



Introduction

Mini-Course: Heterogenous Agent Macro

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Plan

1. Introduction
2. Programming principles
3. Computers
4. Coding
5. Consumption-Saving

Introduction

- **Central economic topics:**

1. Consumption-saving behavior under risk and constraints
2. Heterogeneous agents in general equilibrium models
 - 2.1 Long-run effects on aggregate outcomes
 - 2.2 Short-run effects on aggregate outcomes
 - 2.3 Drivers of inequality

- **History:**

1. Heathcote et al. (2009), »Quantitative Macroeconomics with Heterogeneous Households«
2. Kaplan and Violante (2018), »Microeconomic Heterogeneity and Macroeconomic Shocks«
3. Cherrier et al. (2023), »Household Heterogeneity in Macroeconomic Models: A Historical Perspective«

- **Central technical method:** *Programming in Python*

Macroeconomic Models with Heterogeneous Agents

- **Model components:**

1. Optimizing individual agents (households + firms)
2. Idiosyncratic and aggregate risk
3. Information flows (who knows what when \Rightarrow often everything)
4. Market clearing (Walras vs. search-and-match)

- **Insurance/markets:**

Complete \rightarrow idiosyncratic risk insured away \sim representative agent

Incomplete \rightarrow agents need to *self-insure*

- **Heterogeneity:**

Ex ante in preferences, abilities etc.

Ex post after realization of idiosyncratic shocks

- **HANC:** Heterogeneous Agent *Neo-Classical* model
(Aiyagari-Bewley-Hugget-Imrohoroglu or Standard Incomplete Market model)
- **HANK:** Heterogeneous Agent *New Keynesian* model
(i.e. include price and wage setting frictions)

- **Topics:**

1. Consumption-saving
2. Stationary equilibrium
3. Transitional dynamics
4. HANK models

- **Teaching philosophy:**

1. Go in depth - *from theory to implementation*
2. Not a literature review - *key entrances to literature*

Exam

- **Format:** 36 hours take-home
- **Baseline:** *One of the models from the course*
- **Questions:**
 1. Implement an extension (in Python code)
 2. Analyze the economic dynamics

1. **Assumed knowledge:** Similar to my undergraduate course
Introduction to Programming and Numerical Analysis

- 1.1 Python

- 1.2 VSCode

- 1.3 git

Preparation: **video playlist** (~10 hours at normal speed)

2. **Updated Python:** Install (or re-install) newest Anaconda

3. **Packages:** `pip install quantecon, EconModel, consav`

4. **GEModel tools:**

- 4.1 Clone the GEModelTools repository

- 4.2 Locate repository in command prompt

- 4.3 Run `pip install -e .`

Programming principles

References (pointers)

- **Variables are references to an instance of an object**
- A **class** defines the **type** of an object
 - .attribute, state
 - .method(), action (incl. changing self)
- Arithmetic operators (e.g. +, *, /, //, **, %) combine objects
- **= assigns a reference** (*not a copy!*)

Question: What does a end up as? What if a = [1,2,3]?

```
1 a = np.array([1,2,3])
2 b = a
3 c = a[1:] # slicing
4 b[0] = 3 # indexing
5 c[0] = 3
```

Containers and inheritance

- **Atomic types:** int, float, str, bool, etc.
- **Containers** list, tuple, dict, set, np.array, etc.
- **Inheritance** (build from def. of »parent«, class Child(Parent))
e.g. $\text{integer} \subset \text{scalar} \subset \text{number}$
- **Mutables** (e.g. list, np.array) can change in-place
 1. **Augmentation operators** ($+=$, $-=$ etc.)
 2. **Slicing:** $x[:] = x + y$
- **Immutable** (e.g. atomic types and tuples) can never change

Questions: What does y end up as?

```
1 x = np.array([1,2,3])
2 y = x
3 x += 1
4 x[:] = x + 1
5 x = x + 1
```

Functions

- **Functions are objects** (can e.g. be arguments in functions)

Unlike in math:

1. Can change its arguments (side-effects)
 2. Can call itself (recursion)
- Decorators change function behavior (e.g. @numba.njit)
 - Variables can both be **local scope** (good) or **global scope** (bad)

Questions: What is the output?

```
1 a = 1
2 def f(x):
3     return x+a
4 print(f(1))
5 a = 2
6 print(f(1))
```

Computational tree and branches

- **Comparison** (`==`, `!=`, `<`, `<=`, `not`, `and`, or etc.)
- **Conditionals** (`if`, `elif`, `else`)
- **Loops** (`for`, `while`, `continue`, `break`)
- **Convergence** (tolerance in optimizer or root-finder/equation-solver)

Questions: How could this be implemented with a while loop?

```
1 x = x0
2 for i in range(n):
3     y = evaluate(x)
4     if check(y): break
5     x = update(x,y)
6 else:
7     raise ValueError('did not converge')
```

Everything is discrete

- **Never use exactness for decimal numbers**
 - Order of computation matter
 - Best with numbers are around 1 (underflow and overflow)
- Division, exp, log etc. (costly) approximations
- **Function approximation and interpolation often needed**

Questions: Which are True and which are False?

```
1 print(0.1 + 0.2 == 0.3)
2 print(0.5 + 0.5 == 1.0)
3 print(np.isclose(0.1+0.2,0.3))
4 print(np.isclose(1e-200*1e200*1e200*1e-200,1.0))
5 print(np.isinf(1e-200*(1e200*1e200)*1e-200))
6 print(np.isclose(1e200*(1e-200*1e-200)*1e200,0.0))
```

