

# Innovation: The Bright Side of Common Ownership?<sup>\*</sup>

Miguel Antón<sup>†</sup>    Florian Ederer<sup>‡</sup>    Mireia Giné<sup>§</sup>    Martin Schmalz<sup>¶</sup>

May 11, 2021

## Abstract

A firm has inefficiently low incentives to innovate when other firms benefit from its innovative activity and the innovating firm does not capture the full surplus of its innovations. We theoretically show under which conditions common ownership of firms can mitigate this impediment to corporate innovation. Common ownership increases innovation when technological spillovers are sufficiently large relative to product market spillovers. Otherwise, the business-stealing effect of innovation dominates and common ownership reduces innovation. Empirically, product market spillovers (as measured by Jaffe and Mahalanobis proximity in product market space) decrease the effect of common ownership on innovation inputs and outputs, whereas technology spillovers (proximity in patent space) increase the effect. The sign and magnitude of relationship between common ownership and corporate innovation therefore varies considerably across the universe of firms. An interquartile range increase from the 25th to the 75th percentile of common ownership is associated with between -20% to +20% changes in citation-weighted patents, depending on the relative strength of product and technology spillovers. Our results inform the debate about the welfare effects of increasing common ownership among U.S. corporations.

JEL Codes: O31, L20, L40

---

<sup>\*</sup>We are grateful to Daron Acemoglu, Nick Bloom, Luke Taylor, Raffaella Sadun, Regina Seibel, Fiona Scott Morton, John Van Reenen, #EconTwitter and seminar audiences at Berlin HSG, Humboldt University, NBER PIE, IESE, MadBar Workshop, Michigan, and Yale for helpful comments. We thank Nick Bloom, John Van Reenen, and, in particular, Brian Lucking for generously sharing their data and Pedro Martínez Bruera for outstanding research assistance. Antón acknowledges the financial support of the Department of Economy and Knowledge of the Generalitat de Catalunya (Ref. 2014 SGR 1496), and of the Ministry of Science, Innovation, and Universities (Ref. PGC2018-097335-A-I00). Schmalz acknowledges funding from Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft under Germany's Excellence Strategy – EXC 2126/1–390838866.

<sup>†</sup>IESE Business School, [manton@iese.edu](mailto:manton@iese.edu)

<sup>‡</sup>Yale School of Management and Cowles Foundation, [florian.ederer@yale.edu](mailto:florian.ederer@yale.edu)

<sup>§</sup>IESE Business School, ECGI, and WRDS, [magine@iese.edu](mailto:magine@iese.edu)

<sup>¶</sup>University of Oxford Saïd Business School, CEPR, ECGI, CESifo, and C-SEB, [martin.schmalz@sbs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:martin.schmalz@sbs.ox.ac.uk)

# 1 Introduction

Two secular trends have recently led to a spirited discussion among academics and policy makers regarding the competitiveness of the U.S. economy. First, increasing levels of product market concentration, as measured at the national industry level, have been accompanied by increasing profitability, a decline of the labor share of income, rising inequality, declining business dynamism, and, perhaps most importantly, declining innovation.<sup>1</sup> Second, in addition to rising product market concentration and declining innovation, common ownership has also increased: firms are increasingly commonly-owned by a decreasing number of institutional investors.<sup>2</sup> For example, Softbank’s Vision Fund recently attracted the attention of a number of competition authorities by acquiring large stakes in rivals in the ride-hailing industry and exerting its influence to effectuate a lessening of competition in an alleged attempt to “dominate ride-hailing” ([The Economist, 2018](#)). As a result, competition authorities have begun investigations to study the competitive effects of common ownership of industry competitors by mutual funds, hedge funds, and other types of investment vehicles (e.g., Berkshire Hathaway) that pool resources from a large number of investors, but concentrate control over portfolio firms.<sup>3</sup> Although much attention has focused on the empirical investigation of anticompetitive effects of common ownership, much less work has been devoted to its procompetitive and potentially welfare-enhancing role.

In this paper we investigate, both theoretically and empirically, how corporate innovation depends on common ownership. We show theoretically that the sign and the magnitude of the common ownership effect on corporate innovation depends on the relative importance of technological spillovers and business-stealing repercussions of innovative activity. We show empirically that the sign and magnitude of the relationship between common ownership and innovation varies considerably across the universe of publicly listed U.S. corporations, in line with the theory’s

---

<sup>1</sup>[CEA \(2016\)](#) provides an early overview of these trends. See [Philippon and Gutierrez \(2017\)](#), [Gutiérrez and Philippon \(2017\)](#), [De Loecker et al. \(2020\)](#), and [Akcigit and Ates \(2021\)](#) for a formal quantification and analysis of their macroeconomic implications.

<sup>2</sup>[Backus et al. \(2020\)](#) provide a recent comprehensive analysis of common ownership of the largest U.S. corporations. See [Azar \(2012\)](#) for an earlier documentation of this trend and [Schmalz \(2018, 2021\)](#) for reviews of the theoretical and empirical literature on common ownership.

<sup>3</sup>Mentions of the concerns and investigations by competition authorities and international institutions include, among many others, [OECD \(2017\)](#), [European Competition Commission \(2017\)](#), [Federal Trade Commission \(2018\)](#), [Vestager \(2018\)](#), and [PTI \(2020\)](#).

predictions.

We begin our analysis by introducing common ownership in a canonical model of (process) innovation and strategic competition with both technology and product market spillovers between firms. Our model allows for product differentiation, technology spillovers, and common ownership to vary across all firm pairs. This permits us to study common ownership links between firms across the entire economy rather than just in a single industry. In the presence of technological spillovers, innovation in one firm not only generates benefits in the firm that produced the innovation, but also in technologically related firms. This surplus appropriability problem is well known to lead to inefficiently low ex-ante incentives to innovate (Bolton and Harris, 1999; Jones and Williams, 2000; Arora et al., 2020). Common ownership of technologically related firms mitigates this problem to the extent that firms act in the interest of these common owners. Common ownership can even render innovative activity profitable that would have been unprofitable if it only benefited the innovating firm itself. Prior literature has suggested such beneficial knowledge transfers predominantly in the context of private firms (Lindsey, 2008; Eldar et al., 2020; González-Uribe, 2020) or among investors (Stein, 2008; Botelho, 2018), whereas we focus on public firms.

However, there is a second dimension affecting the firm’s innovation decisions, which concerns the interaction between innovation and product market competition. Innovations resulting from R&D expenditures naturally lead to the innovator stealing market share and profits from firms competing in the same or related product markets (Bloom et al., 2013). When the competitors are predominantly owned by separate groups of shareholders, this procompetitive effect of innovation is desirable for the innovating company’s shareholders. However, when the same shareholders own both the innovator and its product market competitors, such business stealing is less desirable.<sup>4</sup> Hence, common ownership can reduce the incentives to innovate when the business-stealing effect is stronger than the aforementioned technological spillover effect.<sup>5</sup> Our theoretical framework combines both of these effects and provides conditions that determine which one of them dominates.

---

<sup>4</sup>We abstract away from the potential role of common *debtholders* in inducing reduced competition, which is the focus of empirical work by Saidi and Streit (2021).

<sup>5</sup>Consistent with this idea, González-Uribe (2020) shows that technological spillovers amongst companies sharing common VCs are more substantial between portfolio companies that are not in direct competition for the VCs’ resources because different funds finance them.



of 0.015), IBM is not close to Intel and Motorola (product market distances of 0.01). As shown in Table 1, these four firms also have a significant degree of common ownership, particularly towards the end of our sample period in 2015. BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street are all represented among the top owners of each of the four companies. However, large concentrated blockholdings by Berkshire Hathaway and ValueAct illustrate that common ownership interests are heterogeneous and asymmetric across firms. Therefore, the degree of common ownership between firms may differentially affect their innovation decisions as a function of the firms’ technological and product market proximities. Our central theoretical prediction is that, depending on firms’ relative distances in technology and product market space, common ownership has innovation effects of opposite sign and varying magnitude.

However, whether the theoretical predictions about the relationship between common ownership and innovation are indeed helpful in organizing the data is a question that requires more than just anecdotal evidence. We empirically show that both effects exist and that they lead to substantial heterogeneity of the relationship between common ownership and innovation across firms. To do so, we use the methodology pioneered by Bloom et al. (2013) and Lucking et al. (2018) to measure technology and product market spillover from 1985 to 2015. We combine these data with information about the ownership of firms, in particular to which extent the largest owners of one firm also hold shares in other firms using the “kappa” measure advocated by Backus et al. (2020). Using panel regressions we find an ambiguous relationship *on average* between common ownership and corporate innovation as measured by innovation inputs (scaled R&D expenditures) and innovation outputs (citation-weighted number of patents and total stock market value of patents). However, throughout all of our specifications innovation is more positively related to common ownership when technological spillovers are higher, whereas more common ownership is associated with less innovation when product market spillovers are greater. As a result (and as predicted by our theory), common ownership and corporate innovation are positively related when technology spillovers are large relative to product market business stealing incentives and are negatively related otherwise. Finally, the relationship between common ownership and innovation varies considerably across the publicly listed firms. An interquartile range increase from the 25th to the 75th percentile of common ownership can be associated either with a 20% decrease

or increase in citation-weighted patents or the market value of patents depending on the relative strength of product and technology spillovers.

Given that incentives to compete are tightly linked to incentives to innovate (D’Aspremont and Jacquemin, 1988; Hoskisson et al., 2002; Aghion et al., 2005; Bloom et al., 2013) our paper lies at the intersection of corporate innovation, corporate strategy, and corporate governance. The extant literature focuses on the potential benefits of cooperative R&D, on how innovation is affected by mergers, or how it relates to institutional ownership.<sup>6</sup> One of this literature’s primary objectives is to examine the underinvestment of R&D and the welfare effects of moving from a noncooperative to a cooperative regime in R&D. For example, Kamien et al. (1992) identify conditions under which a cartelized research joint venture (RJV) is optimal. Leahy and Neary (1997) show that R&D cooperation leads to more output, innovation, and welfare when spillovers are positive. We adopt these canonical models of innovation and product market competition and re-examine their conclusions in light of the fact that firms with different names do not necessarily have disjoint sets of investors.

The most closely related paper to our own analysis is by Bloom et al. (2013) who theoretically study the effect of product market and technology spillovers on innovation and provide economy-wide empirical evidence for the importance of both effects, but without considering the role of common ownership. They estimate the extent of spillovers in a panel of US firms from 1981 to 2001 and find that gross social returns to R&D are at least twice as high as the private returns. Their results imply that the internalization of those technological spillovers is a matter of first-order welfare importance.<sup>7</sup> We demonstrate that common ownership can internalize product market and technology externalities between the firms and thereby significantly affect the level and heterogeneity of corporate innovation. Our paper is also related to López and Vives (2019) who theoretically study the effect of (symmetric and identical) common ownership on innovation

---

<sup>6</sup>For the interplay between competition and innovation see, for example, Brander and Spencer (1983), Spence (1984), Katz (1986), D’Aspremont and Jacquemin (1988), Grossman and Helpman (1991), Kamien et al. (1992), Suzumura (1992), Aghion and Howitt (1992), and Leahy and Neary (1997). For comprehensive reviews of the literature see Jones (2005) and Gilbert (2006).

<sup>7</sup>Their approach builds on prior work by Jaffe (1988) who assigns firms to technology and product market space, but does not examine the distance between firms in both these spaces. Similarly, Branstetter and Sakakibara (2002) empirically examine the effects of technology closeness and product market overlap on patenting in Japanese research consortia. Lucking et al. (2018) extend the results of Bloom et al. (2013) to later time periods.

of several symmetric industry competitors.<sup>8</sup> In their model, all firms compete in the same industry and produce undifferentiated products. Technology spillovers and common ownership shares are identical between them. In contrast, our model also allows for common ownership of firms in the entire economy, including potentially in separate industries. To reflect that greater scope, we allow for product differentiation, technology spillovers, and common ownership to vary across firms. These generalizations are crucial to predict and understand the variation of the effect of common ownership on innovation found in the data.

