

# The Dynamic Consequences of Monopoly Power

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# Motivation

Welfare consequences of product market power?

The *static* perspective (Edmond, Midrigan and Xu, 2022):

- Markup level: constrains output
- Markup dispersion: misallocation

We extend the analysis to a *dynamic* setting:

- Endogenous growth from innovation by profit-maximizing firms
- How do the welfare costs of markups change in this setting?
- Equilibrium vs. constrained-optimal allocation

# Theoretical setting

To characterize consequences of markups, must take a stance on:

- Origin of product market power
- Nature of innovation

We adopt the particular view that:

- Market power from monopolistic competition among differentiated firms
- Innovation as costly reduction of firms' marginal cost of production
- VES demand and heterogeneity in productivity imply markup dispersion

# Theoretical setting

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Alternatives left for future work:

- Oligopolistic competition
- Product quality improvements

# Outline

1. Partial equilibrium intuition
2. General equilibrium model
3. Quantification
4. Counterfactuals

## Partial equilibrium intuition

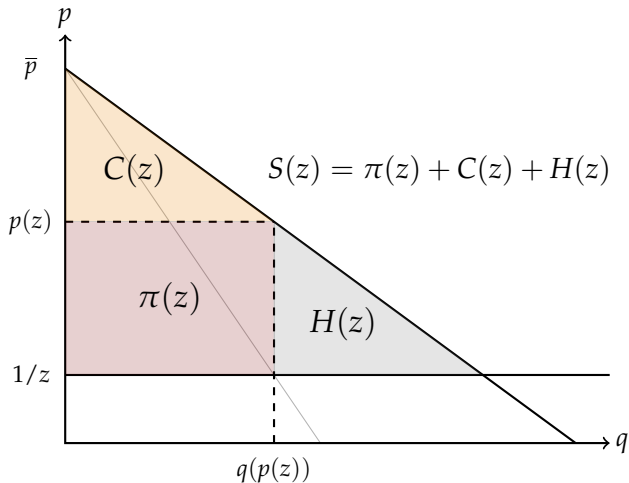
Let  $p$  denote a commodity's price and  $q(p)$  be demand at this price

A monopolist produces at marginal cost  $1/z > 0$  and the demand function satisfies:

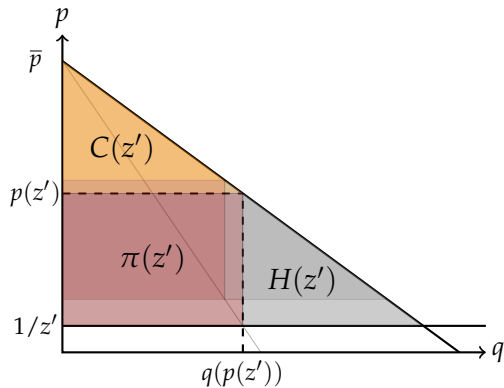
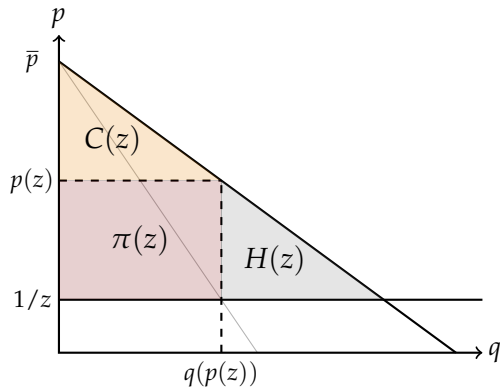
$$\frac{\partial q(p)}{\partial p} < 0, \quad q(1/z) > 0 \quad \text{and} \quad \vartheta(p) \equiv -\frac{\partial \ln(q(p))}{\partial \ln(p)} > 1$$

- The profit-maximizing price  $p(z)$  is such that  $q(p(z)) > 0$

# Static cost of monopoly power



## What about dynamics?





## Introducing dynamics

Achieve  $g\%$  improvement in  $z$  at cost  $i(g)$  for  $i$  strictly increasing-convex

To 1st-order approx., the producer and planner dynamic problems are:

$$\max_g \left\{ \underbrace{\pi(z) + \pi'(z)gz}_{\approx \pi((1+g)z)} - i(g) \right\} \quad \text{and} \quad \max_g \left\{ \underbrace{S(z) + S'(z)gz}_{\approx S((1+g)z)} - i(g) \right\}$$

