z}')] dg(t, \tilde{a}, \tilde{z}) dg(t, \tilde{a}', \tilde{z}')}_{\text{covariance of distribution } \tilde{a} \text{ and } \tilde{a}'}
 \end{aligned}$$

General Aggregate Risk to the Master Equation (GARME?)

- Include controlled drift, diffusion, jump on individual states
+ mean-field interaction on drift, diffusion and jump on aggregate states
- Encompass most macro-finance models. Exception: Impulse control, fixed cost (yet!)

$$\begin{aligned}
 \mathcal{H}(x, m, \mathcal{X}, V, D_x V, D_{xx} V) &= \max_c \mathcal{L}(x, m, \mathcal{X}, c) + b(x, m, \mathcal{X}, c) \cdot D_x V + \text{Tr}([\sigma\sigma' + \bar{\sigma}\bar{\sigma}'](x, m, \mathcal{X}, c) D_{xx} V) \\
 &\quad \sum_{n=1}^{n_J^i} \lambda^n(x, m, \mathcal{X}, c) \left(V^n(x + \gamma(x, m, \mathcal{X}, c), x, m, \mathcal{X}) - V \right) \\
 -\partial_t V + \rho V &= \mathcal{H}(x, m, \mathcal{X}, V, D_x V, D_{xx} V, c^*) \\
 &\quad + \mu(m, \mathcal{X}) \cdot D_{\mathcal{X}} V + \text{Tr}(\hat{\sigma}\hat{\sigma}' D_{\mathcal{X}\mathcal{X}} V) + \sum_{n=1}^{n_J^0} \hat{\lambda}^n(m, \mathcal{X}) \left(V \circ \hat{\gamma}^n(m, \mathcal{X}) - V \right) \\
 &\quad + \int_{\mathbb{X}} D_m V(x, \cdot; y) \cdot D_p \mathcal{H}(y, \cdot) m(dy) + \int_{\mathbb{X}} \sum_{n=1}^{n_J^0} \lambda^n(y, \cdot) \Delta_m V(x, \cdot; y) \circ \gamma(y, \cdot) m(dy) \\
 &\quad + \int_{\mathbb{X}} \text{Tr}[(\sigma\sigma' + \bar{\sigma}\bar{\sigma}')(y, \cdot) D_y (D_m V(x, m, \mathcal{X}; y))] (y, m, \mathcal{X}) m(dy) \\
 &\quad + 2 \int_{\mathbb{X}} \text{Tr}(\bar{\sigma}(x, \cdot) \bar{\sigma}(y, \cdot)' D_x D_m V(x, \cdot; y)) m(dy) + \int_{\mathbb{X}} \text{Tr}(\bar{\sigma}(y, \cdot) \hat{\sigma}(\mathcal{X}_t)' D_m D_{\mathcal{X}} V(x, m, \mathcal{X}; y)) m(dy) \\
 &\quad + \iint_{\mathbb{X}} \text{Tr}(\bar{\sigma}(y, \cdot) \bar{\sigma}(y', \cdot)' D_{mm}^2 V)(x, \cdot; y, y') m(dy) m(dy')
 \end{aligned}$$

Projection and Bounded-rationality in KS98

Back to KS98. What do Households need for decisions?

- Require only changes in prices $(r, w) \Rightarrow$ don't care of the distribution *per se*
- Neoclassical model: only need some moments, **the mean**, of the distribution for asset prices!

$$K = \iint_{a,z} a dg(a, z) \qquad r = \alpha K^{\alpha-1} - \delta$$

- Bounded rationality assumption:s

$$V(a, z, \mathbf{g}, Z) \equiv \bar{V}(a, z, K^h, Z)$$

- Nice property in Lions-derivative:

$$\text{with } K^h = \int_x h(x) dg(x) \qquad \frac{d}{dg} V(x, g; y) \equiv \frac{d}{dK^h} \bar{V}(x, K^h) h'(y)$$

Projection in the Master equation

- Can rewrite the Master Equation with this projection on the first-moment:

$$v = v(a, z, \mathbf{g}, Z) \equiv \bar{v}(a, z, K, Z)$$

$$\rho \bar{v} = \underbrace{\max_c u(c) + \mathcal{L}[\bar{v} | c^*]_{(a,z)}}_{\text{standard HJB continuation value}} \underbrace{-\theta(Z - \bar{Z})\bar{v}_Z + \frac{\hat{\sigma}^2}{2}\bar{v}_{ZZ}}_{\text{direct effect of risk of } Z \text{ on } \bar{v}}$$

$$+ \bar{v}_K \iint_{z,a} \underbrace{[r\tilde{a} + w\tilde{z} - c^*(\tilde{a}, \tilde{z}, K, Z)]}_{\text{change in agents } (\tilde{a}, \tilde{z}) \text{ decisions}} dg(\tilde{a}, \tilde{z})$$