Several recent contributions provide distinct empirical investigations of the relationship between various measures of common ownership and innovation. Our analysis differs from all of them in the theoretical model that guides our empirical design and informs the interpretation of our results. Our analysis may help explain the substantial variation in the sign and magnitude of common ownership effects on innovation across these different papers. [Li et al. \(2021\)](#) study common venture capital ownership of pharmaceutical startups and find evidence suggesting that common ownership improves innovation efficiency. In contrast to their work, we focus on a broad sample of public firms. [He and Huang \(2017\)](#) examine the question whether common *blockholders* have an effect on corporate innovation on average. In contrast, we study the entire institutional ownership structure of the firm, and examine whether the degree of technology spillovers and product market spillovers differentially affect the relationship between common ownership and innovation. [Kostovetsky and Manconi \(2020\)](#) show that increases in shared institutional ownership caused by index additions are followed by more citations of the patents of the firm that was added to the index. [Borochin et al. \(2020\)](#) provide evidence that the sign of the relationship between patent output and non-self citations and common ownership depends on the type of institutional owner creating the common ownership link. [Chiao et al. \(2020\)](#) argue that common ownership (as measured by industry-level MHHID in a sample ending in 2008) is on average negatively related to patent grants, citations, and R&D expenditures. They also find that common ownership protects is negatively associated with the likelihood that a commonly-owned firm are involved in patent litigation and positively related to the speed of settlement of lawsuits between commonly-owned firms. Finally, the empirical evidence of [Geng et al. \(2016\)](#) suggests that common ownership can

---

<sup>8</sup>[Stenbacka and Van Moer \(2020\)](#) theoretically study how common ownership affects the product innovation decisions under duopoly and distinguishes between input spillovers and output spillovers.

mitigate hold-up problems between firms owning complementary patent portfolios. However, the strength of the effect depends on the type of institutional owner.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the theoretical framework that guides the empirical analysis. Section 3 describes the data. The empirical results are presented and discussed in Section 4. Section 5 concludes.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 Setup

We analyze the role of common ownership and its interplay with product market and technological spillovers in the canonical model of innovation and product market competition pioneered by D’Aspremont and Jacquemin (1988). By doing so, we also extend the model of Bloom et al. (2013) which studies the effect of product market and technology spillovers on innovation, to allow for overlapping ownership between firms. Our theoretical setup is also related to the model of López and Vives (2019) which studies the interplay between innovation and common ownership, but we allow for both product market and technology spillovers as well as common ownership weights to differ across firms.

Firms’ innovation choices, product quantities, prices, and profits are endogenously co-determined by the degree of common ownership as well as product market and technological spillovers. In line with the existing literature on common ownership, we assume that ownership is exogenous.

#### 2.1.1 Product Market Competition

Consider an economy with  $n$  firms which each produce a single differentiated product. There are no industries per se, but all firms compete with each other depending on how closely related their products are. In our model the welfare-enhancing effects of common ownership are due to economy-wide horizontal and vertical externalities that arise from technology spillovers. Although strictly speaking we present a partial equilibrium model, all of our insights regarding the impact of common ownership under different technology and product market spillovers also hold in a general



equilibrium model.<sup>9</sup>

Each firm is owned by a majority owner and a set of minority owners. Aside from a literal interpretation, this assumption can also be understood as a metaphor for an explicit or implicit coalition of shareholders that jointly hold an effective majority of the voting stocks.<sup>10</sup>

Following [Singh and Vives \(1984\)](#) and [Häckner \(2000\)](#), we derive demand from the behavior of a representative consumer with the following quadratic utility function:

$$U(\mathbf{q}) = A \sum_{i=1}^n q_i - \frac{1}{2} \left( a_{ii} \sum_{i=1}^n q_i^2 + 2 \sum_{i \neq j} a_{ij} q_i q_j \right) \quad (1)$$

where  $q_i$  is the quantity of product  $i$ ,  $\mathbf{q} = (q_1, \dots, q_n)$  is the vector of all quantities,  $A > 0$  represents overall product quality,  $a_{ii} > 0$  measures the concavity of the utility function, and  $a_{ij}$  represents the degree of substitutability between two differentiated products  $i$  and  $j$ .  $a_{ii} > a_{ij} \geq 0$  ensures that the products are (imperfect) substitutes. Without loss of generality and to simplify notation, we set  $a_{ii} = 1$ . The higher the value of  $a_{ij}$ , the more alike the products are. The resulting consumer maximization problem yields linear demand for each product  $i$ , such that the firms face symmetric inverse demand functions given by

$$p_i(\mathbf{q}) = A - q_i - \sum_{j \neq i}^n a_{ij} q_j, \quad (2)$$

where  $i = 1, 2, \dots, n$ . Because  $1 > a_{ij} \geq 0$ , a firm's quantity  $q_i$  has a greater impact on the price  $p_i$  for its own product than the quantity of any other firm  $q_j$ .<sup>11</sup> The parameter  $a_{ij}$  measures product homogeneity or product market spillovers. Given the symmetry of the empirical measure of product market spillovers ([Bloom et al., 2013](#)) which we describe in Section 3, we assume that this parameter is symmetric between firm  $i$  and  $j$ ,  $a_{ij} = a_{ji}$ . If  $a_{ij}$  is small, the products of firm  $i$

---

<sup>9</sup>For example, [Pellegrino \(2019\)](#) and [Ederer and Pellegrino \(2021\)](#) model and estimate a general equilibrium hedonic linear demand system in which all the  $n$  firms in the economy compete with each other and the investors (or managers) controlling the firms' operations consume an outside good (e.g., leisure).

<sup>10</sup>[Olson and Cook \(2017\)](#) and [Shekita \(2020\)](#) discuss examples of explicit coalitions. [Moskalev \(2020\)](#) shows conditions under which shareholders with similar portfolios will optimally vote the same way, and therefore will be regarded as an implicit coalition or a single block by managers.

<sup>11</sup>In the main part of the paper we focus on the Cournot competition case where quantity choices are strategic substitutes. However, our results for Bertrand competition (see Appendix) where prices are strategic complements are essentially identical. Although we assume linear demands, the main results of our model generalize to nonlinear demand functions.

and  $j$  are quite distinct and thus expanding output  $q_i$  (or lowering price  $p_i$ ) does not steal much market share from the competing firm  $j$ . On the other hand, if  $a_{ij}$  is large the product varieties produced by the firms are quite similar and thus business stealing is more pronounced.

### 2.1.2 Innovation

Following the extant theoretical literature on innovation (D'Aspremont and Jacquemin, 1988; Kamien et al., 1992; Leahy and Neary, 1997; López and Vives, 2019) we model corporate innovation as decreasing marginal cost. However, this is just a particular modeling choice that ensures tractability. One could also model innovation as increasing product quality which would yield qualitatively similar results.

Firm  $i$  has a marginal cost of  $c_i$  given by

$$c_i = \bar{c} - x_i - \sum_{j \neq i}^n \beta_{ij} x_j. \quad (3)$$

Firm  $i$  can lower its marginal cost from  $\bar{c}$  by investing in innovation  $x_i$  at a cost  $\frac{\gamma}{2} x_i^2$ . A firm's marginal costs are also reduced by the innovative investments of other firms  $x_j$ , to the extent that these investments benefit firm  $i$  because of technological spillovers captured by  $0 \leq \beta_{ij} < 1$ . This means that a firm  $i$ 's investment in innovation reduces its own marginal cost  $c_i$  and to a lesser extent may also reduce the marginal cost  $c_j$  of firm  $j$ . Given the construction of the empirical measure of technological spillovers (Bloom et al., 2013) we assume that this parameter is symmetric,  $\beta_{ij} = \beta_{ji}$ . These technological spillovers are not confined within the same industry or even just to firms that produce relatively similar substitute products. Innovation benefits can spill over to technologically related firms (i.e.,  $\beta_{ij} > 0$ ) which produce goods that are entirely unrelated in terms of product market competition (i.e.,  $a_{ij} = 0$ ). The example mentioned in the introduction of IBM and its relationship to Intel and Motorola, which are close in technology space, but not in product market space, fits this case quite well.

The profits of firm  $i$  are given by

$$\pi_i = q_i \left[ A - q_i - \sum_{j \neq i}^n a_{ij} q_j - \left( \bar{c} - x_i - \sum_{j \neq i}^n \beta_{ij} x_j \right) \right] - \frac{\gamma}{2} x_i^2. \quad (4)$$

Firms choose quantities  $q_i$  and innovation levels  $x_i$  simultaneously. We obtain qualitatively similar results when firms invest in innovation before choosing quantities (or prices).

### 2.1.3 Owners

There are  $n$  owners. Each owner  $i$  owns a (majority) stake in firm  $i$  as well as shares in other firms denoted by  $j \neq i$ . [Azar \(2012\)](#) and [Backus et al. \(2020\)](#) show that owner  $i$ 's maximization problem can be restated in the following way:

$$\phi_i = \pi_i + \sum_{j \neq i} \kappa_{ij} \pi_j \quad (5)$$

where  $\kappa_{ij}$  is the weight that owner  $i$  places on the profits  $\pi_j$  of firm  $j$ . Its exact value depends on the type of ownership and corresponds to what [Edgeworth \(1881\)](#) termed the “coefficient of effective sympathy among firms.” In fact, there is a long tradition in economics of weighting shareholder interests in the objective function of the firm, including [Drèze \(1974\)](#), [Grossman and Hart \(1979\)](#), and [Rotemberg \(1984\)](#). We assume that the profit weight  $\kappa_{ij}$  is between 0 (separate ownership) and 1 (perfectly common ownership). In contrast to  $a_{ij}$  and  $\beta_{ij}$ , we do not assume that  $\kappa_{ij}$  is symmetric between any firm pair  $i$  and  $j$ , that is  $\kappa_{ij} \neq \kappa_{ji}$  in general.

We use the  $\kappa$  notation of [Backus et al. \(2020\)](#) which is equivalent to  $\lambda$  in [Azar \(2012\)](#), [López and Vives \(2019\)](#), and [Azar and Vives \(2020\)](#). Values of  $\kappa$  exceeding 1 are possible, but they lead to owners placing more weight on their competitors' profits than on their own profits. This would make it possible for common ownership to create incentives for the “tunneling” of profits from one firm to another ([Johnson et al., 2000](#)). By maximizing equation (5), the owner essentially maximizes a weighted average of her own firm as well as other firms' profits that she owns. The particular objective function given in equation (5) is a normalization. Firms do not maximize a sum that is larger than the entire economy.

## 2.2 Analysis and Comparative Statics

We now analyze the differential impact that common ownership has on corporate innovation which depends on both product market and technological spillovers. Firm  $i$ 's first-order conditions

with respect to quantity  $q_i$  and innovation  $x_i$  can be rearranged to yield the following best-response functions

$$q_i = \frac{1}{2} \left[ A - \left( \bar{c} - x_i - \sum_{j \neq i}^n \beta_{ij} x_j \right) - \sum_{j \neq i}^n a_{ij} q_j - \underbrace{\sum_{j \neq i}^n \kappa_{ij} a_{ji} q_j}_{\text{CO} \times \text{product market spillovers}} \right] \quad (6)$$

$$x_i = \frac{1}{\gamma} \left( q_i + \underbrace{\sum_{j \neq i}^n \kappa_{ij} \beta_{ji} q_j}_{\text{CO} \times \text{technology spillovers}} \right) \quad (7)$$

where given our symmetry assumptions  $a_{ij} = a_{ji}$  and  $\beta_{ij} = \beta_{ji}$ .

Note that firm innovation  $x_i$  is directly proportional to firm quantity  $q_i$  such that any increase in quantity  $q_i$  will also increase innovation  $x_i$ . These first-order conditions illustrate the driving forces of our model. When common ownership  $\kappa_{ij}$  increases, this has two distinct effects on firm  $i$ 's first-order conditions.

First, in equation (6) an increase in  $\kappa_{ij}$  reduces  $q_i$  through the interaction of common ownership and product market spillovers (i.e., the term labeled “CO  $\times$  product market spillovers”) and thereby reduces innovation  $x_i$  in equation (7). This is the anticompetitive effect of common ownership arising from product market spillovers. Effectively, increasing innovation  $x_i$  causes firm  $i$  to steal business from any firm  $j$  that is selling a substitute product. This well-known business stealing effect of innovation will be larger the greater the product homogeneity (also known as the degree of product market spillovers)  $a_{ij}$ . The more closely related the products are, the larger will be the negative profit impact on other firms of any increase in quantity. Common ownership exacerbates this negative effect of product market similarity  $a_{ij}$  on output and innovation, because common ownership weakens the firm's business-stealing incentive. The reason is that when a firm's objective function puts positive weight  $\kappa_{ij}$  on other firms' profits  $\pi_j$ , firm  $i$  will partly internalize any negative profit repercussions on these other firms by reducing innovation  $x_i$  and quantity produced  $q_i$ .