First-order conditions of each problem:

$$\pi'(z) = i'(g)/z \quad \text{and} \quad S'(z) = i'(g)/z$$

Private and social incentives won't coincide if  $\pi'(z) \neq S'(z)$

# Too little innovation?

## Proposition 1

*The ratio  $R(z)$  of marginal producer surplus to marginal social surplus from an infinitesimal reduction in marginal cost is characterized by:*

$$R(z) \equiv \frac{\pi'(z)}{S'(z)} = \frac{q(p(z))}{q(1/z)} < 1.$$

*All else equal, for any downward-sloping demand function with a price elasticity above unity, social incentives for productivity improvements will exceed private incentives.*

# Misallocation of innovation?

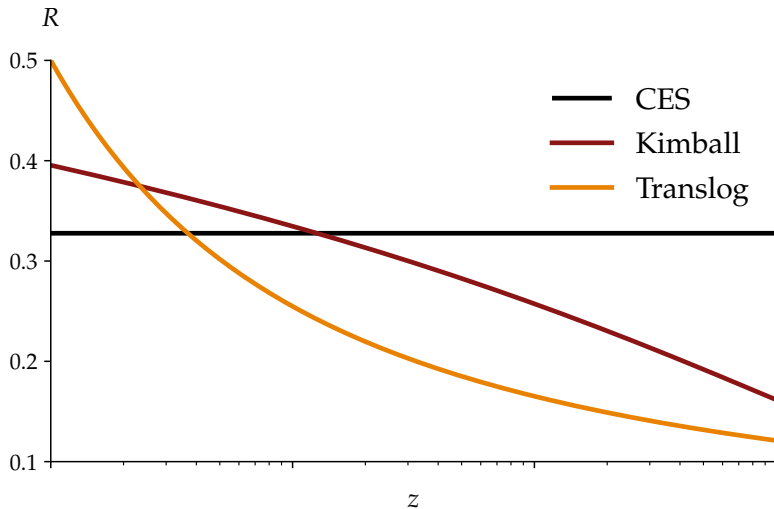
## Proposition 2

*The elasticity of the ratio  $R(z)$  with respect to productivity is characterized by:*

$$\frac{\partial \ln(R(z))}{\partial \ln(z)} = \frac{\vartheta(p(z))[\vartheta(p(z)) - 1]}{\vartheta(p(z)) + \varepsilon(p(z)) - 1} - \vartheta(1/z)$$

*where  $\varepsilon(p) \equiv \partial \ln(\vartheta(p)) / \partial \ln(p)$  denotes the “super-elasticity” of demand.*

## Illustrative examples



# Going from partial to general equilibrium

Partial equilibrium takeaways:

- Too little innovation
- Misallocation of innovation

Why a general equilibrium model?

- Quantitative counterfactuals
- Too much innovation from business stealing externality

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# Theoretical ingredients

## Endogenous growth from Markovian productivity improvements

- Ericson and Pakes (1995), Atkeson and Burstein (2010), Stokey (2014), Benhabib, Perla and Tonetti (2021), Lashkari (2023)

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## Heterogeneous markups from VES demand and productivity dispersion

- Kimball (1995), Klenow and Willis (2016), Edmond, Midrigan and Xu (2022)

## Selection from endogenous entry and exit

- Hopenhayn (1992), Luttmer (2007), Arkolakis (2016), Lashkari (2023)

# Population and preferences

Population of measure  $N_t$  growing at rate  $n$ :

$$\dot{N}_t = nN_t$$

Infinitely lived representative household with separable preferences:

$$U_0 = \int_0^\infty e^{-(\rho-n)t} [\ln(c_t) - v(h_t)] dt \quad \text{where} \quad c_t \equiv C_t/N_t, \quad h_t \equiv H_t/N_t$$

# Production technology

Final good  $Y_t$  is a **Kimball (1995)** aggregate of differentiated varieties:

$$M_t^{-1} \int_{j \in \mathcal{J}_t} \Upsilon(q_{jt}) dj = 1 \quad \text{where} \quad q_{jt} \equiv \frac{y_{jt}}{Y_t/M_t} \quad \text{and} \quad M_t \equiv |\mathcal{J}_t|$$