- Still dependence on g , how to "get rid of it"? Not easy!
- Aggregation:

$$dK = \iint_{z,a} [r\tilde{a} + w\tilde{z} - c^*(\tilde{a}, \tilde{z}, K, Z)] dg(\tilde{a}, \tilde{z})$$

$$dK = rK + w\bar{L} - \mathcal{C}(K, Z|g)$$

with aggregate consumption function $\mathcal{C}(K, Z|g) = \iint_{z,a} c^*(\tilde{a}, \tilde{z}, K, Z) dg(\tilde{a}, \tilde{z})$

The Master Equation becomes a fusion of two familiar equations

- ▶ The Master Equation becomes a “standard” HJB (!), $v = v(a, z, \mathbf{g}, Z) \equiv \bar{v}(a, z, K, Z)$

$$\begin{aligned} \rho \bar{v} = \max_c u(c) + [wz + ra - c] \bar{v}_a + \lambda(\bar{v}(a, z', \cdot) - \bar{v}(a, z, \cdot)) \\ - \theta(Z - \bar{Z}) \bar{v}_Z + \frac{\hat{\sigma}^2}{2} \bar{v}_{ZZ} + \underbrace{[ZK^\alpha - \delta K - \mathcal{C}(K, Z|g)]}_{=dK} \bar{v}_K \end{aligned}$$

- Only issue: $\mathcal{C}(t, K, Z|g)$ still depends on g
- Looks exactly like the fusion of two standard models
 - RBC: $v = v(K, Z)$

$$\rho v = \max_c u(C) + [ZK^\alpha - \delta K - C]v_K - \theta(Z - \bar{Z})v_Z + \frac{\hat{\sigma}^2}{2} v_{ZZ}$$

- Aiyagari: $v = v(a, z)$

$$\rho v = \max_c u(c) + [wz + ra - c]v_a + \lambda(v(a, z', \cdot) - v(a, z, \cdot))$$

Agents' decision and global dynamical system

- ▶ With the Master equation and $v = \bar{v}(a, z, K, Z)$ we obtain the individual decision,

$$c^*(\tilde{a}, \tilde{z}, K, Z) = u'^{-1}(\bar{v}_a(a, z, K, Z))$$

- ▶ Hence we get the dynamical system:

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} da = [z \overbrace{(1-\alpha)ZK^\alpha}^{=w} + \overbrace{(\alpha ZK^{\alpha-1} - \delta)}^{=r} a - c^*(a, z, K, Z)] dt \\ dz = \gamma(z) dJ_t \quad \text{intensity} \quad \lambda(z) \\ dK = (ZK^\alpha - \delta K - \mathcal{C}(K, Z|g)) dt \\ dZ = \mu(Z) dt + \hat{\sigma} dB_t^0 \end{array} \right.$$

- ▶ For a guess of $g(a, z)$ and $\mathcal{C}(K, Z|g) = \iint_{a, z} c^*(a, z, K, Z) g(a, z)$ we have a complete characterization of the system

⇒ Can get a Kolmogorov forward equation for the system (a, z, K, Z) (!!)

“Master-” Kolmogorov Forward for the global system

- ▶ For a guess of $g(a, z)$ and $\mathcal{C}(K, Z|g) = \iint_{a,z} c^*(a,z,K,Z)g(a,z)$, the Master-KFE for states $x = (a, z, K, Z) \in \tilde{\mathbb{X}}$ writes:

$$0 = -\partial_a [s(x, \bar{v}_a)\tilde{g}(x)] + \sum_n \lambda(z^n)\tilde{g}(x^n) - \lambda(z)\tilde{g}(x) \\ - \partial_K [(ZK^\alpha - \delta K - \mathcal{C}(K, Z|g))\tilde{g}(t, \tilde{x})] - \partial_Z [\mu(Z)\tilde{g}(x)] + \hat{\sigma}\partial_{ZZ}^2\tilde{g}(x)$$

- ▶ Easy to get from the Master-HJB's operator using standard finite-difference methods
- ▶ Consistency condition for rational-expectation equilibrium:

$$dg(a, z)|_{K,Z} = \int_{\tilde{\mathbb{X}}} \delta_{\{\tilde{K}=K, \tilde{Z}=Z\}} d\tilde{g}(a, z, \tilde{K}, \tilde{Z})$$

- Consistency for the first moment: $\iint_{a,z} adg(a, z^n) = \int_{\tilde{\mathbb{X}}} \delta_{\{\tilde{K}=K, \tilde{Z}=Z\}} ad\tilde{g}(a, z^n, \tilde{K}, \tilde{Z}) = K$