Second, in equation (7) an increase in  $\kappa_{ij}$  directly increases innovation. When firm  $i$  innovates, it benefits other firms  $j$  by lowering their marginal cost  $c_j$ . This is the procompetitive effect of

common ownership arising from technological spillovers (i.e., the term labeled “CO  $\times$  technology spillovers”). The greater the technological proximity  $\beta_{ij}$  between the two firms, the larger is this technology spillover effect. This is because firm  $j$  which is more closely located in technology space to firm  $i$ , will benefit more from the firm  $i$ ’s innovation. Common ownership strengthens this technology spillover effect because with a positive weight  $\kappa_{ij}$  in its objective function, firm  $i$  partly internalizes the positive externality of innovation on other firms  $j$  that it would otherwise ignore. This output-increasing technology spillover effect is still present when the firms have no product market connection ( $a_{ij} = 0$ ). In graphical terms, an increase in  $\kappa_{ij}$  tilts the innovation reaction function of firm  $i$  inwards due to the product market spillovers operating through  $a_{ji}$ , but shifts it outwards due to the technology spillovers operating through  $\beta_{ji}$ .

Thus, it is immediately obvious that the effect of common ownership on innovation has an ambiguous sign: it can be either positive or negative depending on the relative strength of product market and technology spillovers. If  $a_{ij} = 0$  (i.e., product market spillovers are absent) any increase in common ownership  $\kappa_{ij}$  will raise firm innovation  $x_i$  due to technological spillovers  $\beta_{ij} \geq 0$ . Conversely, if  $\beta_{ij} = 0$  (i.e., technological spillovers do not exist), any increase in  $\kappa_{ij}$  will decrease firm innovation  $x_i$  due to product market spillovers  $a_{ij} \geq 0$ .

We can rewrite the system of first order conditions given in equations (6) and (7) in the following way

$$\begin{aligned} (\mathbf{a} + \mathbf{K} \circ \mathbf{a}') \mathbf{q} &= (A - \bar{c}) \cdot \mathbf{1} + \mathbf{B}\mathbf{x} \\ (\mathbf{K} \circ \mathbf{B}') \mathbf{q} &= \gamma \mathbf{x} \end{aligned}$$

where  $\circ$  is the Hadamard (element-by-element) product,  $\mathbf{1}$  is an  $n \times 1$  vector of ones,  $\mathbf{a}$  is the product similarity matrix,  $\mathbf{B}$  is the technology spillover matrix, and  $\mathbf{K}$  is the common ownership

matrix. The matrices  $\mathbf{a}$ ,  $\mathbf{B}$ , and  $\mathbf{K}$  are defined as follows:

$$\mathbf{a} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & a_{12} & \cdots & a_{1n} \\ a_{21} & 1 & \cdots & a_{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ a_{n1} & a_{n2} & \cdots & 1 \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{B} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & \beta_{12} & \cdots & \beta_{1n} \\ \beta_{21} & 1 & \cdots & \beta_{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ \beta_{n1} & \beta_{n2} & \cdots & 1 \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{K} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & \kappa_{12} & \cdots & \kappa_{1n} \\ \kappa_{21} & 1 & \cdots & \kappa_{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ \kappa_{n1} & \kappa_{n2} & \cdots & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

Defining  $\mathbf{K}_a = \mathbf{a} + \mathbf{K} \circ \mathbf{a}'$  and  $\mathbf{K}_\beta = \mathbf{K} \circ \mathbf{B}'$  and substituting the second system of first-order conditions into the first system yields the vector of equilibrium innovation choices  $\mathbf{x}^*$  given by

$$\mathbf{x}^* = \begin{bmatrix} x_1^* \\ x_2^* \\ \vdots \\ x_n^* \end{bmatrix} = (A - \bar{c}) \left[ \gamma \mathbf{K}_a \mathbf{K}_\beta^{-1} - \mathbf{B} \right]^{-1} \cdot \mathbf{1} \quad (8)$$

where  $\mathbf{1}$  is an  $n \times 1$  vector of ones.

**Proposition 1.** *Common ownership  $\kappa_{ij}$  increases equilibrium firm innovation  $x_i^*$  if and only if technological spillovers  $\beta_{ij}$  are sufficiently large relative to product market spillovers  $a_{ij}$ . The effect of  $\kappa_{ij}$  on  $x_i^*$  is decreasing in  $a_{ij}$ ,  $\frac{\partial^2 x_i^*}{\partial \kappa_{ij} \partial a_{ij}} < 0$ , and increasing in  $\beta_{ij}$ ,  $\frac{\partial^2 x_i^*}{\partial \kappa_{ij} \partial \beta_{ij}} > 0$ .*

Proposition 1 shows that without knowledge of product differentiation and technological characteristics common ownership has an ambiguous effect on innovation. This insight may help explain some of the variation in empirical findings to date on the relation between common ownership and corporate innovation (Kostovetsky and Manconi, 2020; Boroichin et al., 2020; Chiao et al., 2020). These empirical designs do not make the distinctions that our theoretical framework predicts to be crucial for determining the sign of the effect of common ownership on innovation. Depending on the relative strengths of (i) the business stealing and (ii) the technology spillover effect, common ownership can either decrease or increase corporate innovation. However, our framework also makes predictions under what conditions common ownership has a negative or a positive effect on innovation. Common ownership should decrease innovation if  $a_{ij}$  is sufficiently large relative to  $\beta_{ij}$ , whereas common ownership should increase innovation if the opposite is the

case. In other words, we expect common ownership to decrease (increase) innovation when product market spillovers are sufficiently large (small) and technology spillovers are sufficiently small (large).

In our empirical implementation we follow [Bloom et al. \(2013\)](#) and construct measures of firm-specific product market spillovers for  $\sum_{j \neq i}^n a_{ji} q_j$  and of firm-specific technological spillovers for  $\sum_{j \neq i}^n \beta_{ji} q_j$  which we interact with the firm-specific common ownership measure of  $\kappa_{ij}$  to estimate the pro- and anticompetitive effects of common ownership due to product market and technology spillovers highlighted in the first-order conditions (6) and (7).

Importantly, once we control for the relative strength of product market and technology spillovers, the sign of the effect of common ownership on innovation is unambiguous and does not depend on whether firms compete in strategic substitutes or strategic complements. This is in contrast to the analysis in [Bloom et al. \(2013\)](#) where many of the predictions depend on the form of strategic competition. The reason for this difference is that common ownership has a “direct effect” (i.e., directly affecting the objective function) rather than a “strategic effect” (i.e., indirectly affecting it through the effect on decisions of other firms) as defined by [Fudenberg and Tirole \(1984\)](#). Hence, the sign of the common ownership effect on innovation does not depend on the sign of the strategic response of other firms.

Our predictions provide theoretical guidance for our empirical analysis. Specifically, they allow us to quantify whether and under what conditions common ownership should increase or decrease innovation and how product market and technology spillovers should affect this relationship.

### 3 Data

In this section we investigate the empirical relationship between common ownership, product market competition, and innovation. Specifically, we are interested in how innovation inputs (e.g., R&D expenditures) and outputs (e.g., citation-weighted value of patents and stock market value of patents) depend on the extent to which a firm is controlled by shareholders that have significant stakes in related firms, and on the extent to which the innovation spills over to neighboring firms in the product market and technology space. As in our theoretical framework we study the economy-

wide implications of common ownership and do not restrict ourselves to the study of any particular single industry. Unless otherwise stated all of the data used for our estimations are from 1985 to 2015. Table 2 provides an overview of our summary statistics for the key variables.

### 3.1 Measures of Innovation

To proxy for a firm’s innovation  $x_i$  in our theoretical model we construct empirical innovation measures, denoted by  $INNOVATION_{it}$ , based on firm-level patent grants and citations from the database built by Kogan et al. (2017). This database has additions and corrections to the NBER patent data built by Hall et al. (2001) from the official records of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO).<sup>12</sup>

Variables	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	10%	50%	90%
<b><i>Innovation Variables</i></b>						
R&D Expenditures	28,596	245.14	953.00	0.36	14.06	359.38
$\ln(1+R\&D/Sales)$	28,596	0.11	0.20	0.00	0.05	0.22
TCW (Citation-weighted patents)	28,631	87.45	418.96	0.00	4.01	131.43
TSM (Total stock market value of patents)	28,631	930.73	5,867.81	0.00	3.31	933.43
<b><i>Proximity Measures (Bloom et al., 2013)</i></b>						
$\ln(SPILLTECH)$	28,631	15.42	1.01	14.12	15.53	16.60
$\ln(SPILLSIC)$	28,631	4.49	1.78	2.32	4.67	6.65
<b><i>Firm Characteristics</i></b>						
K/L (Capital labor ratio)	28,200	55.22	77.16	11.05	31.45	116.95
$\ln(K/L)$	28,200	3.52	0.94	2.41	3.44	4.75
Sales	28,631	4,080	14,265	18	288	8,652
Institutional Ownership	27,761	0.463	0.295	0.080	0.464	0.833
<b><i>Common Ownership</i></b>						
Kappa	27,755	0.208	0.167	0.050	0.161	0.426

**Table 2.** Summary Statistics for Key Variables

To measure innovation inputs, we use  $\ln(1 + R_{it}/SALES_{it})$  where  $R_{it}$  is the level of inflation-adjusted R&D expenditures and  $SALES_{it}$  are the total sales of firm  $i$  in year  $t$  as reported in Compustat. Since many firms report zero values for R&D expenditures in most years we follow

<sup>12</sup>The database is available on Noah Stoffman’s website (<http://kelley.iu.edu/nstoffma>). More details on how to match patents and citations to the CRSP database can be found in the online appendix of Kogan et al. (2017).



[Branstetter et al. \(2006\)](#) by adding 1 to all observations of R&D scaled by sales and taking the natural logarithm of the resulting values.

To measure innovation outputs, we rely on two different measures that capture the scientific and economic value of innovation respectively. First, we use the number of citation-weighted patents  $TCW_{it}$  given by

$$TCW_{it} = \sum_{j \in P_{it}} \left( 1 + \frac{C_j}{\bar{C}_j} \right) \quad (9)$$

where  $P_{it}$  denotes the set of patents issued to firm  $i$  in year  $t$ ,  $C_j$  is the number of forward citations to patent  $j$  and  $\bar{C}_j$  is the mean number of citations to patents granted in the same year as patent  $j$ . The innovation literature has argued that forward patent citations are a good indicator of the quality of the innovation and its scientific value ([Hall et al., 2001](#)).

Second, we measure the private economic value of innovation ([Hall et al., 2005](#); [Kogan et al., 2017](#)) as proxied by stock market reactions following a patent issuance. Specifically, we use the measure of [Kogan et al. \(2017\)](#) which estimates a firm  $i$ 's stock market reaction  $\xi_j$  during the three-day announcement window following the issuance of the firm's patent  $j$ . [Kogan et al. \(2017\)](#) then sum up all the estimated values  $\xi_j$  of patents  $j$  that were granted to firm  $i$  in year  $t$  to construct the total stock market value of innovation  $TSM_{it}$  generated by firm  $i$  in year  $t$ :

$$TSM_{it} = \sum_{j \in P_{it}} \xi_j. \quad (10)$$

These two innovation outputs (forward patent citations and stock market value of patents) likely measure different aspects of quality. Whereas patent citations are more reflective of the scientific value of the innovation, the total stock market value measures the private economic value that is fully appropriated by the firm. For example, a patent may constitute only a minor scientific progress (and therefore generate few patent citations) but may be particularly successful at limiting competition thereby generating significant profits for the issuing firm.

## 3.2 Measures of Technological and Product Market Proximity

For our analysis we require two distinct measures of technological proximity and product market proximity between firms. We follow [Bloom et al. \(2013\)](#) and [Lucking et al. \(2018\)](#) by using *SPILLTECH* and *SPILLSIC* as measures of technological and product market spillovers. *SPILLTECH* empirically measures the degree of technological spillovers  $\sum_{j \neq i} \beta_{ij}$  and *SPILLSIC* measures the degree of product market spillovers  $\sum_{j \neq i} a_{ij}$  in our model. We briefly explain the specific construction of these measures below. For a thorough discussion including microeconomic foundations see [Bloom et al. \(2013\)](#).