Pseudo random numbers

- **Only one seed** (randomness not assured across seeds)
- State of random number generator can be reset
- **Monte Carlo** simulation and integration
 1. Static alternative: Use **quadrature rules**
 2. Dynamic alternative: Discretize and derive **transition matrix**

Questions: What is z equal to?

```
1 rng = np.random.default_rng(123)
2 s = rng.bit_generator.state
3 x = rng.normal(size=5)
4 y = rng.normal(size=5)
5 rng.bit_generator.state = s
6 z = rng.normal(size=5)
```

Documentation and debugging

- **No code is self-explanatory** (for others, incl. future you)
- **Write documentation** (use *github-copilot*)
 1. The comments explain humans what the code does.
 2. The code makes the computer do what the comments say
- Important **design patterns**:
 1. Use namespaces (be aware of scope) and meaningful names
 2. No repetition of code-lines \Rightarrow single-purpose functions/methods
 3. Use assert (also print and plot intermediate results)
 4. Use try-except
- **Run from top to bottom** (make shortcut)
Replication: datacodestandard.org
- **Debugging**
 1. Errors are (almost) always simple
 2. Go through code step-by-step (*manually* or *debugger*)

- **High level languages:**

1. **MATLAB:** Costly and not better.
2. **R:** Better at statistics and data work, but not pure numerical work.
3. **Julia:** Faster than Python (incl. numba), slower than C++.
Smallish community.

- **Low level languages:**

1. **C++:** State-of-the-art for fastest code.
2. **Fortran:** No benefits relative to C++ (only legacy...).

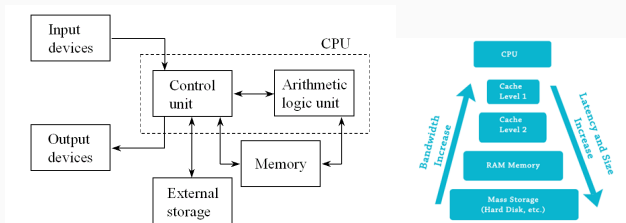
- **Hardware:**

1. CPU: Most complex cores.
2. GPU: More cores, but more specialized at linear algebra.
3. TPU: Even more specialized at AI (incl. machine learning)

Computers

CPUs are complex

- **Instruction set** (assembly) is not just add, subtract, etc.
 1. Work on vectors (SIMD) \Rightarrow *homogeneity is good*
 2. Out-of-order execution \Rightarrow *predictability is good*
 3. Caching \Rightarrow *latest read memory can be accessed quickly*



- **Compilers can optimize a lot** \Rightarrow use existing libraries
- **Parallelisation:** *Start up costs*
 1. **Hardware:** Cores vs. CPUs vs. sockets vs. computers
 2. **Software:** Shared memory (e.g. OpenMP) or not (e.g. MPI)

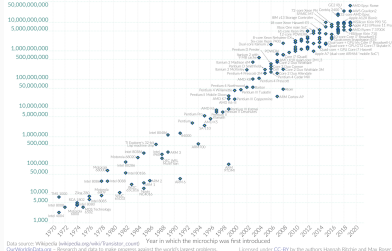
Moore vs. Amdahl

Moore's Law: The number of transistors on microchips doubles every two years.

Moore's law describes the empirical regularity that the number of transistors on integrated circuits doubles approximately every two years. This advancement is important for other aspects of technological progress in computing – such as processing speed or the price of computers.

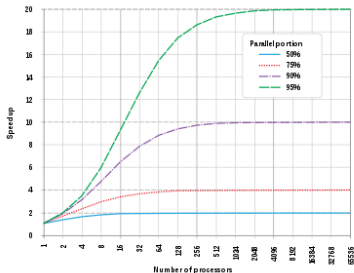
Our World in Data

Transistor count



Data source: https://www.kit-ebooks.org/wiki/Transistor_count
OurWorldinData - Research and data to make progress against the world's biggest problems.
Licensed under CC-BY by the authors Hans-Robert Hoth and Max Roser.

Amdahl's Law



1. **Moore's law:** Exponential growth in computational power
 - 1.1 Originally: Faster cores (calculations per time unit)
 - 1.2 Now: More cores per CPU
2. **Amdahl's law:** Sequential code becomes the bottleneck

Need for speed

- **Computation time vs programmer time**

Use not-too-model-specific insights \Rightarrow *better algorithm*

- **Premature optimization is the root of all evil!**

Use *line-profiler*!

1. Use available code: Stand on the shoulder of giants
2. In numpy: Use vectorization
3. Else: Use numba

- **Automatic differentiation?** Use JAX (or PyTorch)

- **Faster still?** Implement bottleneck in C++ and call from Python

Coding

Coding: Fractions

- **Notebook:** 01. Fractions.ipynb
- **Task 1:** Implement a class defining a fraction and allowing for $a+b$
- **Task 2:** Implement a class for defining a list of fractions, which you can loop through

- **Notebook:** 02. Debugging.ipynb

- **Notebook:** 03. NeedForSpeed.ipynb

Coding: EconModelClass

- **Code:** EconModel
- **Notebook:**
EconModelNotebooks\01. Using the EconModelClass.ipynb
(not the C++ part)
- **Video:** [Youtube - EconModel](#)

Consumption-Saving

Next slide set