Summary and numerical methods

1. General Master equation

- Summarize MFG systems with one equation: $v(a, z, g, Z)$

2. Master HJB for “bounded-rational” agents: $v = \bar{v}(a, z, K, Z)$

- Start from guess $g(a, z)$ and $\mathcal{C}(K, Z|g)$
- Solve Master-HJB: standard finite difference methods
- Get individual decisions $c^*(a, z, K, Z)$ and operator $\mathcal{A}[\bar{v}]$ for (a, z, K, Z)

3. Master-Kolmogorov forward for (a, z, K, Z)

- Obtain distribution \tilde{g} over all states (a, z, K, Z) for “free” with $\mathcal{A}^*[\tilde{g}]$
- Update g thanks to \tilde{g} and update $\mathcal{C}(K, Z|g)$
- Obtain Capital dynamics: potentially very non-linear!!

$$dK = ZK^\alpha - \delta K - \mathcal{C}(K, Z|g)$$

► Procedure standard and general

- No need for deep-learning/splines/polynomials: use standard finite difference methods
- Method robust to higher-order moments (in the paper!)

$$K_2 = \iint_{a,z} (a-K)^2 dg(a, z) \dots \Rightarrow \text{imply additional terms in HJB (+ larger state-space)}$$

Master-Equation with higher moments:

► HJB with 2nd-order moments:

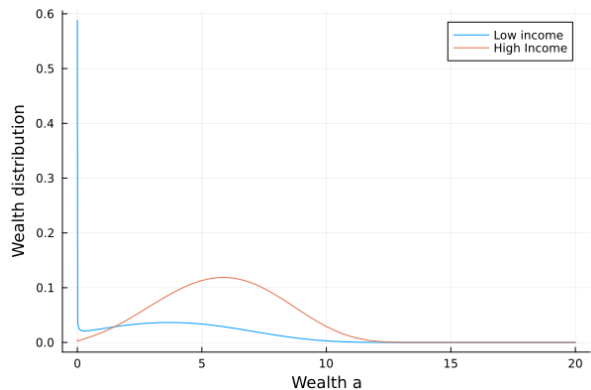
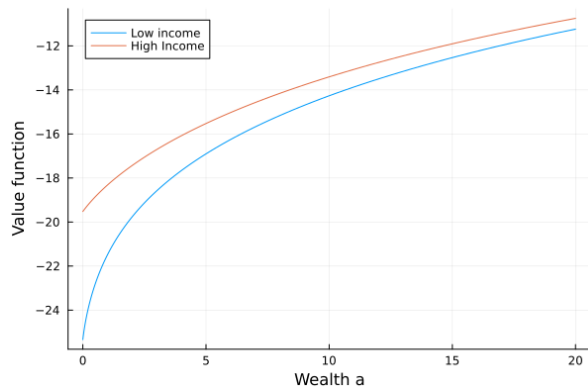
$$v = v(a, z, \mathbf{g}, Z) \equiv \bar{v}(a, z, K, K_2, L_2, KL, Z) = \bar{v}(a, z, K, K_2, Z)$$

- $K_2 = \mathbb{V}\text{ar}(a)$, $L_2 = \mathbb{V}\text{ar}(z)$, $KL = \mathbb{C}\text{ov}(a, z)$
- In KS98, you don't need all of them!

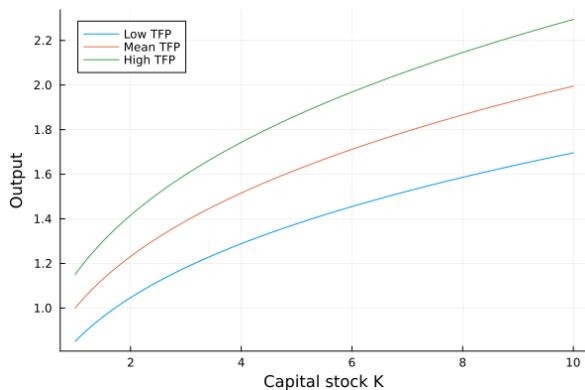
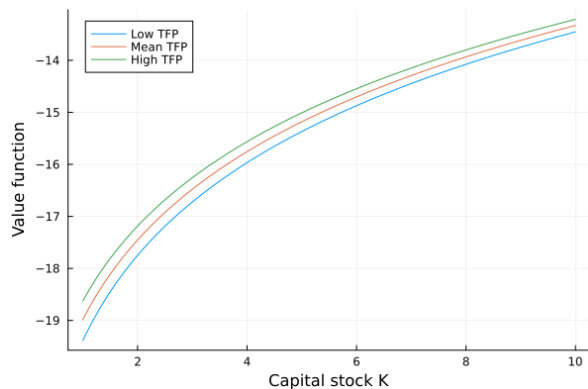
$$\begin{aligned} \rho \bar{v} = \max_c u(c) + (wz + ra - c) \bar{v}_a + \lambda(\bar{v}(a, z', \cdot) - \bar{v}(a, z, \cdot)) - \theta(Z - \bar{Z}) \bar{v}_Z + \frac{\hat{\sigma}^2}{2} \bar{v}_{ZZ} \\ + \underbrace{[ZK^\alpha - \delta K - \mathbb{E}^g[c^*]]}_{=dK} \bar{v}_K + \underbrace{[-\mathbb{C}\text{ov}^g(a, c^*)]}_{dK_2} \bar{v}_{K_2} \end{aligned}$$