Following [Bloom et al. \(2013\)](#) we use both Jaffe and Mahalanobis distances for the construction of the *SPILLTECH* and *SPILLSIC* measures.

### 3.2.1 Jaffe Distance

Denote the vector of the share of patents of firm  $i$  in any given technology class by  $T_i$ . We construct the pool of technology spillover R&D for firm  $i$  in year  $t$ ,  $SPILLTECH_{it}$ , as

$$SPILLTECH_{it} = \sum_{j \neq i} TECH_{ij} G_{jt} \quad (11)$$

where  $G_{jt}$  is the stock of R&D and  $TECH_{ij}$  is the uncentered correlation between all firm  $i, j$  pairings and closely corresponds to the  $\beta_{ij}$  parameter in our model. Following [Jaffe \(1988\)](#), this measure is defined as

$$TECH_{ij} = \frac{T_i T_j'}{(T_i T_i')^{1/2} (T_j T_j')^{1/2}}. \quad (12)$$

We follow [Bloom et al. \(2013\)](#) and [Lucking et al. \(2018\)](#) by using all available years of data for the construction of the  $TECH_{ij}$  measure.

Analogously, let  $S_i$  denote the vector of the sales share of firm  $i$  in any given four-digit industry. We construct the pool of product market spillover R&D for firm  $i$  in year  $t$ ,  $SPILLSIC_{it}$ , as

$$SPILLSIC_{it} = \sum_{j \neq i} SIC_{ij} G_{jt}. \quad (13)$$

This consists of the sum of the  $SIC_{ij}$  uncentered correlations between all firm pairings  $i$  and  $j$  in an exactly analogous way to the technology closeness measure. This  $SIC_{ij}$  measure closely corresponds to the  $a_{ij}$  parameter in our model and is given by

$$SIC_{ij} = \frac{S_i S'_j}{(S_i S'_i)^{1/2} (S_j S'_j)^{1/2}}. \quad (14)$$

Following [Lucking et al. \(2018\)](#) rather than pool across all years to construct a firm's industry sales share, we pool the previous five years of data. Pooling the industry segments data across all 30 years of our sample is problematic in this setting. Future industry sales shares are clearly endogenous as firm innovation and R&D affect subsequent product market success. Past sales shares do not suffer from endogeneity but will be mismeasured if firms move in product space over time. We therefore use the five previous years of firm sales in order to (a) minimize reverse causality between firm outcomes and product market competition and (b) accurately measure the firm's location in product market space at time  $t$ .

### 3.2.2 Mahalanobis Distance

Following [Bloom et al. \(2013\)](#) and [Lucking et al. \(2018\)](#) we also construct alternative versions of  $SPILLTECH$  and  $SPILLSIC$  using the Mahalanobis distance metric which we denote by  $SPILLTECH^M$  and  $SPILLSIC^M$ . These measures allow for spillovers between different technology classes and between different industries. In contrast, such spillovers across technology classes and four-digit industries are ruled out by the Jaffe metric which assumes full spillovers within the same class or industry and no spillovers otherwise. Complete detail on the definition and construction of the Mahalanobis measures is included in the online appendices of [Bloom et al. \(2013\)](#) and [Lucking et al. \(2018\)](#).

The Mahalanobis  $SPILLTECH^M$  measure quantifies spillovers across technology class by using revealed preference. If two technologies are often located together in the same firm (for example, 'computer input/output' and 'computer processing'), then the distance between the technologies is smaller, so spillovers will be greater. The share of times the two technology classes are patented within the same firm proxies for this distance. The Mahalanobis  $SPILLSIC^M$  measure is defined

analogously for product market spillovers. When products within two industries are frequently sold within the same firm, the Mahalanobis  $SPILLSIC^M$  measure infers that the distance between these two industries is small.

### 3.3 Measures of Common Ownership

To construct the ownership variables, we use Thomson Reuters 13Fs, which are taken from SEC regulatory filings by institutions with at least \$100m total assets under management. We augment this data by scraping SEC 13F filings following Ben-David et al. (2020), which resolves the issues of stale and omitted institutional reports, excluded securities, and missing holdings from 2000 onward.<sup>13</sup> We describe the precise construction of the common ownership variables from these data in the following section.

A limitation implied by this data source is that we do not observe the holdings of individual owners, except if they are employed as officers of the company or serve on its board, in which case we complement these data with Execucomp. We assume that the remaining individual stakes of outsiders are relatively small and that in most cases they do not directly exert a significant influence on firm management. The arising inaccuracies introduce measurement error and an attenuation bias toward zero in our regressions.

To identify how common ownership influences the relationship between product market competition, technology spillovers, and innovation, we require a measure of common ownership. The existing literature provides several candidate measures of common ownership, the first of which is closely linked to the theoretical literature on common ownership, including our own model.

From equation (5), recall that the objective function of firm  $i$  is given by

$$\phi_i = \pi_i + \sum_{j \neq i} \kappa_{ij} \pi_j$$

where  $\kappa_{ij}$  is the weight that firm  $i$  places on firm  $j$ 's profits,  $\pi_j$ . The weighted sum of these profit weights  $\kappa_{ij}$  across all the potential product market competitors of firm  $i$  is the principal object of

---

<sup>13</sup>This correction provides a full set of filings by institutional holders for the large universe of Compustat firms. For a detailed description of the problems with the original 13F database and the solutions provided see [https://wrds-www.wharton.upenn.edu/documents/752/Research\\_Note\\_-Thomson\\_S34\\_Data\\_Issues\\_mldAsdi.pdf](https://wrds-www.wharton.upenn.edu/documents/752/Research_Note_-Thomson_S34_Data_Issues_mldAsdi.pdf).

interest in the common ownership hypothesis (Backus et al., 2020). Our main measure of common ownership is  $\kappa_{ij}$  between any firm pair  $i$  and  $j$  across the entire economy. We refer to the equal- or value-weighted average of the weights that the owners of firm  $i$  place in year  $t$  on the profits of the  $n - 1$  other firms in the economy as  $\bar{\kappa}_{it}$  or simply “kappa.” More formally,

$$\bar{\kappa}_{it} = \frac{1}{n-1} \sum_{j \neq i} \kappa_{ij,t} \quad \text{or} \quad \bar{\kappa}_{it} = \frac{1}{\sum_{j \neq i} \omega_{jt}} \sum_{j \neq i} \kappa_{ij,t} \omega_{jt} \quad (15)$$

where the weighting  $\omega_{jt}$  is the stock market value of firm  $j$  in year  $t$ . As in our theoretical model we exclude from our empirical analysis the small fraction of observations where  $\bar{\kappa}_{it}$  exceeds 1 because these observations are indicative of incorrect or missing ownership data (Backus et al., 2020). Our results are virtually unchanged if we included these observations.

### 3.4 Other Variables

Throughout our analysis we also use an additional set of control variables. First,  $\ln(\text{SALES}_{it})$  is the natural logarithm of sales of the company where we adjust for inflation as in Brav et al. (2018). Second,  $\ln(K_{it}/L_{it})$  is the capital-labor ratio, computed as the natural logarithm of the ratio of plant property equipment  $K_{it}$  and the number of employees  $L_{it}$  as in Aghion et al. (2013), Hall et al. (2001), and Gompers and Metrick (2001). Finally, we control for a firm’s share of all of its institutional ownership as in Aghion et al. (2013) as this could also influence corporate innovation independent of the overlapping shareholdings of institutional investors.

## 4 Empirical Analysis

We empirically study how corporate innovation depends on the degree to which the firms are commonly owned and how that relationship is affected by the spillovers on other firms in the technology and product market space. The theoretical model presented in Section 2 illustrates that common ownership can have a positive or a negative effect on innovation, depending on parameters. Specifically, the model predicts that the correlation between common ownership and innovation increases with the level of technological spillovers, but decreases the closer the firms

are in product space.

## 4.1 Empirical Methodology

In our empirical analysis, we estimate for each of the three outcome variables (scaled R&D, citation-weighted patents, stock market value of patents) how innovation depends on common ownership as well as the interactions of common ownership with product market spillovers and technology spillovers, controlling for known or suspected co-determinants of innovation such the size of the firm, capital intensity, and institutional ownership (Aghion et al., 2013). Our baseline regression is

$$\begin{aligned} INNOVATION_{it} = & \alpha_1 \cdot CO_{it} + \alpha_2 \cdot SPILLSIC_{it} + \alpha_3 \cdot SPILLTECH_{it} \\ & + \alpha_4 \cdot CO_{it} \cdot SPILLSIC_{it} + \alpha_5 \cdot CO_{it} \cdot SPILLTECH_{it} \\ & + \alpha_6 \cdot X_{it} + \sum_x \gamma_x \cdot \eta_x + \varepsilon_{ijt} \quad (16) \end{aligned}$$

where firms are indexed by  $i$ , and years by  $t$ .  $X_{it}$  is the vector of control variables  $\ln(SALES_{it})$ ,  $\ln(K_{it}/L_{it})$ , and institutional ownership.  $\eta_x$  with  $x \in \{i, t\}$  are firm  $i$ , and year  $t$  fixed effects.  $CO_{it} = \bar{\kappa}_{it}$  measures to which extent the largest and most powerful shareholders of firm  $i$  are also beneficial owners of other firms that are connected to firm  $i$ . Standard errors are clustered at the firm level.

We estimate OLS regressions for scaled R&D expenditures and the stock market value of patents and negative binominal count data models for citation-weighted patents. The negative binomial regressions include a firm fixed effect which controls for the firm's average citation-weighted patents in the pre-sample period, as in Blundell et al. (1999), Bloom et al. (2013), and Lucking et al. (2018), where the pre-sample period is defined as the five years before the firm enters the regression sample.

Recall that firms influence each other because they benefit from any innovation activities of firm  $i$  (technology spillovers), and/or because they are natural product market competitors of firm  $i$  (product market spillovers). The principal coefficients of interest are therefore  $\alpha_4$  and  $\alpha_5$  which measure how the relationship between common ownership and innovation varies with product

market and technology spillovers.

## 4.2 Empirical Results

We begin our analysis by examining the impact of common ownership and technology spillovers on innovation inputs (R&D expenses) as the outcome variable. Table 3 reports the results for estimation of equation (16) with the R&D to sales ratio as the dependent variable. Across the different specifications we include firm and year fixed effects. Column 1 starts by replicating the results of Lucking et al. (2018) as our baseline specification using the Jaffe proximity measures. Column 2 adds common ownership and shows that it is negatively correlated with innovation input. In columns 3 and 4, which include interaction terms between common ownership and our two proximity measures, and columns 5 and 6, which use the Mahalanobis proximity measures, common ownership is associated with lower innovation input, even after controlling for time and firm fixed effects. We therefore reject the null hypothesis that innovation is not related to a firm’s common ownership. Columns 4 and 5 include controls for institutional ownership, as in Aghion et al. (2013). We find a positive coefficient as they do, but it is statistically insignificant in our specifications.

Our primary concern, however, is with how the relation between common ownership and innovation varies with technology and product market spillovers. Columns 3, 4, and 6 include interaction terms between common ownership and our two measures of spillovers. Consistently throughout all the specifications, the estimated coefficient on the interaction term with technological spillovers *SPILLTECH* is positive whereas it is negative with product market spillover *SPILLSIC*. In accordance with our theoretical analysis, the negative relation between common ownership and innovation inputs becomes more negative as the degree of product market spillovers increases. Conversely, the relationship between common ownership and innovation inputs becomes less negative and can even turn positive the larger technology spillovers are.

In aggregate, as can be seen in column 2, common ownership is negatively related to corporate innovation, but the estimated coefficient is very small: increasing the average kappa all the way from 0 (no common ownership) to 1 (equal profit weights on all other firms) is only associated with a -0.15% (Jaffe) or -0.12% (Mahalanobis) decrease in sales-adjusted R&D expenditure.