Each variety produced by a single firm using labor  $l_{jt}$  with productivity  $z_{jt}$ :

$$y_{jt} = \exp(z_{jt}) l_{jt}$$

Must pay per-period fixed cost of  $c_F > 0$  units of labor to remain active

# Innovation technology

Productivity follows a controlled Itô diffusion process:

$$dz_t = \gamma_t dt + \sigma dB_t$$

Labor requirement to achieve drift  $\gamma$  at detrended productivity  $\hat{z}$  is  $i(\gamma, \hat{z})$ :

- $\hat{z}_t \equiv z_t - g_t t$
- $i : \mathbb{R}_0^+ \times \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_0^+$
- $i$  is strictly increasing-convex in  $\gamma$
- $i(0, \hat{z}) = 0$  and  $\lim_{\gamma \rightarrow \infty} i(\gamma, \hat{z}) = \infty$

# Entry and exit

- Potential entrants allocate  $c_E > 0$  units of labor to achieve unit flow of entry
- Start producing with productivity draw from CDF  $F_t^E(z)$
- $F_t^E(z)$  defined over productivity support of incumbents:  $[\underline{z}_t, \infty)$
- Endogenous exit from unpaid fixed costs

# Resource constraints

Final good is used for consumption:

$$C_t = Y_t$$

Labor can be allocated to production, innovation, entry or fixed costs:

$$L_t + I_t + c_E E_t + c_F M_t = H_t$$

Aggregate production and innovation labor:

$$L_t \equiv M_t \int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} l_t(z) dF_t(z) \quad \text{and} \quad I_t \equiv M_t \int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} i(\gamma_t(z), \hat{z}) dF_t(z)$$

# Economic environment

$$\dot{N}_t = nN_t$$

Population

$$U_0 = \int_0^\infty e^{-(\rho-n)t} [u(c_t) + v(h_t)] dt$$

Preferences

$$\int_{\underline{z}_t}^\infty \Upsilon(q_t(z)) dF_t(z) = 1, \quad q_t(z) \equiv y_t(z)M_t/Y_t$$

Final good production

$$y_t(z) = \exp(z)l_t(z)$$

Variety production

$$dz_t = \gamma_t dt + \sigma dB_t$$

Innovation

$$C_t = Y_t$$

Final good resources

$$L_t + I_t + c_E E_t + c_F M_t = H_t$$

Labor resources

$$\dot{M}_t = (e_t - \delta_t)M_t$$

Varieties

$$\dot{F}_t(z) = -\gamma_t(z)F'_t(z) + \sigma^2 F''_t(z)/2 + e_t[F_t^E(z) - F_t(z)] - \delta_t[1 - F_t(z)]$$

Distribution

# Market structure

- Perfectly competitive **final good** (numéraire) market
- Perfectly competitive **labor** market
- Perfectly competitive **asset** market
- *Monopolistically* competitive **variety** markets

All prices taken as given besides firms choosing their variety's price



# Decision problems

1. Household's problem [Details](#)
  - Choose  $\{c_t, h_t\}_t$  to maximize lifetime utility
2. Final sector's problem [Details](#)
  - Choose  $q_t(z)$  to maximize profits each period
3. Firm's static problem [Details](#)
  - Choose  $p_t(z)$  to maximize profits each period
4. Firm's dynamic problem [Details](#)
  - Choose  $\{\gamma_t(z), \underline{z}_t\}_t$  to maximize expected PDV of profits
5. Entrant's problem [Details](#)
  - Choose  $E_t$  to maximize expected PDV of profits

# Optimality conditions

$$v'(h_t)/u'(c_t) = w_t$$

Intratemporal Euler equation

$$\dot{c}_t/c_t = r_t - \rho$$

Intertemporal Euler equation

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$$p_t(z) = \Upsilon'(q_t(z))D_t$$

Inverse demand function

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$$p_t(z) = \mu(q_t(z))w_t \exp(-z)$$

Monopoly pricing

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Monopoly pricing

$$V'_t(z) = w_t \times \partial i(\gamma, \hat{z})/\partial \gamma$$

Optimal innovation

$$V_t(\underline{z}_t) = V'_t(\underline{z}_t) = 0$$

Value matching and smooth pasting

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Optimal innovation

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Value matching and smooth pasting

$$\left(\int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} V_t(z) dF_t^E(z) - w_t c_E\right) E_t = 0$$

Free-entry condition

# Equilibrium allocation

Given initial conditions  $\{N_0, M_0, F_0(z)\}$ :