- Similarly, solve for dynamical system (a, z, K, K_2, Z) , the “master” KFE and then plug g back into $\mathbb{E}^g[c^*] = \iint c^* dg$ and $\mathbb{C}\text{ov}^g(a, c^*) = \iint (a - \bar{a})(c^* - \bar{c}) dg$
- Theoretical insight:
if $\bar{v}_{K_2} > 0$ and $\mathbb{C}\text{ov}^g(a, c^*) > 0$, it reinforces the precautionary saving motive and lower value

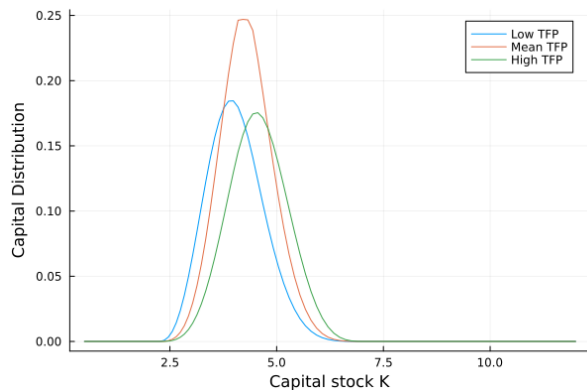
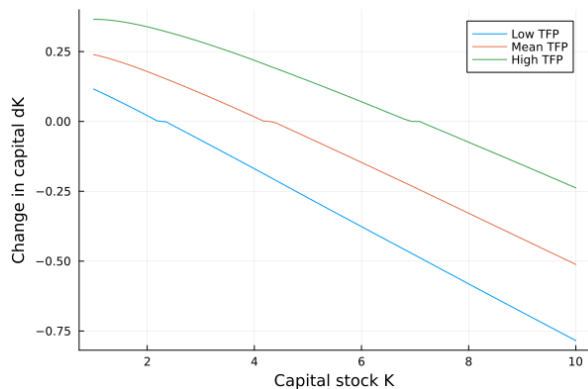
Numerical experiment - Aiyagari model



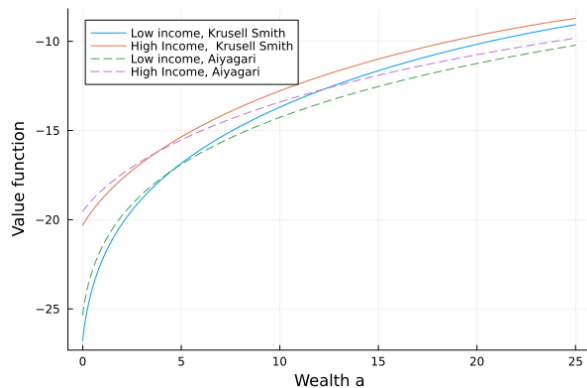
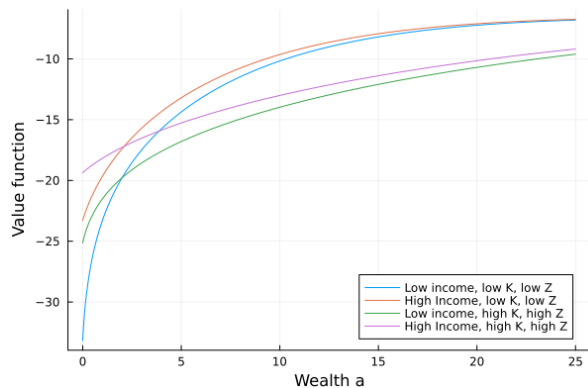
Numerical experiment - Brock-Mirman / RBC



Numerical experiment - Brock-Mirman / RBC



Numerical experiment - Master equation, Krusell-Smith



Conclusion

- ▶ In this project, I propose a new method to solve Heterogeneous Agent Models with aggregate risk
- ▶ Next steps:
 - Properties of KS98: is the model Markovian in capital? i.e. is the consumption function $\mathcal{C}(K, Z|g)$ robust to change in g (e.g. to change in $K_2 = \mathbb{V}\text{ar}(a)$).
 - Comparison with Krusell-Smith's linearity in capital flow
 - Overidentification test for SMM: do agents need second-order (or higher-order) moments when making their decision?
 - Solving a “more interesting” macro-finance model:
Model with a meaningful distribution of portfolios, exposure, and impact of aggregate risk