R&D expenditure $\ln(1 + R_{it}/S_{it})$	(1) Jaf.	(2) Jaf.	(3) Jaf.	(4) Jaf.	(5) Mah.	(6) Mah.
<i>CO</i>		-0.00151** (0.000736)	-0.0347** (0.0162)	-0.0347** (0.0164)	-0.00124* (0.000726)	-0.0697*** (0.0215)
<i>CO</i> $\times$ $\ln(SPILLTECH)$			0.00247** (0.00108)	0.00246** (0.00109)		0.00486*** (0.00143)
<i>CO</i> $\times$ $\ln(SPILLSIC)$			-0.00111** (0.000507)	-0.00103** (0.000513)		-0.00224** (0.000878)
$\ln(SPILLTECH)$	-0.0204*** (0.00642)	-0.0216*** (0.00651)	-0.0223*** (0.00654)	-0.0215*** (0.00668)	-0.0164* (0.00838)	-0.0176** (0.00841)
$\ln(SPILLSIC)$	0.00468*** (0.00134)	0.00442*** (0.00135)	0.00470*** (0.00135)	0.00489*** (0.00137)	0.00215 (0.00219)	0.00266 (0.00220)
<i>Institutional Ownership</i>				0.00426 (0.00349)	0.00486 (0.00350)	0.00471 (0.00349)
Observations	25,985	25,276	25,276	25,009	25,009	25,009
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Table 3.** Sales-adjusted R&D expenditure as a function of common ownership, technology spillovers, and product market spillovers

The table reports OLS coefficient estimates of equation (16) with the dependent variable  $\ln(1 + R_{it}/S_{it})$ . Standard errors are clustered at the firm level. Variable definitions are described in Section 3. Industry sales in  $t$  and in  $t - 1$  are also included as controls, but are not shown in the table.

Thus, in the aggregate the countervailing forces of technology and product market spillovers that pull the relationship between common ownership and corporate innovation in different directions, essentially cancel each other out.

We now turn to the empirical relation between common ownership and innovation outputs. Table 4 reports the results for the citation-weighted value of patents held by a firm using a negative binomial count data model. On average, the citation-weighted value of patents is weakly positively correlated with common ownership as shown in column 2, but the estimated coefficient is statistically insignificant. In other words, on average across our entire sample common ownership and corporate innovation are not particularly strongly related. However, this is because the interactions of common ownership with technology and product market spillovers cancel each other out in the aggregate.

In particular, once we include the interaction terms between common ownership and the two spillover measures in columns 3, 4, and 6, the coefficient on common ownership is consistently



Citation-weighted patents $TCW_{it}$	(1) Jaf.	(2) Jaf.	(3) Jaf.	(4) Jaf.	(5) Mah.	(6) Mah.
$CO$		0.0476 (0.138)	-6.085*** (2.162)	-6.045*** (2.189)	0.125 (0.147)	-6.520** (2.675)
$CO \times \ln(SPILLTECH)$			0.465*** (0.154)	0.466*** (0.156)		0.519*** (0.185)
$CO \times \ln(SPILLSIC)$			-0.237*** (0.0919)	-0.233** (0.0928)		-0.346*** (0.134)
$\ln(SPILLTECH)$	0.133*** (0.0475)	0.133*** (0.0475)	0.0400 (0.0566)	0.0397 (0.0567)	0.174*** (0.0614)	0.0676 (0.0707)
$\ln(SPILLSIC)$	-0.0130 (0.0257)	-0.0127 (0.0256)	0.0367 (0.0317)	0.0372 (0.0319)	-0.0237 (0.0371)	0.0521 (0.0459)
<i>Institutional Ownership</i>				0.137 (0.0952)	0.128 (0.0936)	0.137 (0.0953)
Observations	24,683	24,683	24,683	24,487	24,487	24,487
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Table 4.** Citation-weighted measure of patents as a function of common ownership, technology spillovers, and product market spillovers

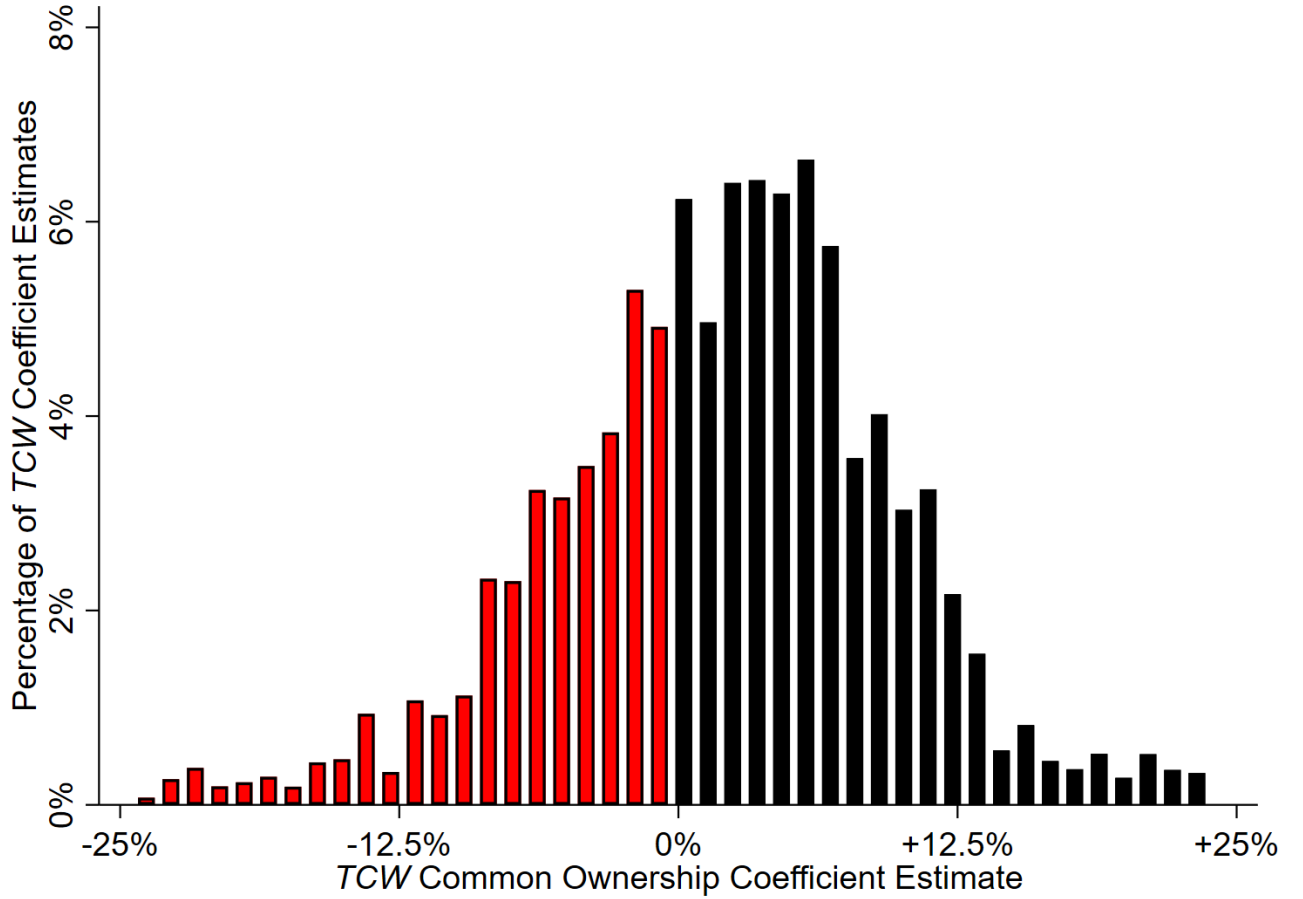
The table reports coefficient estimates of equation (16) with the dependent variable  $TCW_{it}$  using a negative binominal count data model. Standard errors are clustered at the firm level. Variable definitions are described in Section 3. Industry sales in  $t$  and in  $t - 1$  are also included as controls, but are not shown in the table.

negative. As before and in accordance with our theoretical predictions, we find that this negative relationship is larger in magnitude when product market spillovers  $SPILLSIC$  are larger, but smaller in magnitude and even positive when technology spillovers  $SPILLTECH$  are larger. Because there is considerable heterogeneity of these spillovers across industries and firms this leads to vastly different effects of common ownership on corporate innovation. For example, for a firm at the 75th percentile of technology spillovers (16.13) and the 25th percentile of product market spillovers (3.53), an interquartile range increase of common ownership from the 25th percentile (0.092) to the 75th percentile (0.277) would be associated with a 12.5% increase in citation-weighted patents.<sup>14</sup> In contrast, the same increase in common ownership would imply a decrease of -8.4% in citation-weighted patents for a firm at the 25th percentile of technology

<sup>14</sup>The exact calculation of this estimate comes from column 4 of Table 4 and is given by  $0.125 = \exp[(-6.045 + 0.466 \times 16.13 - 0.237 \times 3.53) \times (0.277 - 0.092)] - 1$ .

spillovers and 75th percentile of product market spillovers.

The significant heterogeneity of the relationship between common ownership and corporate innovation can also be seen Figure 1 which plots the aggregate coefficient estimate for common ownership taking into account how technology and product market spillovers vary across firms. For each firm, we compute its average value of *SPILLTECH* and *SPILLSIC* across all the years of our sample. We use these values in conjunction with the coefficient estimates of *CO*,  $CO \times \ln(SPILLTECH)$ , and  $CO \times \ln(SPILLSIC)$  from column 4 of Table 4 to plot how a firm-level interquartile range increase of common ownership from the 25th to the 75th percentile changes the percentage of citation-weighted patents.



**Figure 1. Heterogeneity of the Relationship between Common Ownership and Citation-weighted Patents *TCW***

This figure plots the distribution of how an increase in common ownership from the 25th to the 75th percentile changes citation-weighted patents *TCW* taking into account firm-specific levels of technology and product market spillovers (averaged across years).

Similar patterns emerge in Table 5 which reports the coefficient estimates for the relationship between the total stock market value of patents and common ownership. On average, the total stock market value of patents is now significantly positively correlated with common ownership as shown in column 2. However, once we include the interaction terms between common ownership and the two spillover measures in columns 3, 4, and 5, the coefficient on common ownership is consistently negative. As predicted by our theoretical framework, we find that this negative relationship is reversed when technology spillovers *SPILLTECH* are larger. That is to say, as before, depending on the importance of technological spillovers across the universe of firms common ownership can either be negatively or positively related to corporate innovation. However, unlike for R&D expenditure and citation-weighted patents, the coefficient estimate for the interaction of common owners and product market spillovers *SPILLSIC* is no longer statistically significant. The coefficient on institutional ownership is positive and significant, in line with the results of [Aghion et al. \(2013\)](#). The finding of small effects on R&D inputs but economically large effects (in some firms) on R&D outputs is also consistent with the findings of [Li et al. \(2021\)](#), who find that common ownership by venture capitalists in the pharmaceutical industry reduce duplication of R&D and thus increase innovation efficiency.

Taken together, we find strong and consistent support for the model’s theoretical predictions. First, there exists an empirically ambiguous relationship between common ownership and innovation which can be either positive or negative on average. Second, the innovation-reducing effect of common ownership increases with the degree of product market spillovers. Third, technology spillovers increase the innovation-enhancing effect of common ownership. As predicted by the theoretical framework, the overall effect of common ownership on corporate innovation crucially depends on the relative strength of product market business stealing incentives and of technological spillovers between firms and differs markedly across firms.

One limitation of this study is that, in the theoretical model, ownership is taken as an exogenously given parameter, whereas the data we rely on for our estimation of common ownership effects of innovation is the result of a process involving choices (and hence selection) of ownership. This could potentially lead to an endogeneity problem that challenges a causal interpretation of the panel correlations we estimate. That said, we find it difficult to formulate, even informally, a

Patent stock market value $\ln(1 + TSM_{it})$	(1) Jaf.	(2) Jaf.	(3) Jaf.	(4) Jaf.	(5) Mah.	(6) Mah.
<i>CO</i>		0.581*** (0.0680)	-2.779*** (0.964)	-2.883*** (1.002)	0.692*** (0.0797)	-3.868*** (1.318)
$CO \times \ln(SPILLTECH)$			0.206*** (0.0701)	0.219*** (0.0729)		0.263*** (0.0921)
$CO \times \ln(SPILLSIC)$			0.0418 (0.0523)	0.0446 (0.0532)		0.0463 (0.0809)
$\ln(SPILLTECH)$	0.0785 (0.0907)	0.0625 (0.0902)	-0.0122 (0.0929)	0.0327 (0.0936)	-0.0530 (0.117)	-0.136 (0.120)
$\ln(SPILLSIC)$	0.0508* (0.0268)	0.0541** (0.0268)	0.0443 (0.0272)	0.0413 (0.0274)	0.0775* (0.0421)	0.0652 (0.0419)
<i>Institutional Ownership</i>				0.367** (0.147)	0.350** (0.143)	0.357** (0.146)
Observations	24,694	24,694	24,694	24,495	24,495	24,495
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firm FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Table 5.** Stock market value of patents as a function of common ownership, technology spillovers, and product market spillovers

The table reports OLS coefficient estimates of equation (16) with the dependent variable  $\ln(1 + TSM_{it})$ . Standard errors are clustered at the firm level. Variable definitions are described in Section 3. Industry sales in  $t$  and in  $t - 1$  are also included as controls, but are not shown in the table.

simple economic model that would give rise to the two opposing effects we measure, but not allow for a causal interpretation. Take, for example, a perfectly “passive” investor holding the market portfolio as a benchmark. Some types of active investors might pursue a strategy of underweighting industry competitors while overweighting technologically related firms, and at the same time have a preference for more innovation (for reasons unrelated to their portfolio choice). Other types of active investors might deliberately overweight industry competitors and sell other holdings, and push firms to reduce innovation—again for reasons unrelated to their portfolio choice. We are not aware of an economic rationale that links these portfolio choices with a preference for low or high innovation. Or perhaps firms with high innovation activity attract active shareholders that tend to underweight industry competitors in their investment strategy, whereas firms with low innovation activities attract active investors that specialize in holding industry competitors. Again, we are not aware of an economic rationale that could give rise to such a relationship.