- $\{c_t, h_t\}_{t=0}^{\infty}$  solve the household's problem
- $\{q_t(z)\}_{t=0}^{\infty}$  solve the final sector's problem
- $\{p_t(z)\}_{t=0}^{\infty}$  solve the firms' static problem
- $\{\gamma_t(z), z_t\}_{t=0}^{\infty}$  solve the firms' dynamic problem
- $\{E_t\}_{t=0}^{\infty}$  satisfies the free-entry condition
- $\{Y_t\}_{t=0}^{\infty}$  satisfies the **Kimball (1995)** aggregator
- $\{w_t\}_{t=0}^{\infty}$  clears the labor market
- $\{r_t\}_{t=0}^{\infty}$  clears the asset market
- Population, measure of varieties and distribution of firms evolve as described

# Balanced growth path

Restrict attention to BGP equilibrium allocations:

- $\{c_t, w_t, Y_t/N_t, \underline{z}_t\}$  grow at *endogenous* constant rate  $g$
- $\{N_t, L_t, I_t, E_t, M_t\}$  grow at exogenous constant rate  $n$
- $\{h_t, r_t, q_t(z), p_t(z), D_t, \gamma_t(z)\}$  are stationary
- Distribution  $\mathcal{F}_t(\hat{z})$  of detrended productivity is stationary



# Economic growth

Contributions to growth from: [Details](#)

- Incumbent firms' productivity growth (+)
- Incumbent firms' productivity volatility ( $\pm$ )
- Selection from entry ( $\pm$ )
- Selection from exit (+)

No growth from expanding varieties

# Characterization

$$v(h) = \beta \times \frac{h^{1+\eta}}{1+\eta}$$

MaCurdy (1981)

$$\Upsilon(q) = 1 + (\theta - 1) \exp\left(\frac{1}{\epsilon}\right) \epsilon^{\theta/\epsilon-1} \left[ \Gamma\left(\frac{\theta}{\epsilon}, \frac{1}{\epsilon}\right) - \Gamma\left(\frac{\theta}{\epsilon}, \frac{q^{\epsilon/\theta}}{\epsilon}\right) \right]$$

Klenow and Willis (2016)

$$i(\gamma, \hat{z}) = \exp(\psi + \phi \hat{z}) \times \frac{\gamma^{1+\lambda}}{1+\lambda}$$

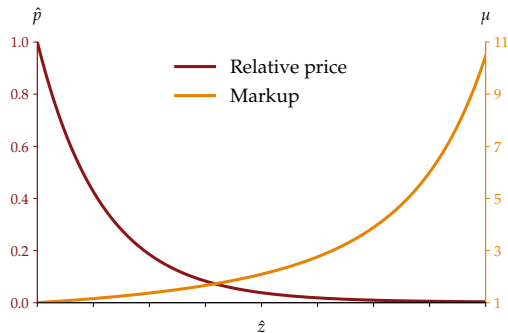
Assumption

$$\mathcal{F}^E(\hat{z}) = \mathcal{F}(\hat{z})^\zeta$$

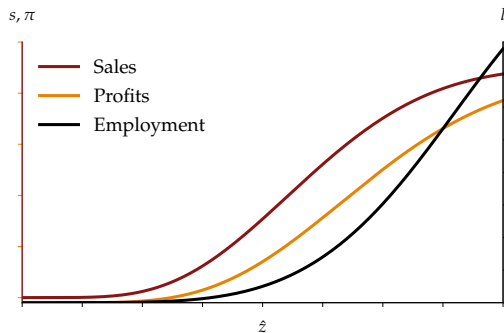
Benhabib, Perla and Tonetti (2021)

# Firm-level static outcomes

(a) Relative price and markup



(b) Sales, profits and employment



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# Policy interventions

Size-dependent transfers to firms:

$$\pi_t^*(z) = \pi_t(z) + T_t(q) \quad \text{where} \quad T_t(q) = [\varrho_0 \Upsilon(q) + \varrho_1 \Upsilon'(q)q] D_t Y_t / M_t$$

Optimal subsidy:  $(\varrho_0, \varrho_1) = (1, -1)$

- Eliminate markup level and dispersion

Uniform subsidy:  $(\varrho_0, \varrho_1) = (0, x/(1-x))$

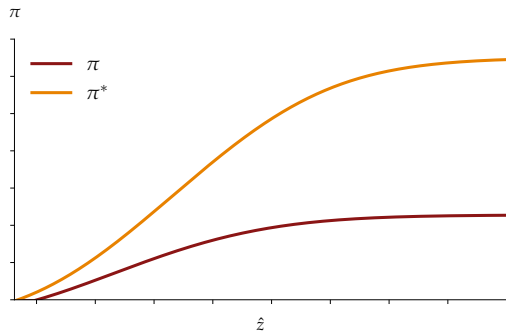
- Reduce markup level by  $x\%$  but leave dispersion unchanged

Size-dependent subsidy:  $(\varrho_0, \varrho_1) = (1/(1+x), -1)$

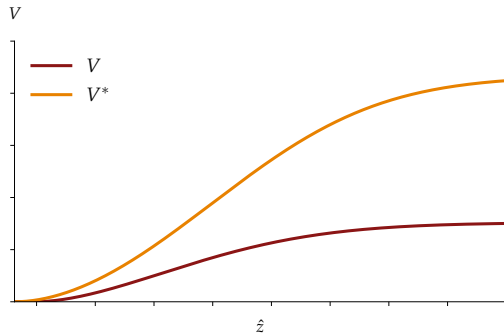
- Eliminate markup dispersion but leave level to  $1+x$

# Profit and value function

(a) Profit function

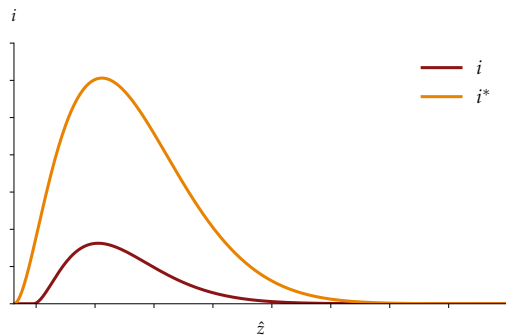


(b) Value function

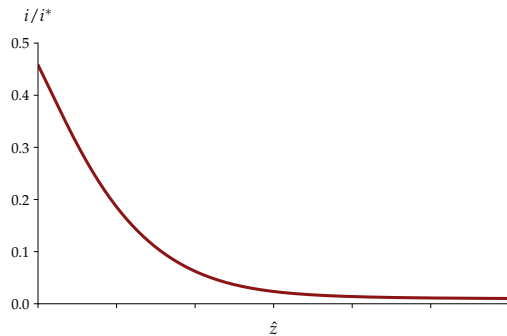


# Innovation incentives response

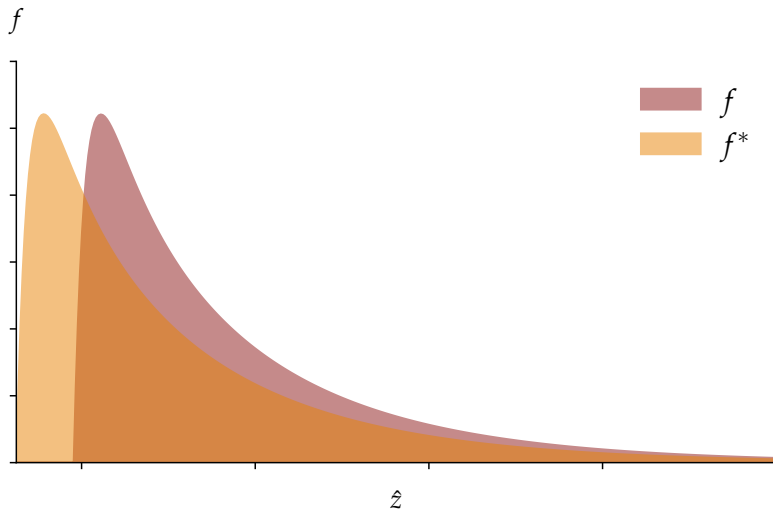
(a) Innovation labor



(b) Ratio



# Distributional response





# Next steps

1. Solution and estimation strategy
  - Spectral collocation + quadrature
  - Mathematical program with equilibrium constraints + TikTak multi-start
2. Estimation with firm-level administrative data from France
  - Data on revenues and quantities for manufacturing firms
3. Transition dynamics with physical capital
4. Alternative policy interventions?