In contrast, the economic model proposed in the present paper provides a significantly simpler and economically intuitive explanation for the empirical patterns we observe. In sum, we are not aware of any alternative theory that would give rise to an endogeneity problem and suggest a different interpretation of the empirical evidence. In sum, the causal interpretation of the empirical correlations we document in this paper comes from combining theory with a set of nuanced patterns in the data, rather than from empirical observations alone.

## 5 Conclusion

In this paper we show that common ownership can increase innovation when technological spillovers are sufficiently large and product market spillovers are sufficiently low. On the other hand, common ownership can also decrease innovation because common owners would like to discourage business stealing between commonly-owned companies that compete in product markets against each other. The ambiguity in theoretical predictions thus poses an interesting empirical question about the sign and magnitude of the effect of common ownership on innovation. We use our theoretical model’s predictions to investigate how the relationship between common ownership and innovation depends on the relative strength of technological and product market spillovers. Consistent with the model’s theoretical predictions, we find that common ownership has a positive effect on innovation inputs and outputs whenever innovation spillovers to other firms are relatively large compared to the firms’ distance in the product market space and a negative effect if the product market spillovers dominate.

Our findings inform an active debate on whether welfare-enhancing effects of common ownership outweigh the previously empirically documented negative effects of common ownership on firms’ incentives to compete. Given that a positive effect on innovation which we model as an efficiency increase in this paper, is a necessary condition for common ownership to positively affect welfare ([López and Vives, 2019](#)), our findings are a necessary ingredient in the argument against regulatory interventions in the common ownership debate. The more nuanced insight, however, is that antitrust and innovation policy should distinguish between common ownership of horizontal competitors and common ownership of technologically and perhaps vertically related

firms. Previous literature indicates that the former weakens competition and, as we show, also reduces innovation. Our theoretical analysis and empirical results suggest that the latter promotes innovation and potentially even increases total welfare.

## References

- Aghion, Philippe and Peter Howitt**, “A model of growth through creative destruction,” *Econometrica*, 1992, *60* (2), 323–351.
- , **John Van Reenen**, and **Luigi Zingales**, “Innovation and institutional ownership,” *American Economic Review*, 2013, *103* (1), 277–304.
- , **Nick Bloom**, **Richard Blundell**, **Rachel Griffith**, and **Peter Howitt**, “Competition and innovation: An inverted-U relationship,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 2005, *120* (2), 701–728.
- Akcigit, Ufuk and Sina T. Ates**, “Ten Facts on Declining Business Dynamism and Lessons from Endogenous Growth Theory,” *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics*, 2021, *13* (1), 257–98.
- Arora, Ashish, Sharon Belenzon**, and **Lia Sheer**, “Knowledge spillovers and corporate investment in scientific research,” *American Economic Review*, 2020, *111* (3), 871–98.
- Azar, José**, “A new look at oligopoly: Implicit collusion through portfolio diversification,” *Ph.D. Thesis, Princeton University*, 2012.
- and **Xavier Vives**, “General Equilibrium Oligopoly and Ownership Structure,” *Econometrica*, 2020.
- Backus, Matthew, Christopher Conlon**, and **Michael Sinkinson**, “Common Ownership in America: 1980-2017,” *American Economic Journal: Microeconomics*, 2020.
- Ben-David, Itzhak, Francesco Franzoni, Rabih Moussawi**, and **John Sedunov**, “The granular nature of large institutional investors,” *Management Science*, 2020.
- Bloom, Nicholas, Mark Schankerman**, and **John Van Reenen**, “Identifying technology spillovers and product market rivalry,” *Econometrica*, 2013, *81* (4), 1347–1393.
- Blundell, Richard, Rachel Griffith**, and **John Van Reenen**, “Market share, market value and innovation in a panel of British manufacturing firms,” *The review of economic studies*, 1999, *66* (3), 529–554.
- Bolton, Patrick and Christopher Harris**, “Strategic experimentation,” *Econometrica*, 1999, *67* (2), 349–374.
- Borochin, Paul, Jie Yang**, and **Rongrong Zhang**, “Common ownership types and their effects on innovation and competition,” *Available at SSRN 3204767*, 2020.
- Botelho, Tristan L.**, “Here’s an opportunity: Knowledge sharing among competitors as a response to buy-in uncertainty,” *Organization Science*, 2018, *29* (6), 1033–1055.
- Brander, James A and Barbara J Spencer**, “Strategic commitment with R&D: the symmetric case,” *The Bell Journal of Economics*, 1983, pp. 225–235.
- Branstetter, Lee G and Mariko Sakakibara**, “When do research consortia work well and why? Evidence from Japanese panel data,” *American Economic Review*, 2002, *92* (1), 143–159.
- Branstetter, Lee G., Raymond Fisman**, and **C. Fritz Foley**, “Do Stronger Intellectual Property Rights Increase International Technology Transfer? Empirical Evidence from U. S.

- Firm-Level Panel Data,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 02 2006, 121 (1), 321–349.
- Brav, Alon, Wei Jiang, Song Ma, and Xuan Tian**, “How does hedge fund activism reshape corporate innovation?,” *Journal of Financial Economics*, 2018, 130 (2), 237–264.
- CEA, White House**, “Benefits of competition and indicators of market power,” *Council of Economic Advisers Issue Brief*, 2016.
- Chiao, Cheng-Huei, Bin Qiu, and Bin Wang**, “Corporate innovation in a world of common ownership,” *Managerial Finance*, 2020.
- D’Aspremont, Claude and Alexis Jacquemin**, “Cooperative and Noncooperative R&D in Duopoly with Spillovers,” *American Economic Review*, 1988, 78 (5), 1133–1137.
- Drèze, Jacques H.**, “Investment under private ownership: optimality, equilibrium and stability,” in “Allocation under uncertainty: equilibrium and optimality,” Springer, 1974, pp. 129–166.
- Ederer, Florian and Bruno Pellegrino**, “The Welfare Cost of Common Ownership,” *Yale SOM Working Paper*, 2021.
- Edgeworth, Francis Ysidro**, *Mathematical psychics: An essay on the application of mathematics to the moral sciences*, Vol. 10, Kegan Paul, 1881.
- Eldar, Ofer, Jillian Grennan, and Katherine Waldo**, “Common ownership and startup growth,” *Duke Law School Public Law & Legal Theory Series*, 2020.
- European Competition Commission**, “Commission Decision M.7932 – Dow/DuPont,” *Competition Committee*, 2017, March (3). Available at [https://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/decisions/m7932\\_13668\\_3.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/decisions/m7932_13668_3.pdf).
- Federal Trade Commission**, “Competition and Consumer Protection in the 21st Century,” *FTC Hearings*, 2018, December (6). Available at [https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/public\\_events/1422929/ftc\\_hearings\\_session\\_8\\_transcript\\_12-6-18\\_0.pdf](https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/public_events/1422929/ftc_hearings_session_8_transcript_12-6-18_0.pdf).
- Fudenberg, Drew and Jean Tirole**, “The Fat-Cat Effect, the Puppy-Dog Ploy, and the Lean and Hungry Look,” *American Economic Review*, 1984, 74 (2), 361–366.
- Geng, Heng, Harald Hau, and Sandy Lai**, “Technological progress and ownership structure,” *CEPR Discussion Paper No. DP11064*, 2016.
- Gilbert, Richard**, “Looking for Mr. Schumpeter: Where Are We in the Competition-Innovation Debate?,” in “Innovation Policy and the Economy, Volume 6,” National Bureau of Economic Research, May 2006, pp. 159–215.
- Gompers, Paul A and Andrew Metrick**, “Institutional investors and equity prices,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 2001, 116 (1), 229–259.
- González-Urbe, Juanita**, “Exchanges of innovation resources inside venture capital portfolios,” *Journal of Financial Economics*, 2020, 135 (1), 144–168.
- Grossman, Gene M and Elhanan Helpman**, *Innovation and growth in the global economy*, MIT press, 1991.
- Grossman, Sanford J. and Oliver Hart**, “A theory of competitive equilibrium in stock market economies,” *Econometrica*, 1979, pp. 293–329.
- Gutiérrez, Germán and Thomas Philippon**, “Declining Competition and Investment in the US,” *NBER Working Paper*, 2017.
- Hall, Bronwyn H, Adam B Jaffe, and Manuel Trajtenberg**, “The NBER patent citation data file: Lessons, insights and methodological tools,” *NBER Working Paper*, 2001.
- Hall, Bronwyn H., Adam Jaffe, and Manuel Trajtenberg**, “Market Value and Patent Citations,” *The RAND Journal of Economics*, 2005, 36 (1), 16–38.



- He, Jie (Jack) and Jiekun Huang**, “Product Market Competition in a World of Cross-Ownership: Evidence from Institutional Blockholdings,” *Review of Financial Studies*, 2017, 30 (8), 2674–2718.
- Hoskisson, Robert E, Michael A Hitt, Richard A Johnson, and Wayne Grossman**, “Conflicting voices: The effects of institutional ownership heterogeneity and internal governance on corporate innovation strategies,” *Academy of Management journal*, 2002, 45 (4), 697–716.
- Häckner, Jonas**, “A Note on Price and Quantity Competition in Differentiated Oligopolies,” *Journal of Economic Theory*, 2000, 93 (2), 233–239.
- Jaffe, Adam B**, “Demand and supply influences in R & D intensity and productivity growth,” *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 1988, pp. 431–437.
- Johnson, Simon, Rafael La Porta, Florencio Lopez de Silanes, and Andrei Shleifer**, “Tunneling,” *American Economic Review*, 2000, 90 (2), 22–27.
- Jones, Charles I**, “Growth and ideas,” *Handbook of economic growth*, 2005, 1, 1063–1111.
- **and John C Williams**, “Too much of a good thing? The economics of investment in R&D,” *Journal of economic growth*, 2000, 5 (1), 65–85.
- Kamien, Morton I., Eitan Muller, and Israel Zang**, “Research Joint Ventures and R&D Cartels,” *American Economic Review*, 1992, 82 (5), 1293–1306.
- Katz, Michael L**, “An analysis of cooperative research and development,” *RAND Journal of Economics*, 1986, pp. 527–543.
- Kogan, Leonid, Dimitris Papanikolaou, Amit Seru, and Noah Stoffman**, “Technological Innovation, Resource Allocation, and Growth,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 03 2017, 132 (2), 665–712.
- Kostovetsky, Leonard and Alberto Manconi**, “Common institutional ownership and diffusion of innovation,” *Available at SSRN 2896372*, 2020.
- Leahy, Dermot and J Peter Neary**, “Public policy towards R&D in oligopolistic industries,” *American Economic Review*, 1997, pp. 642–662.
- Li, Xuelin, Tong Liu, and Lucian A. Taylor**, “Common ownership and innovation efficiency,” *Available at SSRN 3479439*, 2021.
- Lindsey, Laura**, “Blurring Firm Boundaries: The Role of Venture Capital in Strategic Alliances,” *Journal of Finance*, 2008, 63 (3), 1137–1168.
- Loecker, Jan De, Jan Eeckhout, and Gabriel Unger**, “The Rise of Market Power and the Macroeconomic Implications,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 01 2020, 135 (2), 561–644.
- López, Angel L. and Xavier Vives**, “Overlapping Ownership, R&D Spillovers, and Antitrust Policy,” *Journal of Political Economy*, 2019, 127 (5), 2394–2437.
- Lucking, Brian, Nicholas Bloom, and John Van Reenen**, “Have R&D Spillovers Changed?,” *NBER Working Paper*, 2018.
- Moskalev, Alexandr**, “Objective Function of a Non-Price-Taking Firm with Heterogeneous Shareholders,” *University of Michigan Dissertation, available on SSRN 3471564*, 2020.
- OECD**, “Common Ownership by Institutional Investors and its Impact on Competition,” *Competition Committee*, 2017, December (7). Available at [https://one.oecd.org/document/DAF/COMP\(2017\)10/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/DAF/COMP(2017)10/en/pdf).
- Olson, Bradley and Lynn Cook**, “Wall Street Tells Frackers to Stop Counting Barrels, Start Making Profits,” *Wall Street Journal*, 2017, December (13). Available at <https://www.wsj.com/articles/wall-streets-fracking-frenzy-runs-dry-as-profits-fail-to-materialize-1512577420>.