# Defining the surpluses

$$\pi(z) = p(z)q(p(z)) / \vartheta(p(z)) \quad \text{Producer surplus}$$

$$C(z) = \int_{p(z)}^{\bar{p}} q(p) \mathrm{d}p \quad \text{Consumer surplus}$$

$$H(z) = \int_{1/z}^{p(z)} [q(p) - q(p(z))] \mathrm{d}p \quad \text{Harberger triangle}$$

$$S(z) = \pi(z) + C(z) + H(z) \quad \text{Social surplus}$$

# Distribution

Cumulative density  $M_t(z)$  of firms with productivity  $z$ :

$$M_t(z) = F_t(z)M_t \quad \text{where} \quad M_t = \int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} dM_t(z)$$

Law of motion given by Kolmogorov forward equation for all  $z > \underline{z}_t$ :

$$\dot{M}_t(z) = -\gamma_t(z)M'_t(z) + \sigma^2[M''_t(z) - M''_t(\underline{z}_t)]/2 + E_tF_t^E(z)$$

Standard boundary conditions:

$$M'_t(\underline{z}_t) = \lim_{z \rightarrow \infty} M'_t(z) = \lim_{z \rightarrow \infty} M''_t(z) = 0$$

# Distribution

Boundary conditions imply law of motion for measure of varieties:

$$\dot{M}_t = (e_t - \delta_t)M_t \quad \text{where} \quad e_t \equiv E_t/M_t \quad \text{where} \quad \delta_t \equiv \sigma^2 F_t''(\underline{z}_t)/2$$

Which in turn implies law of motion for  $F_t(z)$  for all  $z > \underline{z}_t$ :

$$\dot{F}_t(z) = -\gamma_t(z)F_t'(z) + \sigma^2 F_t''(z)/2 + e_t[F_t^E(z) - F_t(z)] - \delta_t[1 - F_t(z)]$$

# Household's problem

Choose consumption and labor supply to maximize lifetime utility:

$$\max_{\{c_t, h_t\}_{t=0}^{\infty}} \int_0^{\infty} e^{-(\rho-n)t} [\ln(c_t) - v(h_t)] dt \quad \text{s.t.} \quad \dot{a}_t = (r_t - n)a_t + w_t h_t - c_t$$

Value of corporate assets per capita denoted by  $a_t \equiv A_t/N_t$ :

$$A_t = M_t \int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} V_t(z) dF_t(z) \quad \text{where} \quad \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} e^{-\int_0^t r_{t'} dt'} A_t = 0$$

Delivers standard intratemporal and intertemporal Euler equations:

$$\frac{v'(h_t)}{u'(c_t)} = w_t \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{\dot{c}_t}{c_t} = r_t - \rho$$

## Final sector's problem

Choose demand for each variety to maximize profits:

$$\max_{\{q_t(z)\}_{z=\underline{z}_t}^{\infty}} \left\{ P_t - \int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} p_t(z) q_t(z) dF_t(z) \right\} Y_t \quad \text{s.t.} \quad \int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} \Upsilon(q_t(z)) dF_t(z) = 1$$

Delivers inverse demand functions:

$$p_t(z) = \Upsilon'(q_t(z)) P_t D_t$$

Price and demand indices defined as:

$$P_t \equiv \int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} p_t(z) q_t(z) dF_t(z) = 1 \quad \text{and} \quad D_t \equiv \left( \int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} \Upsilon'(q_t(z)) q_t(z) dF_t(z) \right)^{-1}$$

## Firm's static problem

Choose variety's price to maximize profits:

$$\pi_t(z) = \max_{p_t(z)} \{ [p_t(z) - w_t \exp(-z)] q_t(z) \} Y_t / M_t - w_t c_F \quad \text{s.t.} \quad p_t(z) = \Upsilon'(q_t(z)) D_t$$

Set price to a markup above marginal cost:

$$p_t(z) = \frac{\mu(q_t(z)) w_t}{\exp(z)} \quad \text{where} \quad \mu(q) \equiv \frac{\vartheta(q)}{\vartheta(q) - 1}$$