- Pellegrino, Bruno**, “Product Differentiation and Oligopoly: a Network Approach,” *WRDS Research Paper*, 2019.
- Philippon, Thomas and German Gutierrez**, “Investment-less Growth: An Empirical Investigation,” *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, 2017, *April*.
- PTI**, “CCI To Conduct Market Study On Private Equity Investments,” *Bloomberg Quint*, 2020, *December* (4). Available at <https://www.bloombergquint.com/business/competition-comm-to-conduct-market-study-on-private-equity-investments-chairperson>.
- Rotemberg, Julio**, “Financial transaction costs and industrial performance,” *MIT Sloan Working Paper*, 1984.
- Saidi, Farzad and Daniel Streitz**, “Bank Concentration and Product Market Competition,” *Review of Financial Studies*, 1 2021.
- Schmalz, Martin**, “Common Ownership Concentration and Corporate Conduct,” *Annual Review of Financial Economics*, 2018, 10.
- , “Recent studies on common ownership, firm behavior, and market outcomes,” *Antitrust Bulletin*, 2021, 66 (1).
- Shekita, Nathan**, “Interventions by Common Owners,” *SSRN Working Paper 3658726*, 2020.
- Singh, Nirvikar and Xavier Vives**, “Price and Quantity Competition in a Differentiated Duopoly,” *RAND Journal of Economics*, 1984, 15 (4), 546–554.
- Spence, Michael**, “Cost Reduction, Competition, and Industry Performance,” *Econometrica*, 1984, 52 (1), 101–21.
- Stein, Jeremy C**, “Conversations among competitors,” *American Economic Review*, 2008, 98 (5), 2150–62.
- Stenbacka, Rune and Geert Van Moer**, “Overlapping Ownership and Product Innovation,” *Working Paper*, 2020.
- Suzumura, Kotaro**, “Cooperative and Noncooperative R&D in an Oligopoly with Spillovers,” *American Economic Review*, 1992, pp. 1307–1320.
- The Economist**, “A bold scheme to dominate ride-hailing,” *The Economist*, 2018, *May* (10). Available at <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2018/05/10/a-bold-scheme-to-dominate-ride-hailing>.
- Vestager, Margrethe**, “Competition in Changing Times,” *European Commission*, 2018, *February* (16). Available at [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2014-2019/vestager/announcements/competition-changing-times-0\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2014-2019/vestager/announcements/competition-changing-times-0_en).

# A Proofs and Additional Theoretical Results

## A.1 Strategic Substitutes

We can rewrite the system of first order conditions given in equations (6) and (7) in the following way

$$\begin{aligned} (\mathbf{a} + \mathbf{K} \circ \mathbf{a}') \mathbf{q} &= (A - \bar{c}) \cdot \mathbf{1} + \mathbf{B} \mathbf{x} \\ (\mathbf{K} \circ \mathbf{B}') \mathbf{q} &= \gamma \mathbf{x} \end{aligned}$$

where  $\circ$  is the Hadamard (element-by-element) product,  $\mathbf{1}$  is an  $n \times 1$  vector of ones,  $\mathbf{a}$  is the product similarity matrix,  $\mathbf{B}$  is the technology spillover matrix, and  $\mathbf{K}$  is the common ownership matrix. The matrices  $\mathbf{a}$ ,  $\mathbf{B}$ , and  $\mathbf{K}$  are defined as follows:

$$\mathbf{a} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & a_{12} & \cdots & a_{1n} \\ a_{21} & 1 & \cdots & a_{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ a_{n1} & a_{n2} & \cdots & 1 \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{B} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & \beta_{12} & \cdots & \beta_{1n} \\ \beta_{21} & 1 & \cdots & \beta_{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ \beta_{n1} & \beta_{n2} & \cdots & 1 \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{K} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & \kappa_{12} & \cdots & \kappa_{1n} \\ \kappa_{21} & 1 & \cdots & \kappa_{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ \kappa_{n1} & \kappa_{n2} & \cdots & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

Defining  $\mathbf{K}_a = \mathbf{a} + \mathbf{K} \circ \mathbf{a}'$  and  $\mathbf{K}_\beta = \mathbf{K} \circ \mathbf{B}'$  and plugging the second system of first-order conditions into the first yields the vector of equilibrium innovation  $\mathbf{x}^*$  given by

$$\mathbf{x}^* = \begin{bmatrix} x_1^* \\ x_2^* \\ \vdots \\ x_n^* \end{bmatrix} = (A - \bar{c}) \left[ \gamma \mathbf{K}_a \mathbf{K}_\beta^{-1} - \mathbf{B} \right]^{-1} \cdot \mathbf{1}. \quad (17)$$

Recall the best response functions for  $q_i$  and  $x_i$  given in equation (6) and (7)

$$\begin{aligned} q_i &= \frac{1}{2} \left[ A - \left( \bar{c} - x_i - \sum_{j \neq i}^n \beta_{ij} x_j \right) - \sum_{j \neq i}^n a_{ij} q_j - \sum_{j \neq i}^n \kappa_{ij} a_{ji} q_j \right] \\ x_i &= \frac{1}{\gamma} \left( q_i + \sum_{j \neq i}^n \kappa_{ij} \beta_{ji} q_j \right) \end{aligned}$$

We are interested in finding conditions under which  $\frac{\partial x_i^*}{\partial \kappa_{ij}} > 0$

Rewriting (8) we have

$$(A - \bar{c}) \cdot \mathbf{1} = [\gamma \mathbf{K}_a \mathbf{K}_\beta^{-1} - \mathbf{B}] \mathbf{x} \quad (18)$$

First, assume that  $\mathbf{B} = \mathbf{I}$  where  $I$  is the identity matrix. Thus, there are no technology spillovers as all off-diagonal elements  $\beta_{ij}$  of  $\mathbf{B}$  are equal to zero. Therefore  $\mathbf{K}_\beta = \mathbf{K} \circ \mathbf{B}' = I$ . Hence (8) becomes

$$(A - \bar{c}) \cdot \mathbf{1} = [\gamma \mathbf{K}_a - I] x$$

This system is isomorphic to a Cournot Game and the following reaction function for each firm  $i$ :

$$x_i = \frac{1}{2\gamma - 1} \left[ (A - \bar{c}) - \gamma \sum_{j \neq i} (a_{ij} + \kappa_{ij} a_{ji}) x_j \right]$$

We are looking for a stable Nash equilibrium, so we have to impose some restrictions on the parameters. In particular, we need that

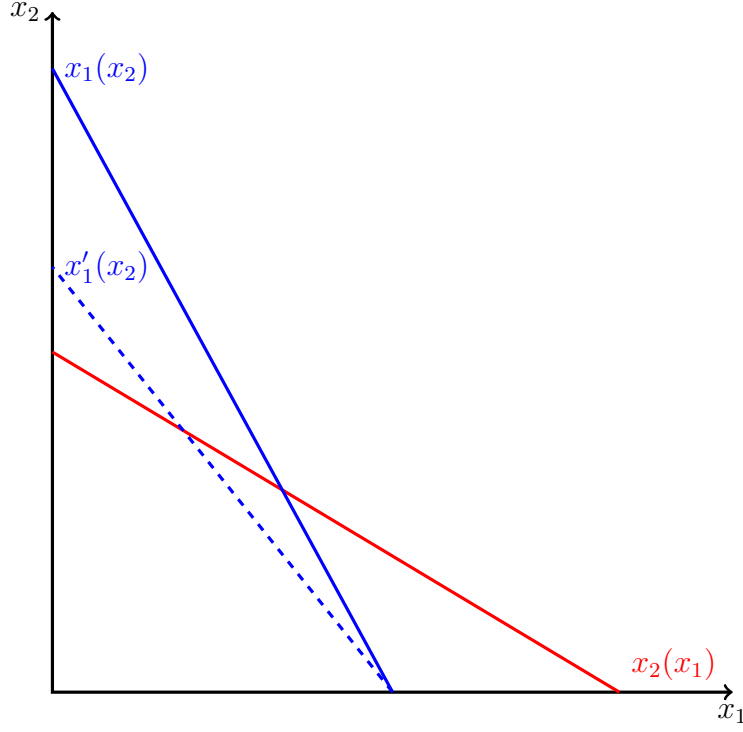
$$\left| \frac{\partial x_i}{\partial x_j} \right| < 1$$

which imposes the following restriction

$$\frac{\gamma}{2\gamma - 1} (a_{ij} + \kappa_{ij} a_{ji}) < 1.$$

With this condition it follows that  $\frac{\partial x_i^*}{\partial \kappa_{ij}} < 0$ . A graphic representation for the  $n = 2$  duopoly case is given in Figure 2.

Now instead assume that  $\mathbf{a} = \mathbf{I}$  such that there are no product market spillovers. The best



**Figure 2.** Innovation best response functions for  $\mathbf{B} = I$  and  $n = 2$

response function for quantity (6) becomes

$$q_i = \frac{1}{2} \left[ (A - \bar{c}) + x_i + \sum_{j \neq i}^n \beta_{ij} x_j \right]$$

which we can substitute into the best response function for innovation (7) to obtain

$$x_i = \frac{1}{\gamma} \left( \frac{1}{2} \left[ (A - \bar{c}) + x_i + \sum_{j \neq i} \beta_{ij} x_j \right] + \sum_{j \neq i}^n \kappa_{ij} \beta_{ji} \frac{1}{2} \left[ (A - \bar{c}) + x_j + \sum_{l \neq j} \beta_{jl} x_l \right] \right).$$

By reordering terms we obtain

$$2\gamma x_i = \left( 1 + \sum_{j \neq i}^n \kappa_{ij} \beta_{ji} \right) (A - \bar{c}) + \left( 1 + \sum_{j \neq i}^n \kappa_{ij} \beta_{ji}^2 \right) x_i + \sum_{j \neq i}^n \left( \beta_{ij} + \kappa_{ij} \beta_{ji} + \sum_{l \neq \{i, j\}}^n \kappa_{il} \beta_{li} \beta_{lj} \right) x_j.$$

Therefore this system is isomorphic to a Cournot game with positive spillovers (instead of negative

ones) with the following reaction function for firm  $i$

$$x_i = \frac{(1 + \sum_{j \neq i}^n \kappa_{ij} \beta_{ji})}{2\gamma - 1 - (\sum_{j \neq i}^n \kappa_{ij} \beta_{ji}^2)} + \sum_{j \neq i}^n \frac{\beta_{ij} + \kappa_{ij} \beta_{ji} + \sum_{l \neq \{i,j\}}^n \kappa_{il} \beta_{li} \beta_{lj}}{2\gamma - 1 - (\sum_{j \neq i}^n \kappa_{ij} \beta_{ji}^2)} x_j$$

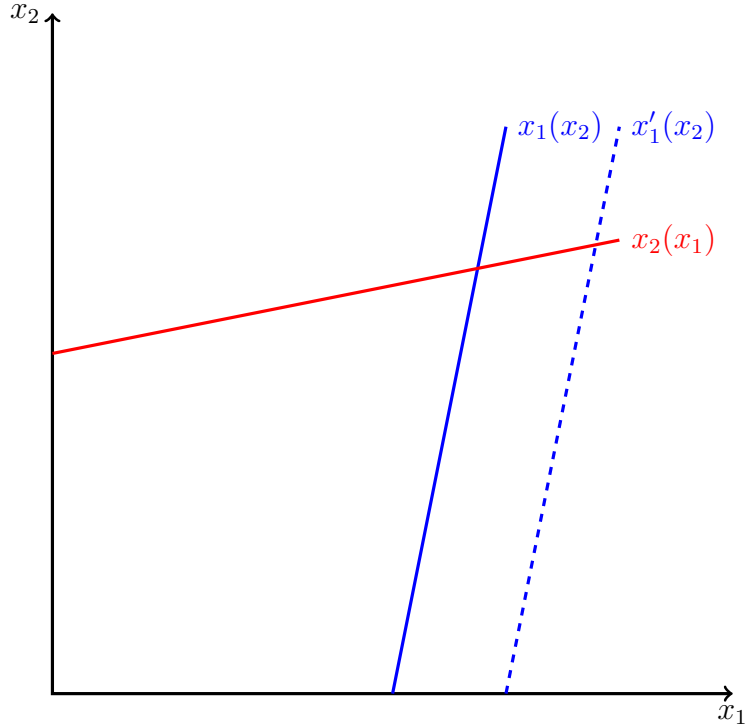
We are looking for a stable Nash equilibrium, so we have to impose some restrictions on the parameters. In particular, we need that

$$\left| \frac{\partial x_i}{\partial x_j} \right| < 1$$

which imposes the following restriction

$$\frac{\beta_{ij} + \kappa_{ij} \beta_{ji} + \sum_{l \neq \{i,j\}} \kappa_{il} \beta_{li} \beta_{lj}}{2\gamma - 1 - (\sum_{j \neq i}^n \kappa_{ij} \beta_{ji}^2)} < 1$$

It then follows that  $\frac{\partial x_i^*}{\partial \kappa_{ij}} > 0$ . A graphic representation for the  $n = 2$  duopoly case is given in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Innovation best response functions for  $\mathbf{a} = I$  and  $n = 2$

Now consider the general case for arbitrary  $\mathbf{a}$  and  $\mathbf{B}$ . Define

$$\psi(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{B}) = \frac{\partial x_i^*}{\partial \kappa_{ij}}(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{B})$$

From our previous discussion we know that

$$\psi(\mathbf{J}, I) < 0 \quad \psi(I, \mathbf{J}) > 0$$

where  $\mathbf{J} = \mathbf{1}\mathbf{1}'$ . Since  $\psi$  is continuous and bounded then there exist  $\tilde{\mathbf{a}}$  and  $\tilde{\mathbf{B}}$  such that

$$\psi(\tilde{\mathbf{a}}, \tilde{\mathbf{B}}) = 0$$

Let  $\Delta = \{\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{B} : \psi(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{B}) = 0\}$  denote the set of all such matrices. Then  $\psi(\tilde{\mathbf{a}}, \tilde{\mathbf{B}} + d\mathbf{B}) > 0$  for  $d\mathbf{B} > 0$ : at our initial point the business stealing effect and the technology spillover effects offset each other, but now the technology spillover is bigger.

**Illustration of the Symmetric Case** Because the equilibrium expression of our asymmetric model are very unwieldy and do not offer any guidance beyond the comparative statics stated in Proposition 1, we provide the expressions of a simplified symmetric case for illustrative purposes. We assume that the owners are symmetric such that owner  $i$  owns a majority stake in firm  $i$  as well as a residual symmetric share in all other firms. Therefore, we have  $\kappa_{ij} = \kappa$ . Furthermore, we assume that both the degree of product differentiation  $a_{ij}$  and technological spillovers  $\beta_{ij}$  are identical across firm pairs such that  $a_{ij} = a$  and  $\beta_{ij} = \beta$ .

Solving for the symmetric equilibrium we obtain

$$q^* = \frac{A - \bar{c}}{2b + a(n-1)(1+\kappa) - \frac{\tau B}{\gamma}} \tag{19}$$

$$x^* = \frac{\tau}{\gamma} q^* \tag{20}$$

where  $\tau = 1 + \kappa\beta(n-1)$  and  $B = 1 + \beta(n-1)$ .

Common ownership  $\kappa$  affects equilibrium innovation  $x^*$  in equation (20) in two ways: (i)

through the “business stealing effect” on the equilibrium quantity  $q^*$  and (ii) through the “technology spillover effect” captured by  $\tau$ .

From equation (19) one can see that whether the net effect of common ownership  $\kappa$  on equilibrium output  $q^*$  is positive or negative depends on the relative importance of product market spillovers  $a$  and technological spillovers  $\beta$ . Moreover, it is immediate from equations (19) and (20) that common ownership can only have a positive effect on output if it has a positive effect on innovation. The following proposition formalizes this insight, and makes it quantitatively precise.

**Corollary 1.** *Denote  $\beta'$  as the (positive) solution to  $1 + \beta(n-1) - \frac{a\gamma}{\beta} = 0$ . The comparative statics of equilibrium quantity  $q^*$  and innovation  $x^*$  with respect to common ownership  $\kappa$  are characterized by 3 regions.*

- (i) *If  $\beta \leq \frac{a}{2+a(n-1)}$ , then  $\frac{\partial q^*}{\partial \kappa} < 0$  and  $\frac{\partial x^*}{\partial \kappa} \leq 0$ .*
- (ii) *If  $\frac{a}{2+a(n-1)} < \beta \leq \beta'$ , then  $\frac{\partial q^*}{\partial \kappa} \leq 0$  and  $\frac{\partial x^*}{\partial \kappa} > 0$ .*
- (iii) *If  $\beta > \beta'$ , then  $\frac{\partial q^*}{\partial \kappa} > 0$  and  $\frac{\partial x^*}{\partial \kappa} > 0$ .*

Equilibrium innovation  $x^*$  is proportional to equilibrium quantity  $q^*$  and is also increasing in  $\tau$  which itself is increasing in  $\kappa$ . Thus, if quantity  $q^*$  is increasing in the degree of common ownership  $\kappa$  then innovation  $x^*$  will also be increasing in common ownership. Compared to equilibrium quantity  $q^*$ , equilibrium innovation  $x^*$  receives an additional kick through  $\tau$  because of the technological spillovers which common ownership internalizes. As a result, common ownership will increase equilibrium innovation for some parameter values for which common ownership will decrease equilibrium quantity.

Although our model provides predictions about the equilibrium quantity, our primary empirical focus is on how the equilibrium level of innovation  $x^*$  varies with the level of common ownership  $\kappa$ . Therefore, the first two parts of Corollary 1 which determine the threshold above which common ownership increases innovation, are instructive. In particular, product market and technology spillovers jointly determine the sign of the common ownership effect on innovation as the following corollary illustrates.

**Corollary 2.** *Common ownership  $\kappa$  can decrease or increase innovation.*

- (i) *If and only if product market spillovers are sufficiently large,  $a > \frac{2\beta}{1-\beta(n-1)}$ , common ownership  $\kappa$  decreases equilibrium innovation  $x^*$ . Otherwise, common ownership  $\kappa$  increases equilibrium innovation  $x^*$ .*
- (ii) *If and only if technology spillovers are sufficiently large,  $\beta > \frac{a}{2+a(n-1)}$ , common ownership  $\kappa$  increases equilibrium innovation  $x^*$ . Otherwise, common ownership  $\kappa$  decreases equilibrium innovation  $x^*$ .*

Corollary 2 shows that without knowledge of product differentiation and technological characteristics common ownership has an ambiguous effect on innovation.<sup>15</sup> Depending on the relative strengths of (i) the business stealing and (ii) the technology spillover effect common ownership can either decrease or increase equilibrium innovation. However, the corollary also makes precise predictions under what conditions common ownership has a negative or a positive effect on innovation. Common ownership should decrease innovation if  $a$  is sufficiently large relative to  $\beta$ , whereas common ownership should increase innovation if the opposite is the case. In other words, we expect common ownership to decrease (increase) innovation when product market spillovers are sufficiently large (small) and technology spillovers are sufficiently small (large).

**Corollary 3.** *The effect of common ownership  $\kappa$  on innovation  $x^*$  is decreasing in product homogeneity  $a$ ,  $\frac{\partial^2 x^*}{\partial \kappa \partial a} < 0$ , and increasing in technology proximity  $\beta$ ,  $\frac{\partial^2 x^*}{\partial \kappa \partial \beta} > 0$ .*

Corollary 3 shows that product market and technology spillovers modify the relationship of common ownership on innovation in opposite ways. Whereas product market spillovers reinforce the negative effect of common ownership on innovation, technology spillovers strengthen its positive effects.

## A.2 Strategic Complements

Consider the following change to our baseline model. Instead of competing in quantities  $q_i$ , firms compete in prices  $p_i$ . The proof for this case is essentially identical to the case of strategic

---

<sup>15</sup>This insight helps explain the variation in empirical findings to date on the relation between common ownership and corporate innovation. These designs have not made the distinctions our model predicts to be crucial.



substitutes. The innovation reaction function of any firm  $i$  is linear and downward-sloping with respect to innovation of any firm  $j$ .

Assume again, for illustrative purposes, that product market and technological spillovers are identical across the  $n$  firms in the economy. Given the representative consumer's preferences the demand function facing firm  $i$  is given by

$$q_i(\mathbf{p}) = \omega - \rho p_i + \delta \sum_{j \neq i} p_j \quad (21)$$

where  $\mathbf{p} = (p_1, \dots, p_n)$  is the vector of all product market prices,  $\omega = \frac{A}{1+(n-1)a}$ ,  $\rho = \frac{1+(n-2)a}{[1+(n-1)a](1-a)}$ , and  $\delta = \frac{a}{[1+(n-1)a](b-a)}$ . By assuming  $1 > a > 0$  we have  $\rho > (n-1)\delta > 0$ . Thus, a firm's price choice has a greater impact on the demand for its own product than its competitive rivals' actions in that particular market.

The profits of firm  $i$  are given by

$$\pi_i = (p_i - c_i) \left( \omega - \rho p_i + \delta \sum_{j \neq i} p_j \right) - \frac{\gamma}{2} x_i^2. \quad (22)$$

The objective function of the owner of firm  $i$  is as in equation (5) given by

$$\phi_i = \pi_i + \sum_{j \neq i} \kappa_{ij} \pi_j \quad (23)$$

where we again, for illustrative purposes, assume that  $\kappa_{ij} = \kappa$  is identical across firms.

Firm  $i$ 's first-order conditions with respect to quantity  $p_i$  and innovation  $x_i$  can be rearranged to yield the following best-response functions:

$$p_i = \frac{1}{2\rho} \left[ \omega + \rho c_i + \delta \sum_{j \neq i}^n p_j + \kappa \delta \sum_{j \neq i}^n (p_j - c_j) \right] \quad (24)$$

$$x_i = \frac{1}{\gamma} \left( q_i + \kappa \beta \sum_{j \neq i}^n q_j \right) \quad (25)$$

where  $q_i = \omega - \rho p_i + \delta \sum_{j \neq i} p_j$  and  $c_i = \bar{c} - x_i - \beta \sum_{j \neq i}^n x_j$ . We solve for the symmetric equilibrium

price  $p^*$  and equilibrium innovation  $x^*$  of the  $n$  firms in the economy which are given by

$$p^* = \frac{\gamma[\omega + \bar{c}(\rho - \kappa\Delta)] + \omega B(\rho - \kappa\Delta)\tau}{\gamma[2\rho - (1 + \kappa)\Delta] + B(\rho - \kappa\Delta)\tau(\rho - \Delta)} \quad (26)$$

$$x^* = \frac{\tau}{\gamma}[\omega - p^*(\rho - \Delta)] \quad (27)$$

where  $\tau = 1 + \kappa\beta(n - 1)$ ,  $B = 1 + \beta(n - 1)$ , and  $\Delta = \delta(n - 1)$ .

As in the case of strategic substitutes, equilibrium innovation  $x^*$  increases (decreases) with common ownership  $\kappa$ , if technology spillovers  $\beta$  are sufficiently large (small) relative to product market spillovers  $a$ . A sufficient condition for  $\frac{\partial x^*}{\partial \kappa} > 0$  is  $\beta > \frac{\delta(\rho - \Delta)}{\rho(2\rho - \Delta)}$ .