Express firm profits as implicit function of productivity:

$$\pi_t(z) = \frac{p_t(z) q_t(z) Y_t}{\vartheta(q_t(z)) M_t} - w_t c_F$$

## Firm's dynamic problem

Control productivity drift and choose optimal exit time to maximize PDV of profits:

$$V_t(z) = \max_{\tau, \{\gamma_s\}_{s=t}^{\infty}} \mathbb{E}_t \left\{ \int_t^{t+\tau} e^{-\int_t^s r_{t'} dt'} [\pi_s(z_s) - w_t i(\gamma_s, \hat{z}_s)] ds \middle| z_t = z \right\}$$

s.t.  $dz_t = \gamma_t dt + \sigma dB_t$

Value function satisfies HJB equation in continuation region:

$$r_t V_t(z) = \pi_t(z) + \max_{\gamma} \{ \gamma V'_t(z) - w_t i(\gamma, \hat{z}) \} + \sigma^2 V''_t(z)/2 + \dot{V}_t(z)$$

As well as first-order, value matching and smooth pasting conditions:

$$V'_t(z) = w_t \times \frac{\partial i(\gamma, \hat{z})}{\partial \gamma} \quad \text{and} \quad V_t(\underline{z}_t) = V'_t(\underline{z}_t) = 0$$



# Entrant's problem

Engage in perfect competition on labor market:

$$V_t^E = \max_{E_t} \left\{ E_t \int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} V_t(z) dF_t^E(z) - w_t c_E E_t \right\}$$

Delivers free-entry condition (in complementary-slackness form):

$$\left( \int_{\underline{z}_t}^{\infty} V_t(z) dF_t^E(z) - w_t c_E \right) E_t = 0$$

# Economic growth

Defining  $\hat{Z} \equiv \left( \int_{\underline{\hat{z}}}^{\infty} q(\hat{p}(\hat{z})) \exp(-\hat{z}) d\mathcal{F}(\hat{z}) \right)^{-1}$  and  $\hat{Z}^E \equiv \left( \int_{\underline{\hat{z}}}^{\infty} q(\hat{p}(\hat{z})) \exp(-\hat{z}) d\mathcal{F}^E(\hat{z}) \right)^{-1}$ :

$$\begin{aligned}
 g = & \frac{\int_{\underline{\hat{z}}}^{\infty} [q'(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))\hat{p}'(\hat{z}) - q(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))] \exp(-\hat{z}) \gamma(\hat{z}) d\mathcal{F}(\hat{z})}{\int_{\underline{\hat{z}}}^{\infty} [q'(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))\hat{p}'(\hat{z}) - q(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))] \exp(-\hat{z}) d\mathcal{F}(\hat{z})} \\
 & + \frac{\sigma^2 \int_{\underline{\hat{z}}}^{\infty} [q''(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))\hat{p}'(\hat{z})^2 + q'(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))\hat{p}''(\hat{z}) - 2q'(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))\hat{p}'(\hat{z}) + q(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))] \exp(-\hat{z}) d\mathcal{F}(\hat{z})}{2 \int_{\underline{\hat{z}}}^{\infty} [q'(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))\hat{p}'(\hat{z}) - q(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))] \exp(-\hat{z}) d\mathcal{F}(\hat{z})} \\
 & + \frac{e(\hat{Z}/\hat{Z}^E - 1)}{\hat{Z} \int_{\underline{\hat{z}}}^{\infty} [q'(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))\hat{p}'(\hat{z}) - q(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))] \exp(-\hat{z}) d\mathcal{F}(\hat{z})} \\
 & - \frac{\delta[\hat{Z}q(p(\underline{\hat{z}})) \exp(-\underline{\hat{z}}) - 1]}{\hat{Z} \int_{\underline{\hat{z}}}^{\infty} [q'(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))\hat{p}'(\hat{z}) - q(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))] \exp(-\hat{z}) d\mathcal{F}(\hat{z})}
 \end{aligned}$$

## Firm-level static outcomes

Firm's relative price ( $W$  denotes Lambert  $W$ -function), relative demand and profits:

$$\hat{p}(\hat{z}) = \frac{(\theta/\epsilon) \exp(-\hat{z})w_0/\bar{p}_0}{W[(\theta/\epsilon) \exp(\theta/\epsilon - \hat{z})w_0/\bar{p}_0]}$$

$$q(\hat{p}) = \begin{cases} [-\epsilon \ln(\hat{p})]^{\theta/\epsilon} & \text{if } \hat{p} < 1 \\ 0 & \text{if } \hat{p} \geq 1 \end{cases}$$

$$\pi_t(\hat{z}) = \frac{\hat{p}(\hat{z})q(\hat{p}(\hat{z}))^{1+\epsilon/\theta}\bar{p}_t Y_t}{\theta M_t} - w_t c_F$$